

Thoughts from the Manse 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020

As we hurtle through November towards Advent today sees another annual celebration Children in Need. It will be interesting to see how the pandemic affects the result this year as there have been fewer opportunities to get together and raise funds. This charity appeal has raised millions over the years and who can forget the exuberance of Terry Wogan, as he championed this evening and encouraged colleagues to give of themselves.



There have been many highlights throughout the years and this year a lot of them will probably be revisited. Last year we had the special CD recorded by a selection of actors, some of whom stepped out of their comfort zone to sing. I loved Jodie Whittaker's recording of the Coldplay track 'Yellow', which obviously meant so much to her as she stayed true to her northern roots, but watching the recording it was the childlike excitement on her face when the guys from Coldplay joined her and played the backing track that has stayed with me. Here was the hero of Dr Who, a hero of many who watch it, being blown away by the presence of two of her heroes, showing we are all big children at heart. Other unexpectedly stand out tracks came from Olivia Coleman, David Tennant and Adrian Lester who recorded every single sound on the track using beat bop. For me, this was a true example of the core principles of Children in Need.

I have to admit that the evening has lost something for me over the years but the reason why it happens is still as important, to offer help to those children who are facing challenges which would see many adults would buckle. Children who care for parents, children who lose siblings or parents, or whose sibling needs so much care it sometimes seems there is little left for them. Children and adults who are experiencing mental illness or loneliness, bullying or abuse. The stories often leave us in tears and with admiration for the people who support them, and more importantly the desire to do something about it.



As we approach Christmas, there will be more children than ever whose families simply cannot afford to buy them a present. As always, the Salvation Army will try and get presents to these children and here in Luton the appeal has already gone out, recognising that many who would normally give are either struggling themselves or are shielding and cannot get out to buy/deliver a toy. Locally, and I am sure nationally, the Salvation Army are using Amazon to enable people to buy the gifts they need and have them delivered straight to the Salvation Army. The charity [KidsOut](#) works with a variety of sponsors to ensure that children in refuges receive a gift by sending a box of books and toys with wrapping paper to the parents of these children so that the Christmas gift comes from the parent and not some anonymous donor, which is really important for the parents who are already feeling guilty over what has happened to them and their children.



Within our pastorate Wigmore church has supported Women's Aid both at Harvest time and Christmas time and this year is no different, already they have received gifts of toys to send to Women's Aid and will collect more in the coming weeks. We can all do something and with charities struggling this year and more families needing help it more important than ever.



So, be creative and arrange something that will raise some money to support a charity this Christmas.