

## A few words from the Vicarage ...



### Happy New Year!



Once more the roundelay of our Christmas events and services is over and so we begin this new calendar year with much hope and enthusiasm. There is much by which to be encouraged as we work towards further growth through a reaching out into the wider community. We have hopefully begun this process already through the signing, in early December, of the local Covenant with our brothers and sisters within the Churches Together grouping here in Ansdell & Fairhaven.

This was not only hugely significant in that we were able to sit down together and put our names to this document, it also sent out an immensely important message to those on the periphery of, or even outside, our respective church families – a message which proclaims a unity of purpose for all Christians; it is a message which says that, despite any differences amongst us, we have common principles which are much stronger than any differences.

Now we must move forward with those common principles and we must build upon them throughout the coming year and beyond. We are but custodians of the church of God and it is beholden upon us to make sure that what we do with it not only pleases God, but that it leaves our care in better shape for those who will inherit it from us, thus enabling them to take up the mantle and help it grow even further in unity and love.

Events such as the Christingle Café seem to be making an impact – from its humble beginnings two years ago when very few turned up, to seeing over 70 joining in this year and running out of oranges to make the Christingles, gives something of a yardstick to the café's appeal and success.

Now as the search is on for our new Bishop of Blackburn, we offer our prayers for those charged with this task. Having seen the appointment made for the new Archbishop of Canterbury, in the form of Bishop Justin Welby, it is to be hoped that this part of our diocesan journey may be short lived and we pray that we will soon be blessed by a new appointment here in the Blackburn Diocese.

The recent events at General Synod do mean, of course, that one thing is certain, our new bishop will be a man – and so we pray for him, wherever he currently

may be, that he will soon hear the call to work among us and lead our diocese forward with courage and dynamism.

With regard to those Synod 'events', it is sad that the church is now somewhat 'in limbo' on this matter. Having agreed two years ago that there should be women bishops, it ought to have provided sufficient time for the correct legislation to be formulated in order to give effect to this decision. Irrespective of whatever side of the issue you are, this is the worst case scenario for all concerned. It all hinges, of course, upon the mechanisms sought to make provisions for those who, for sound reasons, cannot accept that decision two years ago – provisions which will allow them to remain within the Church of England.

I sincerely hope and pray that a swift and acceptable solution may be found – as the current situation is far from satisfactory.

God bless you all,

Your Vicar,  
*Fr D.*