

Weekly Newsletter (73)

by and for the Christ Church and Paghams URC (St. Ninian's) families

1st August 2021

Musings from the Manse....

Dear Friends,

How has your week been? Happy, sad, exhausting, boring?

The first week of the school holidays, when I was a child, was always a wonderful exciting adventure, watching my dad loading up our car and trailer with camping gear and setting off at some unearthly hour to what felt like the other end of the world!!

In truth, I think the farthest we went was down to the New Forest, which took us two days of travelling from North East Lancashire.

There was also none of this breaking up from school at the end of July; the first two weeks of every July were known as 'Colne Holiday Fortnight', when most of the factories and shops would close and everyone would set off for their two weeks annual holiday. Ah, those were the days!! Now, of course, unless you have children of school age, you can take holidays at any time of the year – besides, it's much cheaper 'off peak' but not always very convenient.

This year has been somewhat different – well that's an understatement! Holidays have not figured much, apart from planning the 'Staycation' – but now we are post 'freedom-day' we do have the opportunity to spread our wings a little. Yet, that depends on whether we are confident enough, or feel safe enough, to venture further afield than our back gardens (if you are fortunate enough to have one!). And then, of course, we can make all the plans we want to make, and still have them crash around us in disappointment.

For some weeks, Colin and I have been looking forward to seeing our eldest son, Dan, and his wife Lowri and our 10 yr. old granddaughter, Rose, after a two year wait. They live in North Wales, so, not an easy trip to do or a particularly short one. They were due to arrive with us last Sunday – but on the previous Thursday, I had a message to say that they were having to self-isolate after having a call from 'Track and Trace'. So, no visit allowed. Happily, it has been rescheduled for the end of August, when I have a week's leave and, hopefully it will be able to go ahead this time.

It's always hard to pick ourselves up when our plans don't go according to plan. But we have to trust that God knows how we feel and will help us to once again look forward in hope.

Someone else who has had to replan things, due to forces beyond her control, is Sarah Crispin. Her wedding was due to take place at a time when the church was closed and we were in lockdown – but Saturday, 31st July was re-booked and, (at the time of writing), is due to go ahead after much waiting! I'm sure we all wish Sarah and Darren many blessings as they start this new chapter of married life together!

This wedding will also mean that the last four weeks have ended on a happy note! You'll have heard of the film 'Four weddings and a funeral'; well, for me, the last four weeks have been 'four funerals and a wedding'.

Whilst it is always a blessing and a privilege to be able to lead or take part in these life events, I must admit that I'm looking forward to a quieter month of August – unless...you know something I don't!!

Yours in Christ,
Helen <><

Word for today John 6: 24-35

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?'

Jesus answered them,

'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.'

(John 6: 25,26)



Meditation of Andrew

It's true what he said: they pursued him, not so much because of his message – because they were hungry to learn of God – but because they'd been physically hungry and he'd given them something to eat.

Their thoughts were of earth, not heaven - of what he could do for them in the here and now, not in the life to come. Never mind their immortal souls, it was their bodies that concerned them, whether they were clothed, housed, fed and watered, with money in their pockets and food on the table.

He offered so much – eternal life – and they failed to see it; each so concerned with the rewards of this world that they'd eyes for nothing else.

Oh yes, they played the part of devoted followers to a tee - pursuing him everywhere, walking in his footsteps; but they didn't really follow - not as he'd hoped.

They were hangers-on - out for what they could get, intent finally on serving self rather than him and the irony is that, though he gave his all, they failed to receive.

Don't make that mistake. Don't accept crusts when you can have bread of life - food for your soul.

He offers eternal nourishment – don't settle for less.

Prayer

Eternal God,
you offer us so much in Christ –
joy, hope, peace, forgiveness, assurance, wholeness, love -
but, while we pay lip service to such blessings,
so often we fail to make them our own.
Day after day we forget you,
barely giving you a moment's thought,
only remembering you in time of need.
But then we expect you to respond –
to deliver us from a crisis,
redeem a situation,
provide the answers we seek.
Teach us that you want to give us so much more –
life in all its fullness, lived with you –
and help us to receive that,
with glad thanksgiving.
Amen.

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

Appeal for Volunteers!!



- ❖ To all you green fingered gardeners - Christ Church is in urgent need of volunteers to help with some of the gardening tasks around the building. (no climbing of ladders needed)
- ❖ 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!

At the Manse...



The first of our open house afternoons will take place this afternoon –
Sunday 1st August, from 2 – 5 pm, at Beth Salem, The Drive, Chichester PO19 5QA

Colin and I would love to welcome you to our home for fellowship and refreshments – so don't be shy; come and join us.

These afternoons will take place on the **first Sunday of each month**, so if you can't come today, don't worry, come next time!!

Helen and Colin <><

Priory Park Service

Remember last year – 13th September – my induction service and 'official' welcome to Chichester?

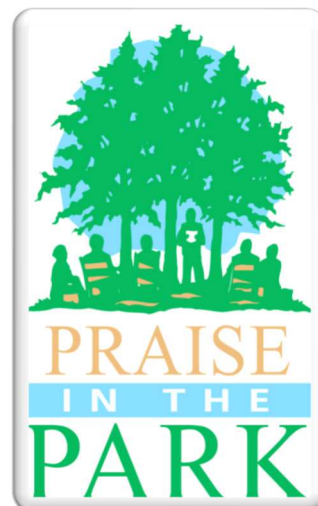
Well, as it was such a success it was suggested that we do it all again this year – not re-induct me - but **have an outdoor service in the park.**

Pam Parsons has worked incredibly hard in contacting the right people and ensuring that we can have the sound equipment again – and you may have heard me mention the service a few times since we named the day! That day is **Sunday 12th September** and, 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 going away, to turn up – **bring a friend or two or three!!** I'd like it to be an interactive, full of fun, service of witness to the whole community –

So, let's make it another day to remember!!

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

Thankyou – Helen <><



If a Dog Were Your Teacher!

- When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
- Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.
- Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
- When it's in your best interest, practise obedience.
- Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
- Take naps and stretch before rising.
- Run, romp, and play daily.
- Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
- Avoid biting, when a simple growl will do.
- On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass.
- On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
- When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
- No matter how often you're-scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout – run right back and make friends.
- Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
- Eat with gusto and enthusiasm. Stop when you've had enough.
- Be loyal.
- Never pretend to be something you're not.
- If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.

And MOST of all...

- When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and offer a gently nuzzle.

Anon.

Taken from 'The Swallow, The Owl & The Sandpiper, compiled by Claire Maitland for The Sandpiper Trust.