

STREET JESUS



E News

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Welcome to the January edition of Street Jesus e-news.

So here we are in that period between Christmas and new year, what some people call, *Betwixtmas*. Many will have enjoyed time off from work to be with family and friends, will have enjoyed giving and receiving gifts and revelled in merry making, enjoying plentiful food and drink. But for other Christmas is anything but merry. We think of those who are homeless, estranged or in conflict with family or are lonely, home alone. The yo ho ho Christmas to them seems very remote. Many will not have given much thought to the meaning of Christmas and Christ. Some will have gone to church carol services and sung carols outdoors who would not normally attend church at any other time, maybe they carry an underlying faith, a cultural Christianity which believes in the ethical but not the supernatural elements of our faith, they may say things like "We are a Christian country" although in truth we are a secular country informed by a Christmas past, but are things beginning to change?



We are seeing a renewed interest by young people across Europe, even in a more modest way in the UK. Initiatives like Jumping for Jesus



where people are dancing and singing in the streets much like we read about in scripture with worship taking place in the public square. Other initiatives include Cycling for Jesus, Running for Jesus.

Although church attendance is growing in some places much of this activity is happening outside of church. Interestingly the sale of bibles has increased significantly particularly in America following the death of the evangelist Charlie Kirk.

We often read of the mental health crisis amongst the young in our country, with an increase in anxiety, depression, and benefit support has risen sharply.

Could it be that our secular humanist, choice based, materialistic, fragmented, technological driven society has become too overwhelming, complex and fails to satisfy the soul. It seems that people are falling in love with Jesus once again if not the Church.

There has been a number of articles in the media following a period of "We don't do God" which are now asking the question Why is this happening? An increasing number of footballers are expressing their faith openly on the pitch. Pointing to the heavens or getting down on their knees when they score a goal. Speaking openly in post match interviews in praise of God, the same in football chat shows as well as a documentary on faith in football. Players have also carried slogans



stating they belong to Jesus even though it is against the regulations to carry text and symbols of a political or religious nature.

What's interesting is this new expression of faith seems to manifest itself in different ways. The leader of the nationalist English defence league Tommy Robinson held a carol service over the Christmas period. Tommy is known for his anti immigration stance, has a long history of criticising Islamic extremism and believe that we are losing our distinct English culture based on our Judeo-Christian heritage. He believes that we will have to literally fight to retain our values because extremists want to supplant them.



Remarkably during that service Tommy shared that he had converted to Christianity whilst in prison following discussions with a priest, and declared on national television that he was a sinner who needed a saviour. Self honesty is first base in the Christian life on the road to salvation. If Tommy is to grow into his faith how does that fit with his anti immigrant rhetoric which stands in stark contrast to the story of the good Samaritan where the foreigner is welcomed and



cared for. Is Tommy Robinson a true or cultural Christian, are the fears he has, justified or just paranoia? Is God hardening his heart to stand against what many see as a false prophet and a threat to Gods kingdom?

The co-opting of the cross in the name of Christian nationalism has also been expressed by political parties such as UKIP and is more in line with the nationalistic Christianity commonly seen in the USA but seems an uncomfortable fit with Jesus's teachings to love the 'other' and has caused consternation in church circles. Tommy Robinson when interviewed was asked about criticism of him by the church, simply said "That's why churches are empty".

Conversely the well respected adventurer and former chief scout Bear Grylls also has a broadside for the Church. He has written a book named "The best story ever told" He describes his quest to increase understanding of the Christian faith as an imperative, his most important work yet. He was controversially involved in the baptism of the comedian Russell Brand who faces accusations and criminal charges for sexual impropriety. Russell Brand has himself been honest about his sex addiction. Bear Grylls points out that he loves Russell because as a broken person how can he condemn another broken person. Leave the judging to God he says. He also extends that love to all immigrants because Jesus himself was a refugee and he showed love and compassion to all. Controversially Bear Grylls condemns the Church for ruining the message of Jesus.

Being a regular church goer and lover of fellowship, i found this to be a very challenging statement. The church is essentially Gods people but we so often think of it in terms of buildings and organisation. Without the church would the Christian message have spread across the world? Would there be the same understanding of our faith without its teaching and creedal statements.? Would our society be so orientated toward charity without its influence? The church is imperfect yet our faith has been shaped by it and has helped us draw closer to God . I have visited many churches and have rarely heard any teaching that is counter to what is generally considered biblical truth. Our churches may not be full but they are spiritual spaces and places of thankful worship but how would we react if Tommy Robinson or Russell Brand walked into our church next Sunday?



The Filling Station is an informal way of expressing the Christian Faith, using celebration meetings to encourage the local church, predominantly in rural areas across the UK.

Next meeting still to be announced. Please keep an eye on the website below for details.

What to expect when we meet:

A warm welcome with light refreshments... Contemporary worship led by local worship leaders... Stories of God at work today... Guest Speakers to refresh our faith... Prayer together for worldwide and personal needs...

The Riverside Centre, Stratford St Andrew
Refreshments at 7pm for a 7:30 start.

Everyone is Welcome

<https://thefillingstation.org.uk/>

All Saints Wickham Market  SS Peter & Paul Tottistree 

OPEN DOOR

Coffee, tea,
biscuits and
friends

Friday morning
Drop in from
10:00am

LOVE

At All Saints Church
Every Friday Morning

Network SUFFOLK

Connecting Christian Communities in Suffolk

GOOD NEWS

www.goodnews-paper.org.uk

Evangelistic Newspaper



**All Saints Church
Wickham Market**

Prayer & Praise Evenings
3rd Sunday of the month
at 6:30pm

Informal service for all ages



Every third Sunday of the month at 11am
All Saints Church, refreshments from 10.30am



Oasis

Informal Service @ All Saints Church
3pm every Second Sunday. All invited!

A time of worship, fellowship,
and light refreshments.

Meet old friends and make new ones



Creator God, we glimpse your beauty
in setting sun, mountain top, eagle's wing.
We sense your power in thunder crash,
lightning flash and ocean's roar.
Creator God we praise you

Precious Jesus, we see your love
stretched out upon a cruel cross.
We stand in awe at your sacrifice,
pure love poured out for humankind.
Precious Jesus we praise you

Holy Spirit, we see your power
in lives transformed, hearts on fire.
We listen for your still, small voice,
comforting, guiding, calling.
Holy Spirit we praise you

The background of the lower section is dark blue with decorative elements. At the top corners, there are clusters of yellow stars hanging from thin lines. On the left and right sides, there are faint, light blue line-art illustrations of doves with their wings spread, symbolizing the Holy Spirit. The main text is centered in a large, bold, yellow font.

FAITH, HOPE & JOY FOR THE NEW YEAR!



May the hope of a fresh New Year
fill your life with love and grace.

*Let God's light shine upon you
in this blessed New Year!*



Mary Joseph and the baby Jesus giving a Christmas welcome at All Saints Wickham Market





Handbells at All Saints Christmas carol service

Book of the month



Our next outreach is on
Wickham Market Hill
on Saturday January 24th 9am–1pm

Facebook



Check out our
facebook page
[www.facebook.com/groups/
1246450225452294](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1246450225452294)