



RBC Newsletter

January 2024

Dear Church Family,

Happy New Year to you all!

Firstly, Ian and I would like to say a huge thank you for the lovely Christmas gift you gave us. We were again overwhelmed at your generosity – thank you so very much!

A New Year always brings mixed emotions – excitement or maybe trepidation at what lies ahead; sadness or regret for things that have finished; relief at the start of something new; a fresh start perhaps; or time for resolutions to do things differently this year. Certainly the uncertainties and national concerns about strikes, energy bills, the cost of living, the wars in Gaza and the Ukraine, are not likely to disappear overnight as 2024 begins. But we have a God who knows the end from the beginning, who has our future in His hands, who has blessed us and carried us through all the difficulties and uncertainties of the past, and who promises never to leave us or forsake us in the future. If we hold tight to Him, and step forward into 2024 with our little hands firmly held in His big hand, we can trust that He will watch over us and guide us through. I love the words of the Minnie Haskins poem that George VI quoted in 1939, which are great advice for us all:-

*“I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year,
‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.’
And he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be better than light, and safer than a known way.’”*

Also helpful are these encouraging words from a note left in our crèche room recently by one of our younger visitors, who wrote, *“I am writing this for someone who is having a bad day. God is always with you...The key is always to have hope and joy... The kindness you put out there has a way of coming back to you. At the end of the tunnel there will always be light.”*

After the Christmas/ New Year break, most of the RBC regular activities will be returning to normal, although the Coffee Plus team will take their usual winter break until Easter.

Butterfly Carers and Toddlers’ group meets again this **Friday 5th at 9.30am.**

The monthly **Saturday Prayers Zoom meeting** will take place at **9am on Saturday 6th.** Zoom details will be sent out in the usual way.

Our Annual **Covenant Communion service** will be on **Sunday 7th** – with an opportunity to renew our vows of service and commitment to the Lord and to each other.

The first **Encountering God** evening of 2024 will be on **Tuesday 9th at 7.30pm**. All are welcome to this lovely informal time of praise and prayer, and as usual, we will have no house-groups that week. House-groups will re-start the following week.

On **Sunday 21st** there will be *no service at RBC* as we will be having a **United morning service at St Mary's**. Please don't treat this as a Sunday off, but come along and enjoy worship and fellowship with our brothers and sisters from the other congregations in Rye.

The United service will form the start of the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, and during the following **Monday (22nd) to Friday (26th) at 9am** we will be having daily half-hour ecumenical **prayer and discussion meetings on Zoom**. For these, we will be following the resource material provided by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. This year's theme is *"Go and Do Likewise!"* Zoom links for the Rye Churches Together prayer and discussion meetings will be publicised nearer the time. It is always interesting to share in prayer and discussion with other Christians from different traditions, so if you have never attended before, why not give one or two sessions a try this year?

Also on **Monday 22nd, at 7.30pm** is our first **Church Members' Meeting** of the year. Church members, please do book the date and make every effort to attend and play your part in discerning the mind of Christ as we discuss and pray together regarding decisions and plans for the coming year. Remember that well-known passage (1 Corinthians 12) about us all being different parts of the Body of Christ – if some are missing, then the Body doesn't function as effectively as when all are present and working together!!

Engage for men and **Connect** for ladies will take place on **Thursday 25th at 7pm**. If you would like to come, ladies please speak with Penny Kingham, and men with Ian Gill, before Sunday 21st in order to book your place.

Looking forward to seeing what the Lord will do in and through RBC in this new year.

May He continue to bless each and every one of you
as you serve Him here, and out in the world.

Your Pastor & sister in Christ,

Fiona