

# CLERGY LETTER

Dear Friends

As I'm sure many of you know, Graham and I really enjoy taking photographs – any excuse and we will have our camera's out and be snapping away. This is not, however, a recent hobby, it is one that we have enjoyed since we were first married. It's not surprising therefore to



learn that we have two very large boxes full of old photo's charting the last 40 years or so.

To be honest, however, although we knew that these boxes held reminders of some very happy events, they have remained virtually undisturbed over the last few years. That was until Graham decided to go through them and start sorting and digitising all of the photo's. It has turned out to be a real Aladdin's Cave of treasured memories. He has found photo's of new born babies – all 4 of them, Christmases, first days at school, holidays, gatherings of the wider family – including those who are no longer with us. Indeed, you name it and there's a photo of it and each and every one of them has brought a smile to our faces as we have been transported back to those very special family moments of years ago.

But they haven't just brought a smile to our faces, they have also brought many smiles to the faces of Lucy, Edward, Alex and Beth as they remembered those times from their own childhoods, and also, Neil, Alex & Dani, their "significant

others" – who have joined our family more recently, but are no less an integral part of it.

So, all in all, these old photo's have brought a great deal of delight to quite a few people. But they have also done something else, they have helped us to appreciate our family – that's all of them.

They have reminded us of the times that we have helped each other enjoy ourselves, the times when we have supported each other through the more challenging times, the times when we/ they have fallen out – and then made up again, they have reminded us of the importance of the simple day to day activities that we have undertaken as we have journeyed together along life's highway and of course, more recently, the real delight that we have all shared as we have welcomed new additions to the fold.

Well this all got me thinking, important as they are, our own Biological family is not the only one that we are called to be members of. We are also called to be members of Christ's family here on earth – His Church. We are called to be just as close, just as supportive, just as encouraging, forgiving, welcoming and enabling as an earthly family should be. We are even called to have fun and enjoy life as much as our very special earthly family does.

It was with great satisfaction therefore, that only yesterday, I received a message

from a member of one of our congregations to tell me that they genuinely feel this about their own church family. They highlighted the welcome they received when they first arrived, the ongoing friendship and openness that exists between all members and the way that everyone is ready and willing to support those in need. They even said that being a part of the Church family is “about giving people a sense of belonging and knowing that they will be supported and loved in practical and suitable ways”.

My Biological family will always be very special to me – and I will do anything for them. However, I also truly appreciate our Church family and, just like the Haskett fold, love to see it grow. Why don't you come and check us out – you would be welcome at any time.

With Blessings for the coming month

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'H' followed by 'one'.