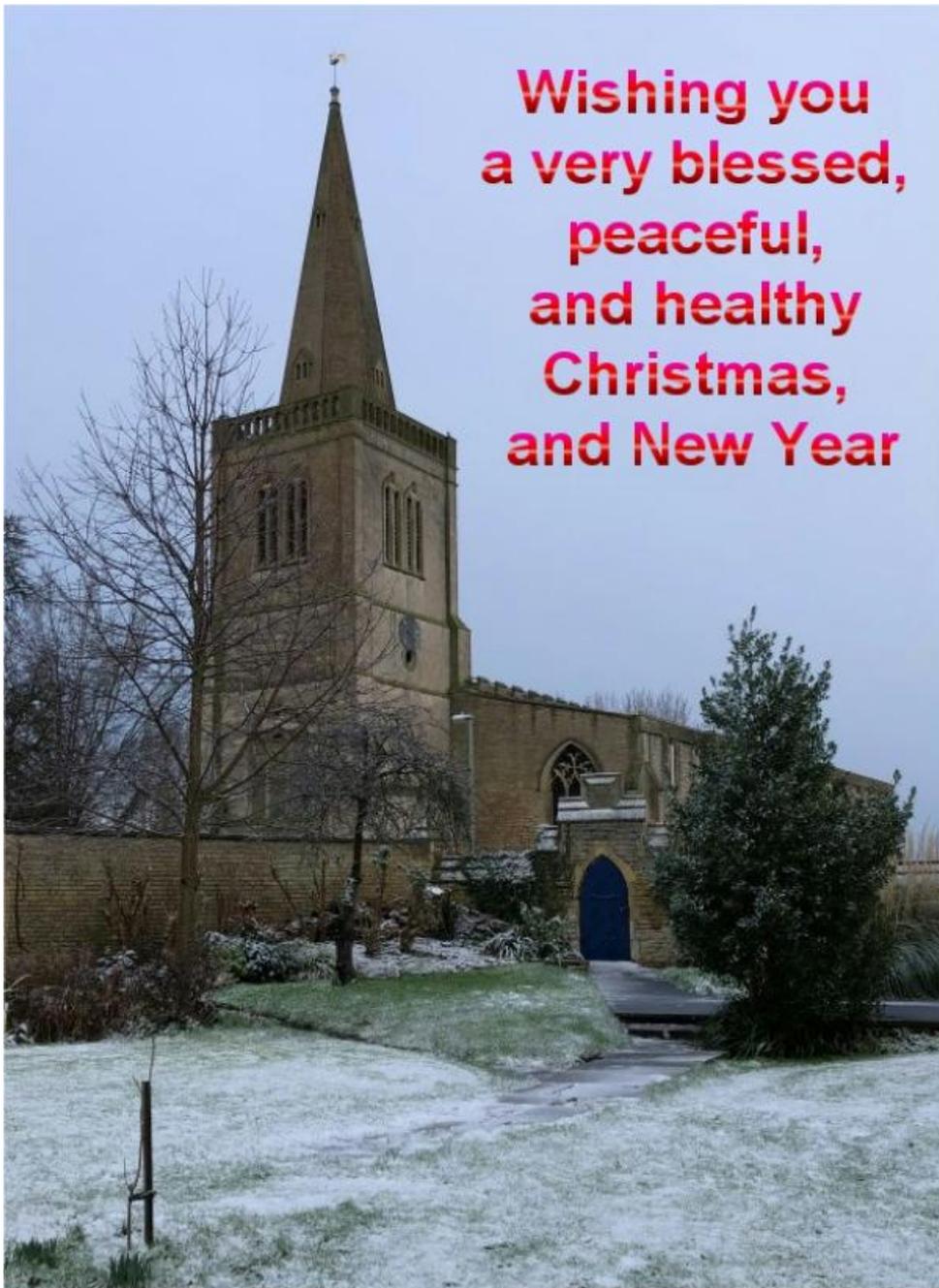


Dear all



Since we are not all going to be meeting together over this Christmastide, with many still isolating, and following us virtually, I am sending my Christmas Card in this email this year.

As we approach this Christmas season, the daylight hours are starting to lengthen again. The turning season tells us that, in the depths of the darkest times, light will not be overcome. There is the hope of spring, of new life... and that life that has been dormant, and at times hidden, will return. It is a message that we all need to hear, especially at this difficult time.

As the prophet Isaiah reminds us:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy

at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9: 2-7).

I have included the full quote, resisting the temptation of just concentrating on the 'purple passage' of verse 2. We can see the full weight of the problems facing the people of God. Isaiah was promising them that, whatever it may seem to them, God has not abandoned them. And the peace promised was far more than simply a nice comfortable feeling. It was true *shalom* – justice and righteousness. All would be well – all would be right.

This was a prophecy for the people of Israel millennia ago, but it applies equally to God's people 2000 years ago, and to all of God's people today. The light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not, and will not overcome it!

You might be interested in the following. Our hall toilets are twinned, as are our bins and taps. It is the 10th Anniversary of Toilet Twinning.



We cannot thank you enough for all your support this year. You have made transformation possible in some of the remotest, most marginalised places on earth. With your support, we've helped so many more families have access to clean water and sanitation – and we've shared urgent hygiene education in communities across 37 countries. Thank you for partnering with us in this vital work. We wish you a wonderful Christmas, and a peace-filled 2021.

Lorraine Kingsley CEO

And a message from Bin Twinning:



It's been a pretty rubbish year – but, thanks to you, we're celebrating lives being transformed.

It's only four months since we launched Bin Twinning, and already it's taken on a life of its own...

Not only have more than 2,000 bins been twinned across the UK, but so many twidders like you have been fundraising too, and spreading the word to encourage others to twin.

In the year of Covid, you've proved the strength of community. Through your generosity, communities overseas have been equipped and enabled to pull together and clean up their streets, protect their health and improve their livelihoods

Here are a couple of links from the diocese...

The diocesan carol service includes participants from the community, church schools, churches, and the sporting world. We are grateful for all those who have participated and to Archdeacons Mark and Gavin for the behind the scenes work in this. The service can be accessed via <https://www.lincoln.anglican.org/news/2020-christmas-carol-service>.

Please feel free to share this link and encourage others to watch our county celebrating Christmas.

We mentioned last week that we are preparing a recorded service for Sunday 27th December. This is Holy Communion for the First Sunday after Christmas. The service will go 'live' during Saturday 26th December on the [diocesan website](#).

Some excellent news regarding the Prince of Wales oak tree. We are very grateful to the DSJ Parish Council for their funding support. Earlier in the year we received grants from our Parish Councillors for just over £1000 towards the cost of remedial works and testing. We have just learned that we have been granted £2529 towards the cost of railings to be put up round the tree. You may recall that part of the ongoing care of the tree is to strengthen those roots that are still healthy on the road-side of the tree. The car park has been broken up and mulched to enhance water retention. The railings are to fence off that area so no further damage can be done to the roots by driving or walking over them. This should contribute significantly to the survival of the tree for years to come. A very big thanks to Caroline who has taken the brunt of the work for this, and to Simon for ensuring that the financial side has been managed so well.

I have often referenced a quote from the genii in Disney's Aladdin cartoon, as voiced by the late lamented Robin Williams, to illustrate the meaning of the Incarnation. Today, I found it in a meme:



Finally, a couple of musical links for you.

First a beautiful take on *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* by Chris & Kellie While, and Julie Matthews:

[In The Bleak Mid Winter - While and Matthews with Kellie While - YouTube](#)

And one of my favourite Christmas pieces, Corelli's Christmas Concerto:

[Corelli Christmas Concerto; Op.68 -- Freiburger Barockorchester - YouTube](#)

OK – I had to add Bach's Christmas Oratorio too...

[Bach - Christmas Oratorio \[1-3\] Harnoncourt - YouTube](#)



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark