

Christ Church Chichester and Pagham URC News (52)

by and for the Christ Church and Pagham families

28th February 2021

Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

It is now one year since I came to meet with the Vacancy Group at Christ Church to see if a move to Chichester might be possible! A lot has happened since then, including the Pastorate being rescoped to include two churches instead of one. So, Pagham URC became Christ Church's 'little sister' (if I might be permitted to call the good folks down by the seaside by that term!). St. Ninian's, as it is locally known, maybe familiar to many folks and, whilst being much smaller in size and membership, is it no less active (under normal circumstances).

As Pagham have been joining with Christ Church - both with our recorded services and in receiving this Newsletter - I was, therefore, delighted when asked if I would be able to include some news they wished to share. 'Commitment for Life' is something both fellowships support and this piece - written by church secretary Penny Thomas - highlights a cause that is worthy of all our support

The Plight of Palestinians

In 2019 the members of Pagham URC made the decision to support the "Commitment for Life" initiative of the URC and, in particular, to support the occupied Palestinian territories.

Following this, in January 2020 Bernie Taylor and I attended a presentation at Havant URC given by some of the URC group who had visited Palestine in the autumn of 2019. We learnt about how much land is being taken from the Palestinians and how their human rights are being eroded by the state of Israel. We came home wanting to share this with our next Church meeting but, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, this was not possible.

Later, in 2020, we were asked to join a URC Sabeel-Kairos group and we have since attended two zoom meetings of this group. Sabeel-Kairos is a Christian charity committed to supporting peace and justice in the Holy Land. It has groups working in various UK denominations, including the Methodist Church and the URC.

At our February meeting discussion took place around getting a resolution at the next URC General Assembly about the plight of the Palestinians. This is being led by the group members from Thames North Synod.

We also talked about disinvesting in companies that support the occupation. We were told that the Methodist Church currently have this under consideration and it is hoped that the URC will follow soon. Fairly locally, East Sussex Council pension fund have already disinvested from such companies and it is hoped that other pension funds will follow suit.

We, as a group, were asked to increase awareness of the Palestinian situation across our congregations; hence this article. If you would like to know more, please Google Sabeel-Kairos and "Cry for Hope" - both of which will tell you much more than I can!

For those who would like to delve further into the plight of the Palestinians, a book called "The Other Side of the Wall" by Munther Isaac gives a day-to-day insight to difficulties faced by ordinary Palestinians like you and me. The book can be found on the web: <https://uk.bookshop.org/>

Thank you, Penny, for this contribution – I look forward to receiving more!!

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

Word for today Mark 8: 31-38

'Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed and, after three days, rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But, turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.' (Mark 8: 31-33)

Meditation of Simon Peter

Did those words of his hurt, you ask? Well yes, of course they did. It's not every day someone calls you Satan. And to be labelled such by your closest friend - one you love and admire beyond all others - understandably it leaves you shaken.

But, let's be clear, I deserved it, a hundred per cent, for I should have known better.

It wasn't like he'd said anything new in warning us he must die. He'd been utterly open about it from the start.



He was clear that he came, not to lord it over us as the Romans did, but to serve through sacrifice - winning glory through humility, triumph through defeat, life through death.

Yet, I still couldn't get my head round that; still saw success through human eyes rather than divine. 'You *can't* die!' I told him. 'You mustn't!'

Understandable, perhaps, but wrong – hideously, hopelessly wrong. For if he didn't surrender his life, choosing instead to serve self rather than others, there would be no gospel to proclaim, no Messiah to set us free.

I may have meant well, but that wasn't enough – the road to hell (as they say) being paved with good intentions. I wanted joy without sorrow, pleasure without pain, answers that asked nothing of him and still less of me and helped me to realise that.

For his kingdom to come, there must necessarily be cost: a price *he* would pay, for us *all*.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

we struggle to come to terms with your way, for it cuts across the norms and expectations of this world. We resist the idea of surrendering all, of losing our life in order to find it.

Like Peter, confronted by the stark reality of the cross, we find ourselves asking:
isn't there a less costly, less demanding path?

Teach us the values of your kingdom, where the last are first and the least greatest.

Teach us the meaning of love – above all, of your love that fills the universe,
changing lives and transforming history.

Help us, then, for all our doubts and lack of understanding,
to celebrate what you have done and, obediently, to walk your way.

Amen

adapted from 'A most amazing Man' by Nick Fawcett

Gathered for Prayer....

Gathered for Prayer meets on Zoom **every Wednesday at 9 am and 7 pm** Here's the link....

To Join the Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVVKwWVdvd6QT09>

Meeting ID: 574 272 2693

Passcode: xsX5UM

Lent Study Group on Zoom

The third in the series '*Holy Habits – Following Jesus*' will be tomorrow evening (**Monday 1st March**) when I will be opening the meeting **from 7:15 pm so that we can make a prompt start at 7:30 pm**.

This week the topic is 'Jesus sharing bread' – and during the open worship song we will 'break bread together' – so I invite you to have some bread - (perhaps a Hot Cross Bun!) - with you for this part of our meeting.

To Join the Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82079214648?pwd=NXpMTVNkRnlrQitlenVVK1FINVR1QT09>

Meeting ID: 820 7921 4648

Passcode: 167580

Lent Lectures on Radio 4

at 8:45 pm on radio 4 on Wednesdays, repeated at 5:45 am(!) on Sundays or online.

Each talk has someone explaining how the pandemic has affected his/her life and faith. The first, by a hospital doctor treating dying COVID patients whose wife had a baby, concerned his decision about whether to go home to bond with his daughter or isolate himself from her for months. It had me in tears. It's called '*A letter to Lydia*'.

David Booth

Award for The Chichester Child Contact Centre

The Chichester Child Contact Centre, which meets fortnightly in Christ Church, has received a Community Award from the City Council. The certificate was presented to the Co-ordinator, Kathleen Davies, by the Mayor, Cllr. Richard Plowman, at a ceremony at the Church; the citation was read by Cllr. Sarah Sharpe, who had visited the Centre earlier in the year and commended the award to the Mayor. Anne Wales made the nomination two years ago but there was a delay as Anne's supporting notes were mislaid. An appreciation of this recognition by the City has been received from Karen Cave who, 25 years ago this year, set up the Centre along with Mary Edwards and Sue Gould.