

# Letter from the Minister

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Dear Friends,

I write this letter in early to mid November and the Christmas decorations are rapidly appearing around the community in shops and other places. As my children have grown older and through teenage years, the issue of Christmas gifts becomes for them a matter of 'quality over quantity'. We also begin to see the wonderfully crafted adverts which aim to ignite in us warm feelings about what Christmas should be about. Going out with the Praizin' Hands Puppets and asking the audience what they are looking forward to about Christmas always gets some interesting responses!

But there is another side to all this with average household consumer debt in Britain now close to 30% of income. For some it is much more, a frightening reality which traps people in despair and a life driven by the need for money or to give others the life that we want for them. For some, life can seem to spiral out of control and it is good to see how local churches are there for them in times of brokenness and vulnerability. Just one example of this is the new Winter Night Shelter in our own community.

As a church, we have celebrated ten years of our re-opening and we have been thankful for the way that God has called us and sustained us in a real ministry in and to the community where we are. Our message is one of Hope, that God so loves us that he has given us His Son. The truth is that we and the people we meet day by day cannot buy this hope, earn it or qualify for it by our intelligence. It is received by faith - praise God!

At times, as each year ends and a new one begins, we can wonder what impact we are making by our words and our actions. Whilst many do not seem that interested in the Christian faith we must continue to be faithful in our witness both 'in and out' of season. However 2017 has gone for you and whatever lies ahead in 2018 I hope that you will know God more and find him using you in all sorts of situations where you are and where he calls you.

Yours in Christ

Eddie