

## Weekly Newsletter (75)

by and for the Christ Church and Paghmagh URC (St. Ninians) families

15<sup>th</sup> August 2021

### Musings from the Manse....

Dear Friends,

This week it's felt like the church has truly woken up after a long sleep!! Of course it hasn't, but we have been kind of dormant, unable to do all the things we would normally do. So, getting into the routine of going down to church for the morning 'Cuppa and Company' sessions has been great and it's enabled me to feel like I've truly 'arrived'!!

But other things have also started – in-person meetings!! Remember when we used to gather together and chat and discuss the business we needed to discuss, or sit around for a Bible Study, or meet to think about how we might help our church to grow!

To this end, the members of the Outreach Working Group met with Mike Starkey, (Beryl's son, and a lovely chap!) to talk about a course he has written which helps churches to grow. We were all impressed and felt that we should go ahead and run the course (called 'Stepping Stones') in two concentrated sessions. I'm not going to say any more at this stage but watch out for details coming soon!!

The 'Face to Faith' group also met to look at a new study they've embarked on – 'Hearts on Fire'! No, it's not about how to tackle indigestion, it's about the beginning of the early church and the spreading of the Good News – and, what's more, we got to enjoy each other's company as we sat and ate our home made lunches!

I suppose all this brings me to the fact that, as the church is able to safely open up more and people are feeling more and more confident of meeting together, we are going to be able to get back to the active parts of discipleship. So, instead of being hidden away in our homes, we can cautiously step out in faith and proclaim the Good News! 'Ah, but', I hear you say, 'I'm not very good at that sort of thing – there are others much better at doing that. I'll just work away in the background, doing what I'm comfortable with'.

Well, whilst that is great, and whilst we will always need people on the support side of things – each of us in our own way is able to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. How about inviting neighbours, friends, family, to come along on a Sunday morning, or a week-day morning, or to an event that is being run, or house group – or 'Praise in the Park'!! How about demonstrating the love of Jesus by the way you live and interact with people.

I'm sure you are already 'doing' discipleship in ways you feel comfortable with – but Jesus didn't call us to be comfortable; he called us to step out in faith. He didn't invite us to 'come' to church, but to 'go' in His name – and, whatever we are called to do, we are never asked to do it in our own strength - but reliant on God.

Of course, there will, hopefully, be new faces appearing in church in the days and weeks ahead. There have already been a few during the 'Cuppa and Company' mornings and it's wonderful that they've felt able to cross the threshold and venture inside. One chap who stopped for a coffee put me in mind of a poem that I have, written by the Poet, Rev'd Lucy Berry – and it serves as a reminder that we are all part of God's church, whether we know it or not! The poem is called, '**But Lord**' .....

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

But Lord - if They come to our church, we might hear about Life outside.

**You would**, said the Lord.

But Lord - there is no Life apart from you.

**That's right**, said the Lord.

But Lord - then there is no Life outside of church.

**Not true**, laughed the Lord.

But Lord - to learn their story is to feel their loneliness.

**My loneliness**, said the Lord

But Lord - to listen to Them is to know their terror.

**My terror**, said the Lord.

Or to hear Them is to know their fear.



**My fear**, said the Lord.

And to know Them might be to love Them or to hate Them  
**To love me, or to hate me** said the Lord.

Or to embrace Them truly, truly, we would then belong to Them.  
**Truly, truly, you would belong to me**, said the Lord.

But Lord - if we do this we will be changed.  
**We can hope**, laughed the Lord. **We can pray**.

But Lord - if we do this thing, we would no longer be our church.  
**No! My church**, said the Lord.  
**You would be My church**.

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## **Word for today** John 6: 51-58

*'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'* The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, *'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'* (John 6: 51,52)

## **Meditation of one of the crowd listening to Jesus**

This has gone from bad to worse! It's not just weird, but gross – grotesque - for he's talking of giving us his flesh, of his body being living bread that all must eat.

What does he think we are? Cannibals!

He's got us not just puzzled but angry, arguing bitterly over his words.

And can you blame us?

Oh, I've tried to make sense of them - to see them in a different light; but what else can he mean?

It seems more than plain.

Even his supporters are struggling with the idea - some siding openly with his enemies - and it's no surprise, for what sane person wouldn't draw the line at such strange teaching?

It's caused confusion and offence as nothing before.

He's got to be careful, Jesus, if he doesn't want to meet a sticky end, for the mood's turning ugly; many who once followed him starting to feel enough's enough.

And, though the Pharisees have backed off so far, afraid of sparking riots, if the crowds abandon him he'll be sunk.

Mark my words, there'll be no mercy. Blood will be spilt, his body broken, his flesh pierced and torn.

Doesn't he know that? He must do for, whatever else, he's no fool; yet he carries on regardless.

Well, let him talk of giving life to the world if he wants to; it will end with him giving up his life ... and what will he achieve by that?

## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ,

thank you for willingly being broken to make us whole,  
for enduring death to bring us life.

Thank you for seeing our emptiness  
and offering food for the soul,  
for understanding our hunger deep within  
and providing eternal nourishment,  
sufficient for all our needs.

Teach us to recognise all you gave,  
all you so readily sacrificed,  
and to marvel afresh at the extent of your love.

In faith, may we eat of your living bread,  
and be truly satisfied.

Amen.

*Word for today, Meditation and Prayer taken from 'A most amazing Man' by Nick Fawcett*

## Appeal for Volunteers!!

- ❖ The Sound and Visuals Team are a bit thin on the ground and could do with more 'bodies' to help out during worship. Also, if we are to keep recording the services, we need more volunteers to learn the skills to do this!  
Please speak to Richard Spong if interested.  
Thank you.



### At the Manse...

The next 'at home' will be on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2-5 pm.  
All are welcome!!  
Helen and Colin <><



## Praise in the Park!

### Don't forget... Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> September!

Once more we will be praying for good weather and for you good folks to come and support this.

There will be no service at Christ Church (unless we are rained off!!) and whilst we know that there are some of our number who will be away, we do need those who are not to turn up – bring a friend or two or three!!

Tina, Christina and myself are planning it to be an interactive, full of fun service of witness to the whole community – so let's make it a day to remember for all the right reasons!!

Bring a picnic lunch and stay and chat after the service is over – restriction free – and we can sing to our hearts content, mask free, as we'll be outside!!

Thank you – Helen <><



## Harvest Weekend at Christ Church

Looking ahead to **October** and our **Harvest Celebrations**, there are plans afoot for both **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>** and **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>** – so keep watching out for details.

However, to give you the heads-up, the theme of this weekend will be '**A Harvest of Talents**' and my hope is that many of the talents and gifts of the Christ Church and Paghams Church Families will be showcased in a display set out around the church and lounge – so start thinking about what you might bring or do.

Everyone has something they are good at, so let's make it a time of celebration, not just for the produce and people traditionally given thanks for at this time of year, but of all our God given gifts. Thank you.

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

### Reminder

There will be a Service of Thanksgiving for Anne Wales on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> September at 2 pm at St Paul's Church

### It's never too early to start preparing for Christmas!

Please start knitting Angels for Christmas. Christina Carter has patterns if anyone wants one. Her phone number is 01243 776155.

### PLEASE NOTE:

From September, the **Newsletter will only be issued once a month**, rather than every week. Whilst it has been lovely writing this during the past months, with things beginning to start up again, my time is becoming limited and I can't always promise to give it the attention it needs.