

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. *Colossians 3 v14*

Thoughts for a New Year

Think of a word. Not just any word, but a word, or maybe two words, that express for you the best description of the year that has just come to an end. That is something the Oxford University Press do every year - a competition to find a word or two that provides the best description of the year that is past. You may be surprised to know that the winner for 2024 was two words - "brain rot." It means the impact of excessive amounts of on-line information. A pretty fair description you might say.

What about this year? What word would you choose to express your own personal wishes and hopes for 2025? Let me suggest a few words. The first is the word "peace." If only we could make a world of peace, free of conflict, aggression, hatred, greed. When we look back on last year, it seems that political, religious, cultural and racial differences make it well-nigh impossible that people will find a way to live together in peace and harmony.

Or perhaps your word would be "understanding". We know how difficult it can be to understand one another. We all have problems in understanding why others do certain things or behave in certain ways. And if we add the complications of language, history, age, culture, then we soon discover that for two people to understand one another is asking a lot. How much more difficult for two nations to understand one another.

Here's another word you might think of - "tolerance". When we look around the world, we see just how intolerant people can be - especially if they think they are right and everyone else is wrong.

This may lead us on to think of another word we might hope will characterise 2025 - the word "acceptance."

There is so much that goes on in our world that we find unacceptable. Acceptance is much easier when things fit in with our way of seeing things. Not so easy when differences are so great and there seems to be no meeting point. Somehow we have to become more accepting of one another in a world where there is so much difference.

And then there is the word "forgiveness". There is such a great need for it, yet such difficulty in offering and receiving it. Forgiveness, as we know, is just as important to the one who is forgiving as it is to the one who is forgiven. I'm sure you can think of other words that you hope might characterise 2025 and thus make a real difference to God's world.

As Christians, we don't have to look very far to find the one word that can make all the difference to our world and to its future. That word is found frequently in the Gospels. It is the one word that governs and directs all that Jesus says and does. It is the one word he urges his followers to adopt and to guide and direct all that they do and say. That word is "love".

The passage from John's Gospel we hear on Christmas Day doesn't mention the word "love". But it says a lot of other things. It talks a lot about the "Word". It tells us that in the beginning, at the time of creation, the Word was with God, and, in fact, that the Word was God. It ends by telling us that the Word became flesh and lived among us - full of grace and truth. What a wonderful description that is of Jesus - that Jesus himself is the Word of God: that he did indeed come and live among us. He did that for one reason only - that through him and all that he did and said we might be restored to a right relationship with God and with one another.

How was that done? It was done by that one word "love". It was done through a life of love such as we have never seen before. It was done by a love which knew no bounds. It was done by a love that led ultimately to the death of Jesus on the cross and to a new life beyond our

January Services and Events

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| Wednesday 1 | 11.00 | New Year's Day Walk |
| Saturday 4 | 09.00 | Men's Breakfast at Horton Golf Park |
| Sunday 5 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| Monday 6 | 19.30 | <i>Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room</i> |
| Sunday 12 | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| Wednesday 15 | 20.00 | PCC meeting in Church |
| Thursday 16 | 14.30 | Afternoon Club in the Cuddington Hall |
| Saturday 18 | 10.00 | Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall |
| Sunday 19 | 09.30 | Sung Communion and Children's Groups |
| Sunday 26 | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| Wednesday 29 | 19.15 | Men's Evening Meal together |

Vicar Application Closing Date

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome

***A HAPPY NEW YEAR
to one & all***