

The Gospel of Love

“The only way to show people God loves them is to love them yourself.”

Retired from a career in nursing and then education activism, Margaret Morrissey worships at St Mary’s, Dorchester and is a Bishop’s Council member.

Margaret grew up in a devout home. “Church was a way of life”, she says,



“As I moved around with work, it was natural to seek out the local church. It was a place to find friends as well as God.

“One church that meant a lot was St Luke’s, Battersea in the 1970s, a really go ahead place. I helped run a playgroup and baby-sitting scheme there, which was very progressive in those days.

“When my children were at secondary school in Wareham in the 1980s, I set up the All Dorset Parents’ Action Group. From that I became Chair and then Press Officer of the National Confederation of PTAs. I like to think we raised the voice of parents at a time when they weren’t

always listened to.

“I tried to encourage parents to get to know teachers and work with them, not against them. They are people to whom we give a rare trust with our children.”

As well as children, church is still a big part of Margaret’s life and, she says, of this country, “It is said we’re a secular society, but people turn to the church at times of personal crisis or bereavement.

“I’m not a fan of preaching at people, but spreading the Gospel by loving them at times like that. I also firmly believe that Church should be fun!”

Monthly Letter

The Rt Revd Dr Edward Condry
Bishop of Ramsbury

The true meaning of the Birth of Christ has been revealed. Yes, the John Lewis Christmas advert has arrived.

Last year a penguin skidded down snow slopes. This year a little girl looks through a telescope at an Old Man in the Moon and sends her loving gift wrapped present across the loneliness of the universe, floating upwards on balloons. It’s not a bad message but it isn’t quite what the Gospel ordered.

Churches have this struggle every year. The Christmas trees are up in

the High Street again, and the lights are about to be turned on as I write this. Soon every shop will be filled with piped carols. Do you go with the culture and celebrate Christmas on the High Street? Or do you deny it, buying your worthy presents from organic Fairtrade shops?

Some go even further in their desire to distance themselves from the secular world, and refuse to sing carols until Christmas Day when the event itself has passed.

I have a friend who goes so far as to refuse to eat satsumas before Advent

Sunday!

For myself, I am a both/and kind of person. I love the streets filled with people, and the stars in lights above. If everyone wants to sing about Jesus,

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there has to be good in it somewhere.

And after all, this is the churches' prime time for people to come. Crib services, Carol services, Christingles, Midnights: all will be full. So let us celebrate as the worlds of faith and commerce somehow collide.

And at the same time, remember

Support Justice At Paris

The upcoming UN climate summit in Paris is crucial for the planet's future.

Scientists say the global temperature rise must be kept below 2C to avoid catastrophic damage. Current proposals from the world's countries would take us to a rise of 2.7C. We must do better.

There is hope. For the first time, all major countries agree climate change is real. Here are three simple steps you can take to boost the chances of a deal.

the poor, the refugee, the lonely, the sick, the grieving. For, as the Bidding Prayer for Nine Lessons says, this would delight His heart.

Oh, and organic Fairtrade shops are really good, and full of excellent presents. Go there.



Pray for the leaders of the world to put common human needs first.

Wear a green ribbon during the summit period to show your support publicly - Church House has a supply.

Write to your MP to show there is public support in Britain for a proper global deal on climate change.

Justice For All

"Faith not rooted in the world is empty."

At 16, Elizabeth Perry was drawn to attending her parish church regularly for the first time. Later, a schoolfriend took her to a charismatic Anglican church which appealed as "Jesus was obviously important to people".

She spent a gap year with Mother Teresa and Sir Leonard Cheshire in India. Her love for husband Mike, Vicar of the Woodford Valley with Archer's Gate, blossomed while they volunteered for the International



Nepal Fellowship.

"Those were the years when my faith had its first awakening. The second was when Mike was at theological college. A fellow student's infant child died. We were devastated, and then a Zambian student said that happened in his country all the time. I found out about how repaying debt had destroyed health services for the poor there.

"I was so angry! I got heavily involved in the Jubilee movement to cancel developing world debt. When Mike was curate at Keynsham, a group of us got very involved in public campaigning."

After lecturing and researching on immunology, in which she holds a PhD, Elizabeth started working for Christian organisations on global justice. She now works for the

Still Waters Run Deep

Experimental worship isn't usually connected with villages of 250 people. Yet *Still Waters* at Holy Cross in Wilcot has been a success for over two years.

Karen Macauslan devised the idea and runs most services with her husband John. "Services last just half an hour, monthly on a Friday at 6 pm", she says, "We have poetry, Bible and other readings on a topical or seasonal theme, and recorded music. The music can be classical or contemporary.

"Some people come from other villages, which rarely happens on Sunday. Some don't go to any other church services."

The Revd Mark Windsor, Team Vicar, says, "People love the chance to be still. It also suits some people to come for a quick half hour of prayer after work."



Anglican Communion's development arm, the Anglican Alliance. Her main role is training local people who run development projects in Africa and the Pacific.

Elizabeth is currently walking from London to Paris, as part of a group of Christians aiming to lobby the UN climate talks taking place there.

"I was in the Solomon Islands when Cyclone Pam hit earlier this year. I also have friends in parts of Africa and the Caribbean where the effects of climate change are really starting to be felt. I want to make their voices heard.

"For me, this is the heart of Christianity. Jesus takes people on the margins and puts them centre stage."