

Weekly Newsletter (69)

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

4th July 2021

Musings from the Manse....

Dear Friends,

I expect we all have things that we are grateful for – people we'd like to say thank you to – especially over the last 18 months or so since Covid gripped our country and our world. Remember, back in the early days, when we all stood outside on the street, clapping for our NHS, clapping for carers. We don't do it these days but I expect our grateful thanks are just as relevant and important as ever they were.

Well, if this is how you feel, then you are not alone...

As I found out this week, a small group of individuals also began to think about this and what they could do as the end of lockdown began to come into sharper focus. They decided to propose an official 'Thank You Day' and the idea is now supported by hundreds of organisations across the country, ranging from the Scouts and Guides to Rotary and the Royal Voluntary Service, the NHS, the Mirror and the Sun, the Football Association and the Church of England.

It has the backing of celebrities, religious leaders and sports stars, local councils and schools, businesses and communities throughout the UK – and their aim is for as many people as possible to be involved, however they would like, so everyone who deserves it gets a thank you – and the whole of the UK gets together.

If this is the first you have heard of 'Thank You Day' then fear not! There isn't a strict plan for the day, as the idea is to say thank you, however you want to, but if this came to your attention when it was launched about a month ago, then there are a whole range of events that you can join in with.

May Parsons, the NHS nurse who gave the first Covid vaccination and who was one of the original proposers of the day, said:

"We knew people wanted a chance to get together in a socially distanced and responsible way, so we can all say thank you and the scale of the public's response has blown us all away. This is going to be an important national moment and we want everyone to join us – safely, and in line with government guidance – in the country's biggest ever thank you party."

Organisations are also putting on events throughout the day including:

- 9:00: Join in an hour's exercise across our country's parks and green spaces.
- 11:00: Power Hour - Keep Britain Tidy, the RSPB and Rotary are organising an hour's tidy up of parks and green spaces.
- 13:00: The Big Lunch are organising small street parties and picnics to get neighbours together.
- 17:00: Cheers for volunteers, led by Ross Kemp and the Royal Voluntary Service, is encouraging people to raise a glass or a cuppa with their neighbours; the initiative is backed by thousands of pubs across the country.
- 19:00: The country's biggest ever BBQ with neighbours, led by Levi Roots, the Scouts and the National Citizens Service.
- 15:00: Led by 'Together with Music' – individuals, choirs, bands and music groups are invited to get together and sing or play Christine McVie's (Fleetwood Mac) classic "Don't Stop".

You can find out more about 'Thank You Day' on: www.thankyouday.org.uk

On a more personal note, as I sit and write this Newsletter today, (Wednesday 30th June), I would like to say my own very big 'Thank You'. 14 years ago today, I was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the United Reformed Church and inducted into my first pastorate of Christ Church Longridge, and Fulwood URC, Preston, Lancashire. A lot of water has flown under the bridge since those days – and there have been many things that I've had to learn, which they didn't teach us in college!!

However, it has been a journey that I would not have been able to bear had it not been for the love and support of many, many people - not least my 'minister's spouse' Colin – who has been my rock!

I look forward to the coming years and my time here in Chichester, in the knowledge that God has my back and I will be forever thankful that He called me to do this work.

Yours in Christ, Helen <><



PASS IT ON!
SUNDAY 4th JULY
#THANKYOU DAY

Word for today Mark 6: 1-13

'He left that place and came to his home town and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue and many, who heard him, were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offence at him.' (Mark 6: 1-3)

Meditation of one of Jesus' sisters

I can't tell you how proud we were! To see Jesus, standing there in our synagogue, teaching with such authority – it was a sight to behold.

But not everyone agreed. They **would** have done, I'm sure of it, had they listened but their minds were closed to anything he might say. Why?

Because they thought they knew him. Because it was Jesus, the lad they'd watched grow up among them, who'd played in their streets and helped in his dad's workshop, who they'd walked, talked, laughed and cried with across the years.

And yes, though none spelt it out, because this was the boy who, all those years ago, had been born under a cloud, causing heads to nod and tongues to wag. We know all about you, they were thinking, so they took offence and turned their backs.

Would **we** have been different, I wonder, with the roles reversed, had Jesus been **their** brother instead of ours? I like to think so, but I'm not so sure, for sadly, familiarity, in us all, breeds contempt.

That's what happened in his home town – and because they wouldn't listen, they couldn't hear.

Don't let that be true of you.

Don't think you know it all.

Remember that if you're not open, you can't receive.

It's as stark and simple as that.

Prayer

Loving God, it shouldn't happen, but it does –
what once moved us to outpourings of wonder, now leaving us cold.

We pass by, with barely a second thought,
things that previously brought joy to our heart
and praise to our lips:

the view that filled us with awe...

the rainbow,

the music,

the sights,

the sounds –

each becomes so familiar that we grow blasé about it
and our lives are left the poorer.

It's the same story in relation to you,
perhaps there most of all,
the good news of Christ becoming so well known to us
that we take it for granted –
no longer thrilled as we once were,
no longer inspired to gratitude and worship.

Forgive us, and help us to hear it again as though for the first time,
to experience afresh the miracle of your grace as if we have never tasted it before.

However long we have known you,
grant that the old, old story will, for us, be ever new.

Amen.

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

Gathered for Prayer....

...meets at **9 am and 7 pm each Wednesday, until the 21st July** when we will break for the summer.
Please do feel free to come and join in this time of prayer and space to rest in God's presence.

Here's the link....

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVVKZWdvdWV6Qk909>

Meeting ID: 574 272 2693 Passcode: xsX5UM

Other news....



Anna Vowles

Anna, the Youth Leader at Christ Church, has achieved a 1st in her dissertation on Music and Musical theatre; she sends a huge thank you to Christ Church for the use of the church for her rehearsals.

Anna graduates on 18th August and then goes on to teacher training in Chichester from September.

We all wish you every blessing, Anna, as you move forward in your career.

Anna also moves forward with our Youth Group which restarts on Thursday 1st July. She has an exciting new programme for Christ Church Creatives! We pray for fun, laughter and God's richest blessings as they meet together again. More information from Doreen - **01243 774271**

St Ninian's, Pagham URC opening

St Ninian's is opening for 'face to face' worship again this Sunday (4 July)

Save the Date

Pam Parsons is organising another **service in the park**
in **Priory Park** on **12 September** at **10:30 am** .

Please come and bring family and friends as, hopefully, we will be allowed to do this by then.

Message from Rev Andy Twilley,

Training and Development Officer, URC Southern Synod

Another 2 weeks have passed since the last newsletter and, increasingly, churches are emerging from lockdown as restrictions are gradually lifted. New opportunities and new challenges lie ahead; yet, for many, a sense of weariness from all that has been experienced these past 15 months. The words of Isaiah (quoted on the newsletter) become a useful reminder to us that, as we look to God, as we wait on God, as we hope in God, He will renew us, restore us and raise us up once again to rediscover the plans and purposes He has for us.

(see the attachment 'Mission and Vision 96.pdf')

Message from the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference *(held this week)*

(see the attachment 'P and VP Pastoral letter 1 July.pdf')

Booking for Services at Christ Church

There is **plenty of room at the remaining services in July**. In case you've missed the message, the deadline for booking has been extended to **6 pm on the Wednesday before each service** with confirmation being sent by Friday evening (usually on Thursday). Please also contact Mary after the deadline if you realise you are able and would like to come and we will do our best to accommodate you.

email chichristchurch@gmail.com or **phone 01243 531594** and leave a message