

## Newcastle City Temple Connected

Reimagining Church Together

Dear Friends

After what seems to have been months of 'more of the same' in the news - there seems to have been a little bit more variety these past couple of weeks.

Football has dominated the headlines this week after proposals for a European Super League were announced, attacked and then swiftly abandoned within just 72 hours.

Mass celebrations erupted in the United States after former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted for the murder of George Floyd. The guilty verdict prompted a renewed push among Democrats for wide-ranging police reform.

There has been further good news in that experts have suggested that Britain is no longer in a Covid pandemic as data shows the vaccination rollout has cut symptomatic infections by 90 per cent.

And then of course last week, M&S made headlines after it launched legal action against Aldi, over the their copycat version of its Colin the Caterpillar cake.

Dubbed 'Cuthbert' by the low-cost supermarket, the battle of the caterpillars has dominated press and social media, as support has poured in from the public and other supermarkets, poking fun at the case and backing Aldi's 'Free Cuthbert' campaign.

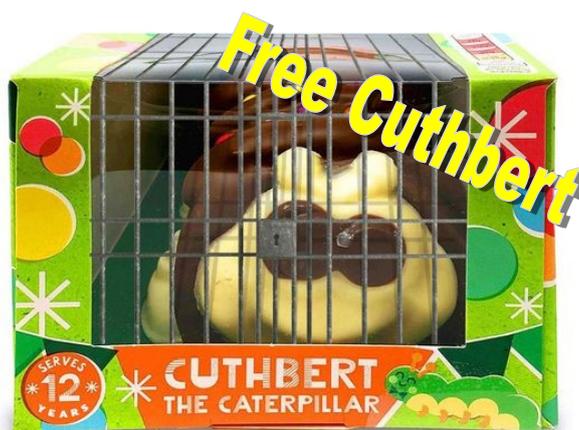
Aldi isn't the only store to sell a caterpillar cake; for you can buy Curly the Caterpillar from Tesco. Wiggles the Caterpillar from Sainsbury's; Cecil the Caterpillar from Waitrose, Charlie the Caterpillar from the Co-op, Clyde the Caterpillar from ASDA and Morris the Caterpillar from Morrison's.

Well I'm sure that you will be pleased to know that **WHICH?** commissioned their own Caterpillar Cake review. Over two days, nine taste testers – a mix of adults and children – rated the cakes on taste and appearance. Each tester tasted and examined each cake blind, having been served a slice from the middle of each cake and being asked to cleanse their palate between samples. The order of the cakes was rotated to remove any bias in the results.

Which came out on top...well unfortunately we cant be absolutely sure because neither Cuthbert nor Morris were able to make an appearance, due to being seasonal products for Aldi & Morrison's, and thus were not available to the panel. Of the remaining 6, priced at just £6.35 for 12 portions (compared with M&S £7 for just 10), the Co-op's Charlie the Caterpillar was announced as the panels favourite on taste and priced £7 for 12 portions Waitrose's Cecil came 1st based on appearance.\*

However, it would appear that similar surveys by other organisations have produced very different results—so I guess what it really boils down to is personal preference. As for me - well I'd happily have a slice of any of them with a nice cuppa.

\*Read more: <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2021/04/caterpillar-cakes-compared-which-supermarket-came-out-on-top/> - Which?



Before you think I've gone mad, there is a serious point to my these thoughts which I share with you— all of which will be revealed in this weeks ministry notes. So have a great week, and if you're inviting me round for a cuppa in your garden ... just don't forget the Caterpillar! 😊

Every Blessing  
Major Liz Hancock

# NCT SA Connected

Reimagining Church - Let's Worship Together



**SUNDAY 25th April 2021**

**Theme:** Free as a Caterpillar!

**Bible Text:** Philippians 2:1-11  
Ephesians 5:1-20

**Suggested Songs:** At the name of Jesus <https://youtu.be/k9Q8r01X8I4>  
I am a new creation <https://youtu.be/x8I0FctxJZk>  
To be like Jesus <https://youtu.be/fpyUEWoWOJg>  
I've been changed <https://youtu.be/1NHMh9qgL7Q>

**Suggested Songster Piece:** Christ in me <https://youtu.be/CloOereb6SQ>

## Reflection

There has been a huge market for counterfeit goods over recent years. To counterfeit means to imitate (or to copy) something authentic, with the intent to steal, destroy or replace the original. Counterfeit products are fakes of unauthorised replicas of the real thing.

Counterfeit consumer goods are often of inferior quality and exist in virtually every industry sector, including

Food & beverages, clothing & footwear, accessories such as sunglasses, watches & jewellery, Pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, electronics, auto parts, toys and currency.

One of the TV programmes I sometime like to watch is Fake or Fortune. Using forensic analysis and archival research, experts examine the provenance and attribution of notable artworks, in order to determine their true value, often with disappointing results - Artwork being another example of something which others may copy or imitate.

There can be no denying that a large part of Aldi's success is due to the ruthless way that they have produced products which bear a strong resemblance to the look of top brands - nor that some of these products have smashed the competition out of the water on price and quality; I recall one year Aldi's Christmas puddings beating Harrods' and Heston Blumenthal's offerings in blind-taste tests by the Good Housekeeping Institute—and so is it any wonder then that M&S have declared war upon poor 'Cuthbert the Caterpillar'!

Today's Bible Readings make it clear however that there is One whom we are encouraged to imitate. In Ephesians 5:1 Paul said; "**Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children**" (NIV) although according to scholars the NRSV gives a much more literal interpretation of the original Greek "**be imitators of God, as beloved children**". In other words we are called to **be like Jesus**. But what does this mean?

What it doesn't mean is that we should dress like Jesus or pretend to be Jesus - (I'm sure some of you will recall self proclaimed prophet, former professional footballer and sports presenter, David Icke declaring himself to be the Son of God on *Wogan* in April 1991!) - rather we are to imitate Him, by following the example He gave us and doing likewise; I believe this is what Paul was encouraging when he wrote;

*Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. (Philippians 2:1-2)*

If Christ has encouraged us... we must encourage others. If Christ has comforted us... we must comfort others. If Christ has shown us any tenderness or any compassion... then we must be tender and compassionate to others. At all times and in all ways we must love others as Christ has love us, and in so doing we will please Him.

Is this our hearts desire to please God? To know the love of Jesus - and to share that love with others?



Continued...

It's so easy to sing words such as;

*'To be like Jesus! This hope possesses me;  
In every thought and deed, This is my aim, my creed;  
To be like Jesus! This hope possesses me;  
His Spirit helping me, Like Him I'll be.'*

This simple chorus, written by the late General John Gowans for the musical, Spirit , continues to inspire followers of Jesus to try to emulate Him; but do the words we sing equate not only with our hearts desire - but with our actions too?

Pauls says;

*<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

What this means is that when we pass onto others the things which Christ has passed on to us—we need to be sure that we are doing so for the right reason. Doing so not to make ourselves look good, doing so not to attract the attention and praise of others for our efforts, but doing so out of a genuine concern for others.

Again Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 had this to say;

*<sup>14</sup> For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

As I type these words - I bring to mind the beautiful songster piece 'Compelled by love';

*Compelled by love,  
Called to serve wherever there are souls in need.  
Compelled by love,  
Called to find the lonely and the lost.  
Touched by God's grace,  
I'll love where hearts are hurting.  
How can I offer less than all  
When I am born again by his forgiving?  
I'm compelled by love.*

*Compelled by love,  
Called to toil wherever there are mouths to feed.  
Compelled by love,  
Called to work where life is at its worst.  
Moved by God's grace,  
I'll prove that I am willing.  
How can I offer less than all  
When his love fills my heart, my spirit thrilling?  
I'm compelled by love.*

*Compelled by love,  
Called to follow Christ no matter where he leads.  
Compelled by love,  
Called to give and not to count the cost.  
Filled with God's grace,  
I'll lead a life worth living.  
How can I offer less than all  
When I am made anew by his infilling?  
His love calls me, his love claims me,  
I'm compelled by love.*

Words: Stephen Pearson

<https://youtu.be/gu05kBHN7Y>

**'His love calls me, His love claims me, I'm compelled by love'...** When God sent Jesus to come and dwell among us, it was out of His great love for us. When Jesus came to earth - He came and put our interests first. Surely we are not so far from Easter to have forgotten that when Jesus came He treated us (humankind) far better than we (humankind) treated Him!

## NCT SA Connected

Reimagining Church - Let's Worship Together

Continued...



We mocked Him, We spat on Him, We crucified Him

And what did Jesus do? In love and mercy He forgave us!

Even from the cross, the pinnacle of suffering and shame He cried *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* (Luke 23:34)

And Paul says;

*<sup>5</sup>In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!*

When we look at what Jesus did for us. Coming down from Heaven, laying aside the independent use of His divine attributes. Taking on a sinless human body - the form of a servant and the likeness of man. Humbling Himself to the point of death— yes even death on a cross - a most demeaning form of torture, and then ask ourselves why? - How can we not stand in awe of Him—knowing that He did it for you, He did it for me, out of love.

Jesus loves us. To prove it—He died on the cross for your sins and mine.

Because Jesus died on the Cross for our sins—the door is now wide open for us to receive from God everything that Paul spoke of in verses 1-2; Encouragement, Comport, Fellowship, Tenderness and Compassion. But also for us to do those things Paul spoke of in verses 3&4.

*<sup>1-4</sup>If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you *care*—then do me a favour: *Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.* (The Message)*

When Jesus did what God the Father requested of Him in terms of what He was to do for us, Paul tells us that...

God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name, (v9)

Paul also tells us what our response should be;

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
<sup>11</sup>and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. (v10&11)

By doing this— *by imitating the one who in humbled Himself for us*— we shall be able to do for others what Jesus wants us to do.



Continued...

## Ephesians 5

*<sup>1</sup> Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup> and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ... <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words...Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord...<sup>15</sup> Be very careful... how you live – not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of every opportunity ...understand what the Lord's will is...<sup>18</sup>be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now we don't know what the outcome will be for poor Cuthbert; but there's one final thought that I'd like to leave you with at the start this new week. I'm sure some of you will know that the caterpillar along with the chrysalis and the butterfly are ancient Christian symbols of rebirth. Now whilst there is a sense in which all the threatened legal action by M&S towards Aldi has re-birthed a keen interest in Aldi's Cuthbert the Caterpillar Cake - an interest which will most surely give a fresh boost to sales once Cuthbert makes a reappearance on the grocery shelves—for you and for me the symbolism of the Caterpillar is so much richer for it offers a beautiful picture of what happens when Christ comes into a human heart; and I want to leave you with this wonderful quote by Marjorie Thompson author of Soul feast.

*"The caterpillar must yield up the life it knows and submit to the mystery of interior transformation. It emerges from the process transfigured, with wings that give it freedom to fly... A rule of life gives us a way to enter into the life-long process of personal transformation. Its disciplines help us to shed the familiar but constricting "old self" and allow our "new self" in Christ to be formed—the true self that is naturally attracted to the light of God."*

If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here! (1 Corinthians 5:17)

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, how we praise and thank You  
We pray that we may grow more in Your likeness  
day by day  
Having the same compassion and kindness  
Putting the needs of others before our own.  
Saturate our hearts with Your love  
So that we may love You and those You love all the more.  
We thank You for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit  
Help us to reflect Your grace and beauty in thought, word and deed;  
And as others begin to recognise the faith we have in You,  
may they in seeking, come to know You for themselves, AMEN



Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,  
All His wonderful passion and purity,  
O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,  
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

Albert Orsborn