

Unity

The Newsletter of Ealing Green Church

Ealing Green Church, The Green, Ealing, London W5 5QT



December 2021

Ealing Green Church (Methodist & United Reformed)

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when it is open 1pm ~ 6pm

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~ Groups ~

Afternoon Bible Study: first Thursday monthly at 1.30pm

Monday Fellowship: 2nd & 4th Mondays monthly at 1.45pm

Choir Practice: before and after the service each Sunday

Luncheon Club: Thursdays 12 noon—1.15pm

Full details can be found in the weekly notice sheet

~ You are welcome to come to any meeting ~

December 2021

Welcome to December's Unity newsletter.

This month's contents are listed below. Thank-you all for your contributions.

**Closing date for contributions for January's issue is
December 16th, Thanks!**

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If you have a picture (preferably in jpeg format) you would like to feature on the front of the newsletter, please let me know.

Thanks,
Lee

People are so worried about what they eat between Christmas and the New Year, but they really should be worried about what they eat between the New Year and Christmas.

Unknown

From Sue

Dear Friends,

Those of you who I talk often with will know that I am sometimes puzzled and delighted by the way that the Bible readings are organised in the daily lectionary. They often seem to pop up as readings at a time which seems unseasonable. This can at first be perplexing, but soon becomes fascinating - as it helps to shed new light on the Gospel message. A reading which came into this category this November was the story of the cleansing of the temple. This is usually a Lent reading which urges us to reflect on Jesus' righteous anger at the temple being used to commercialise the outward signs of religion whilst the internal prayers and commitments are forgotten.

The point when Jesus turned the tables and declared that his Father's house, which should be a house of prayer, was being misused; is traditionally seen as the point in the Christian narrative where the religious authorities turned against Jesus and the journey towards crucifixion began.

Here, however, the lectionary suggests a different reading. We are now moving into Advent and into preparation for Christmas - we are preparing to welcome the Christ child. It is good that the temples - our churches - should be put in order for Christmas- perhaps particularly after a pandemic.

So, are the usual symbols and furniture in their rightful place? Have you considered recently the meaning of our symbols -

- The empty cross
- The Bible
- The font
- The bread and wine
- The Nativity figures
- The advent wreath
- The Christmas tree?

How do objects in the church help you to come before God? What other non-visual things which take place in your church help with this?

As we prepare our churches for the coming of the Christ Child. We cleanse our temples and look at them anew.

We are also reminded however that there are two kinds of temples -

the building, and also our bodies (which are temples of the Holy Spirit). We need to prepare for the Christ Child, for his indwelling Spirit by cleansing our own beings too. Advent has that same call that Lent has for self reflection and renewal - we are called to check that all of the religious furniture within ourselves is ready for Christmas -

- Am I finding regular time to be with God in prayer?
- Am I attending worship each week?
- Am I reading the Bible regularly and allowing it to speak new things to me?
- Are there things which are troubling me spiritually which I need to confess in prayer or talk to someone else about?
- Am I trying to be the best version of me I can be?
- Am I asking God for more of his Holy Spirit in order to make that possible?

Advent is a time to look at ourselves and our lives with God. We have all been through a very stressful and difficult time. If you have drifted from God, drifted from church, drifted from regular prayer and study, then Advent is a time to recommit.

Challenge yourself . What are you going to do? Christ will come this Christmas into hearts that are ready and waiting for him - temples - will you be ready?

Sue

Christmas Services.

Hope is Born

Sunday 19th December

- -No morning service
- 6.30pm Carol Service

Although there is no morning service, we hope you will still join us at 11am at the Church, to Carol sing for an hour outside the homes of a few of our Church Family, who have not been able to return to Church

Christmas Eve

- 12 noon Holy Communion

Christmas Day

- 11am Family Service

Boxing Day

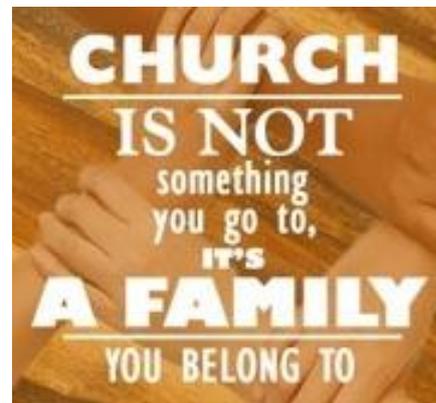
- No service at Ealing Green nor any of the Churches in the Circuit. Instead there will be a video service at 11am

Sunday 16th January

- 11am Covenant service

News of the Church Family

John Collingbourne has just had a fall in his flat, which has resulted in him staying in hospital for a couple of nights so far. Fortunately he has not broken any bones. He is now in a rehabilitation unit in Westbourne Park to improve his mobility and apparently enjoying his stay.



Jean Rose is now back home and managing well with the help of a carer. She has at long last got rid of the terrible pain she has suffered for more than a year. She sends her love to all the Church Family and thanks us for our prayers, cards and good wishes.

Janette Pender continues to attend to her sister, Rosemary's, affairs. She has just gone to Scotland, for about a month, to clear Rosemary's flat. She asks for prayers for strength to be able to do this. We miss you Janette, and look forward to having you back with us in time for Christmas.

Colin Hatherall's skin graft to his forehead is 'taking' gradually. He remains plastered! - with elastoplast not alcohol !!!

We send our love and sympathy to **Caroline, Valerie and Aki** on the peaceful passing of **Caroline's brother, Horatio**, in Sierra Leone.

On Remembrance Day, we were pleased to welcome **Ron Honor** back to Church for the first time since the start of lockdown. It was most appropriate that as a veteran, he said the Remembrance words....'They grow not old.....'

Sadly we have had to say Goodbye to **Christine Edwards**, who is leaving Ealing to move into a Residential Care Home in Litchfield, near her daughter Fiona, who has kindly been bringing her to EG every fortnight. We will miss you Christine and we pray that you will settle into your new home quickly and happily.

There are a few other people who are feeling unwell and are struggling at the moment for a number of reasons, but do not wish to be named. We pray that they will be aware of God's presence with them and receive His comfort and strength for the coming days.

We wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a healthy, peaceful 2022.

Gill Hatherall

Unity

It's 1000 am here and I'm on holiday. I had hoped to get much of this month's newsletter sorted before we came away, but it didn't work out that way (what a surprise – it never does). Still the house and preparation for the work on it that is going to be done in the new year (I hope) just filled up the time until we were frantically packing, then dragging our suitcases out of the door.

The plan was for it to be a less stressed run up to Christmas so we could have a quiet time to appreciate our blessings. Now, believe me, we do count our blessings, and on a daily basis, but of late it's gotten to the point that, at the end of the day, we are grateful for what we have, we acknowledge that any problems we have are first world ones and unlikely to develop into anything serious. There doesn't seem time for it to go much beyond that - unlike the homelessness or Foodbank situations that cast a cloud over our, and other, rich countries.

I'd like to say writing to our MP to get the government to help would also be something to do, not least because they managed to 'solve' the homeless problem in a stroke at the beginning of lockdown last year.

This month's Communion Collection goes to Abba's Father's House which is one avenue where we can help.

And that goes for climate change as well. Sue has just run a course on this and we are all encouraged to do what we can, to support the church where it makes representations to those in power to 'nudge' us all into more environmentally beneficial ways of living – not for us, as the changes will be gradual, but for our children, their children and those coming after. It's a heavy responsibility and one that transcends the many day-to-day worries that we have, but it is part of our faith that we help those less able to help themselves and look after the inheritance that we have enjoyed.

After all, the world isn't ours to do what we want with it – it's only loaned to us to look after for those who come after us – or something like that.

God bless you

| A lovely thing about Christmas is that it's compulsory, like a
thunderstorm, and we all go through it together. *Garrison Keillor*



Letters and emails

From Linda Field

Some of you who know me will be aware that I suffer from insomnia, a debilitating affliction because it has such a hold on how you feel the following day. However, I recently found myself smiling and really feeling quite fond of my old foe.

I had been awake since about 4 am trying to get back to sleep (I should know better) and had been listening, on and off, to the World Service. I am quite a fan of the Shipping Forecast and Farming Today and half listen to News Briefing. On this particular morning the announcer then said that today's Prayer for the Day would be by the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Smith and my attention perked up. There was a little preamble and a very short prayer (2 mins is the timeslot). I felt that a friend had spoken to me over the airwaves. The next morning followed a similar pattern and I was happily surprised to hear it announced that the Rev. Dr. Jen Smith was again doing the Prayer for the Day. I hadn't realised that the same person would take on a week's slot. I can remember the last one on the Friday when Jen (I think it OK to refer to her in this friendly way) spoke about how she used modern technology to keep organised, specifically using AI to pick up words that were prompts to her needing to take follow-up action. She pointed out though that, clever though this was, it was only following a script even if it was a clever one. The prayer followed seamlessly: let us use our communication skills to really talk and listen – we are much more able than the technology.

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Smith wouldn't be aware of how beneficial her communication skills were over that week for one person. I felt less alone, fully connected with the voice coming over the radio and the messages given to me, which I most definitely heard. I hope others felt such positive benefits that week too.

Linda

My mother-in-law has come round to our house at Christmas seven years running. This year we're having a change. We're going to let her in.

Leslie 'Les' Dawson

Poetry

When asked at a church to come up with a poem, so came up with short, inspired pieces. This one is from Fiona.

I am at peace,
I am safe.
I trust the people I'm with.
They won't hurt me.
The fear is gone.
I can blossom.
I look for sunshine rather than clouds
And give you my smile.

Fiona

And here are some others, composed outside church, thanks to Helen.

Advice from Poor Robins Almanac:

Now that the time has come wherein
Our Saviour Christ was born,
The larder's full of beef and pork
The granary's full of corn.
As God hath plenty to thee sent,
Take comfort of thy labours,
And let it never thee repent
To feed thy needy neighbours.

(Anon)

Keeping Christmas

How will you your Christmas keep ?
Feasting, fasting ,or asleep ?
Will you laugh or will you pray
Or will you forget the day?
Be it kept with joy or pray'r
Keep of either some to spare
Whatsoever brings the day
Do not keep but give away

Eleanor Farjeon 1881-1965)

Random on a Tandem

Have you ever considered riding around Gunnersbury Park after dark with a minister on the back of your bike? No? Well that's just what Sue and I have been doing for the last few nights. Courtesy of a generous charity called



Charlotte's Tandems which loans tandems to people with disabilities.

The biggest barrier to using a tandem is actually getting it home. They are very large! And certainly don't fit into the back of a Skoda Fabia hatchback. The one we have borrowed splits into two, but then you have to reassemble it. I've got the gears and brakes working after some trial and error. Charlotte's Tandems are always available to help you, and I'm particularly grateful to Steve the Hertfordshire helper for his advice.

The next challenge was playing 'dodge the dog' in Gunnersbury Park during the hours of daylight, so we opted for night cycling and a powerful torch tied to the front of the cycle. Who needs a rollercoaster?

So, if you wondered what that bright light circling around Gunnersbury Park was, now you know.

Oh yeah, and don't ask why Sue has her helmet on backwards!

Phil Male

Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter for the coming year.

We recently received an email from the organisers of the night shelter which said, amongst other things:

'We are very grateful for the way churches have thought and prayed about ways to go forward with helping homeless people this winter. We have collected ideas and responses from many of you, and are looking at what kind of programme we could offer between us after Christmas.' . . .

'We have now learned that only one shelter project in the country is actively considering running a "rolling" shelter that goes round different churches every night, and the government is trying to encourage static, self-contained provision in places like hotels or converted office buildings. This is not only for COVID safety, but also because it has been found to lead to better long-term prospects of housing. It therefore looks as if we are unlikely to have "overnights" in our churches.' . . .

'We are in conversation with representatives of Housing Justice and the government Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities, as well as Ealing Council, to find and fund premises in Ealing Borough where our guests could sleep. If you have any contacts aware of possible properties, please do get in touch.' . . .

'We hope then in the New Year to include overnight sleeping facilities into a complete package with the meals and other practical, social and spiritual support churches have offered in different places.' . . .

We will let you know just as soon as any more information becomes available.

Yours with thanks

Alison

We will keep you updated on any movement and any proposals for our church to help support the Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter.

Jane & Lee

A Poe-Themed Christmas Tale. - Bah, Gold-Bug.

A little holiday reading: Here is a short story by George Ade (pictured) from 1903 "The Set of Poe." I grant you, it's no "A Christmas Carol," but this short tale is a sweetly goofy salute to the subject of this blog: The dream of the protagonist's life is to own a fine edition of the works of Poe. A noble goal, indeed.

And here's hoping all of you have a holiday season with as happy an ending.



Waterby remarked to his wife: "I'm still tempted by that set of Poe. I saw it in the window today, marked down to fifteen dollars."

"Yes?" said Mrs. Waterby, with a sudden gasp of emotion, it seemed to him.

"Yes--I believe I'll have to get it."

"I wouldn't if I were you, Alfred," she said. "You have so many books now."

"I know I have, my dear, but I haven't any set of Poe; and that's what I've been wanting for a long time. This edition I was telling you about is beautifully gotten up."

"Oh, I wouldn't buy it, Alfred," she repeated, and there was a note of pleading earnestness in her voice. "It's so much money to spend for a few books."

"Well, I know, but--" and then he paused for the lack of words to express his mortified surprise.

Mr. Waterby had tried to be an indulgent husband. He took a selfish pleasure in giving, and found it more blessed than receiving. Every salary day he turned over to Mrs. Waterby a fixed sum for household expenses. He added to this an allowance for her spending money. He set aside a small amount for his personal expenses and deposited the remainder in the bank. He flattered himself that he approximated the model husband.

Mr. Waterby had no costly habits and no prevailing appetite for anything expensive. Like every other man, he had one or two hobbies, and one of his particular hobbies was Edgar Allan Poe. He believed

that Poe, of all American writers, was the one unmistakable "genius." The word "genius" has been bandied around the country until it has come to be applied to a long-haired man out of work or a stout lady who writes poetry. In the case of Poe, Mr. Waterby maintained that "genius" meant one who was not governed by the common mental processes, but "who spoke from inspiration, his mind involuntarily taking superhuman flight into the realm of pure imagination"--or something of that sort. At any rate, Mr. Waterby liked Poe, and he wanted a set of Poe. He allowed himself not more than one luxury a year and he determined that this year the luxury should be a set of Poe.

Therefore, imagine the hurt to his feelings when his wife objected to his expending fifteen dollars for that which he coveted above anything else in the world.

As he went to work that day he reflected on Mrs. Waterby's conduct. Did she not have her allowance of spending money? Did he ever find fault with her extravagance? Was he an unreasonable husband in asking that he be allowed to spend this small sum for that which would give him many hours of pleasure and which would belong to Mrs. Waterby as much to him?

He told himself that many a husband would have bought the books without consulting his wife. But he (Waterby) had deferred to his wife in all matters touching family finances, and he said to himself, with a tincture of bitterness in his thoughts, that probably he had put himself into the attitude of a mere dependent.

For had she not forbidden him to buy a few books for himself? Well, no, she had not forbidden him, but it amounted to the same thing. She had declared that she was firmly opposed to the purchase of Poe. Mr. Waterby wondered if it were possible that he was just beginning to know his wife. Was she a selfish woman at heart? Was she complacent and good-natured only while she was having her own way? Wouldn't she prove to be an entirely different sort of woman if he should do as many husbands do—spend his income on clubs and cigars and private amusements; and give her the pickings of small change?

Nothing in Mr. Waterby's experience as a married man had so wrenched his sensibilities and disturbed his faith as Mrs. Waterby's objection to the purchase of a set of Poe. There was but one way to account for it. She wanted all the money for herself or else she wanted

him to put it into the bank so that she could come into it after he--but this was too monstrous.

However, Mrs. Waterby's conduct helped to give strength to Mr. Waterby's meanest suspicions. Two or three days after the first conversation she asked: "You didn't buy that set of Poe, did you Alfred?"

"No, I didn't buy it," he answered as coldly and with as much hauteur as possible

He hoped to hear her say: "Well, why don't you go and get it? I'm sure that you want it, and I'd like to see you buy something for yourself once in a while."

That would have shown the spirit of a loving and unselfish wife.

But she merely said: "That's right; don't buy it," and he was utterly unhappy, for he realized that he had married a woman who did not love him and who simply desired to use him as a pack horse for all household burdens.

As soon as Mr. Waterby had learned the horrible truth about his wife he began to recall little episodes dating back years, and now he pieced them together to convince himself that he was a deeply wronged person.

Small at the time and almost unnoticed, they were now accumulating to prove that Mrs. Waterby had no real anxiety for her husband's happiness. Also, Mr. Waterby began to observe her closely, and he believed that he found new evidences of her unworthiness. For one thing, while he was in gloom over his discovery and harassed by doubts of what the future might reveal to him, she was content and even-tempered.

The holiday season approached and Mr. Waterby had made a resolution. He decided that if she would not permit him to spend a little money on himself he would not buy the customary Christmas present for her.

"Selfishness is a game at which two can play," he said.

Furthermore, he determined that if she asked him for any extra money for Christmas he would say: "I'm sorry, my dear, but I can't spare any. I am so hard up that I can't even afford to buy a few books that I've been wanting a long time. Don't you remember that you told me that

I couldn't afford to buy that set of Poe?"

Could anything be more biting as to sarcasm or more crushing as to logic?

He rehearsed this speech and had it all ready for her, as he pictured to himself her humiliation and surprise at discovering that he had some spirit after all and a considerable say-so whenever money was involved.

Unfortunately for his plan, she did not ask for any extra spending money and so he had to rely on the other mode of punishment. He would withhold the expected Christmas present. In order that she might fully understand his purpose, he would give presents to both of the children.

It was a harsh measure, he admitted, but perhaps it would teach her to have some consideration for the wishes of others.

It must be said that Mr. Waterby was not wholly proud of his revenge when he arose on Christmas morning. He felt that he had accomplished his purpose and he told himself that his motives had been good and pure, but still he was not satisfied with himself.

He went to the dining room and there on the table in front of his plate was a long paper box containing ten books each marked "Poe." It was the edition he had coveted.

"What's this?" he asked, winking slowly, for his mind could not grasp in one moment the fact of his awful shame.

"I should think you ought to know, Alfred," said Mrs. Waterby, flushed and giggling like a school girl.

"Oh, it was you—"

"My goodness, you've had me so frightened. That day when you spoke of buying them and I told you not to, I was just sure that you suspected something. I bought them a week before that."

"Yes--yes," said Mr. Waterby, feeling the salt water in his eyes. At that moment he had the soul of a wretch being whipped at the stake.

"I was determined not to ask you for any money to pay for your own presents," Mrs. Waterby continued. "Do you know I had to save for you and the children out of my regular allowance. Why, last week I nearly starved you and you never noticed it as I was afraid you would."

"No, I didn't notice it," said Mr. Waterby brokenly, for he was confused and giddy. This self-sacrificing angel--and he had bought no Christmas present for her! It was a fearful situation, and he lied his way out of it.

"How did you like your present?" he asked.

"Why, I haven't seen it yet," she responded, looking across at him in surprise.

"You haven't? I told them to send it up yesterday."

The children were shouting and laughing over their gifts in the next room and he felt it his duty to lie for their sake.

"Well, don't tell me what it is," interrupted Mrs. Waterby. "Wait until it comes."

"I'll go after it."

He did go after it, although he had to drag a jeweller away from his home on Christmas Day and have him open his great safe. The ring which he selected was beyond his means, it is true, but when a man has to buy back his self-respect the price is never too high.

A couple of Christmas thoughts

This past Christmas, I told my girlfriend for months in advance that all I wanted was an Xbox. That's it. Beginning and end of list, Xbox. You know what she got me? A homemade frame with a picture of us from our first date together.

Which was fine. Because I got her an Xbox.

Anthony Jeselnik

Oh look, yet another Christmas TV special! How touching to have the meaning of Christmas brought to us by cola, fast food, and beer... Who'd have ever guessed that product consumption, popular entertainment, and spirituality would mix so harmoniously?

Bill Watterson, Calvin & Hobbes

Collection Point

Abba's Father's House

The Communion Collection this month goes to Abba's Father's House

This is an orphanage in Jinja in Uganda. The charity was founded in 2006 by Juliet Najja, a



former colleague, who works in the Housing Department at Ealing Council.

The orphanage provides a Christian home for vulnerable children from different parts of Uganda. The charity also provides an income for widows who make handicrafts such as baskets, bags and jewellery which are sold in the UK. Juliet usually visits the orphanage once or twice a year but she was unable to travel to Uganda during the pandemic. Sadly she was even unable to attend her mother's funeral.

Abba Father's House is a very worthy charity and all donations are badly needed and gratefully received. The charity produces one or two newsletters per year. I know that Juliet, the staff and the children at Abba Father's House will be extremely grateful for any money raised from the communion collection in December. May God bless you for your generosity to those in need.

Helen Flower

About The House

The children under care in the House live in a safe environment and receive all the care and nurturing needed to enable them to grow in every way. The House offers a safe, comfortable environment, good education, nourishment, skills training, medical care and a variety of staff who are able to meet their emotional and spiritual needs.

The lives of the children are transformed so that individual children blossom, grow and develop.

The children come from different backgrounds and most times they are challenging. Staff have to keep an open mind with a readiness to help.

The children attend local schools in and around Jinja. During school term they leave very early and return in the evening. Whilst the children are at school staff members carry out the day to day jobs at the home and they get ready for children ministry from 5 pm when the children begin to return home. The home gets very busy during school holidays as full time ministry is required to manage children, carry out skill training and other activities and to offer one to one care. There are children from the age of 5 to 19 and the need for capable leader is very pivotal.

The Widows:

Most people who try to help others tend to think or profess that “they know how they feel”, but this is not true because all of us are unique



beings and we all react to issues differently. It is wrong for anyone to assume that they understand how others feel unless they have been in a similar situation or it is revealed to them by the Holy Spirit.

Having gone through the same situation at some point in your life still does not guarantee you knowledge of how someone else might be feeling about their situation. All we do is try to imagine how other people might be feeling. The good news is that no matter how big the problem, God is bigger than all situations that happen to us. That's why the bible tells us to pray in all situations and to believe that God is faithful to give us breakthroughs.

At the moment, the widows are producing such things as necklaces made from local material, table clothes, paper bags, and other handcrafts for sale while we wait for a building to be constructed where all widow's activities will be conducted.

Future plans are for the widows to get involved in various project works to enable them to acquire saleable skills from which they can earn a living in the future.

Please give generously.

The Back pages:

December:

We're almost there, now. The shortest day of the year and then it all starts over again. Oh - and Christmas (I knew there was something else to look forward to at this time of the year).

28 th Nov – 6 th December	Hanukkah - The Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire.
3 rd Dec	Elf Day is a festive fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Society designed to get you in the Christmas spirit whilst raising money to help beat dementia. Unleash your inner elf by dressing up - as much or as little as you like
4 th	International Cheetah Day The world's fastest land animal is racing against extinction. This day is about raising awareness of the cheetah's imminent extinction.
10 th	Christmas Jumper Day - is organised by Save The Children to raise money to help children around the world.
16 th	Jane Austen's birthday , and a day dedicated to celebrating her life and achievements, and to telling as many people as possible about her amazing works.
17 th	Wear A Christmas Hat Day In aid of Brain Tumour Research. Dust off your Christmas hats and spread some cheer with festive fundraising events at home, school, work or in your community.
Also on the 17 th	Panto Day - A day to celebrate that most British of Christmas theatrical traditions - Pantomime!
21 st	National Robin Day - An annual nationwide event raising awareness of small birds and other wildlife in winter and how you can help them through this tough time of year.

21 st	<p>Winter Begins - The winter solstice represents the beginning of the astronomical winter and is the shortest day - the day with the least daylight.</p> <p>I like to think of it as the day that nights start to become shorter and the days longer in a run up to spring and summer. But I might just be looking for an upside!</p>
24 th	Christmas Eve
25 th	Christmas Day – need I say more?
26 th	<p>Boxing Day, A time to get over the excesses of Christmas Day and to settle back on the sofa and sympathise with highly paid football stars who have had to forego all those celebrations so that they could get up and run out on to (mainly) frozen pitches to play games that none of us would willingly take part in. This year the Bees are away at Brighton. Someone has offered us tickets for the game. It's a late kick off which makes it even easier for me to decline as travelling home late on Boxing Day is just not my idea of fun. Still 'Come on the Bees'.</p>
31 st	The end of a year that has brought on some real problems – and some insights (CoP 26 amongst others). Let's hope that we, collectively, can start to fix some of these things in 2022

Have a good one. See you next month.

Happy New Year to all of you. And may God bless all of you.

Christmas 1970

A little girl called Sile Javotte
Said "Look at the lovely presents I've got"
While a little girl in Biafra said
"Oh what a lovely slice of bread."

(Spike Milligan 1918-2002)