

## Christ Church News (45)

by and for the Christ Church Family

10<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### Musings from the Manse

In this week's 'Worship from the Manse' I took an overall theme of 'New Beginnings' – something I'm sure we all wish we could do at the moment. However, instead of 2021 being the new year we'd all hoped for, it feels more like a re-run of 2020 - except that we now have a glimmer of hope on the horizon in that, at some point in the months ahead, there will be a vaccination! Until then we are in lockdown – again – and it's hard not to think of each day as simply more of the same. Trips to the supermarket are taken with caution and only medical or dental appointments provide any variation to this. Yes, we can go for a walk – weather permitting – and this is positively encouraged for our mental health and general wellbeing – and the dog (if you have one)!!



But let me ask you this – what, if anything, has made your life more (or less) bearable during the pandemic? Have you taken up a new hobby? Have you finally read that book you've been longing to have the time to fit in? Have you perfected a new skill? Zoom is the one that immediately comes to my mind! How do you manage to put some variety in your life, especially if you are living alone? Or is it all just too much and you'd rather just sit tight and ride the days out until it's all over?

That last option, however tempting, is not one I'd recommend – though it is often the hardest mindset to get out of once you are in that zone. As a church family, we need to look out for one another. The flower group would love to bring you some joy in the form of a plant but, in order to do that, they need to know who is struggling – either through health or circumstance. Our Pastoral Group Leaders are doing a wonderful job of keeping in touch with their 'charges', but often we never get to know how folk in general are doing. Most days I can be found at the end of the phone, and would love to have a chat. There doesn't need to be a reason and you won't be disturbing me – just pick up the phone, or get word to me that you'd appreciated a call – I don't bite!!

However, I wonder at what point we will be able to look back and realise that Covid is firmly in the past – maybe we never will – maybe it's just a virus that we learn to manage and live with. It would be wonderful to be able to know that it's something we can control but, until then, as we're told to do, we must 'Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives'.

One final thought for this week – for the Christmas Magazine, Mary Quiney asked for people's 'Lockdown Stories' – the responses to her were, let's say, not numerous!! A little disappointing, I think, so, whilst we are in the current lockdown, why not write your story and send it to her for the newsletter or next magazine. I, for one, would love to know how you've been coping!

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

### Word for today Mark 1: 4,5

'John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside, and all the people of Jerusalem, were going out to him and were baptised by him in the river Jordan - confessing their sins.'

### Meditation of a follower of John the Baptist

They came in their droves - hundreds arriving each day - eager to confess their faults and make amends.

There was no pretence, no hiding their mistakes – they knew what they'd done wrong and longed to start again. So, I did what I could, baptising them as God had commanded for the forgiveness of sins. And were they pardoned? Of course, for ours is a God who delights to show mercy, whose nature is always to forgive.

But a new beginning? Nothing *I* could do could give them that, nor anything *they* might do either; for it takes something more – a new heart and a right spirit, change deep within. Just imagine what that means: no more striving on our own, struggling to do what can't be done; no more trying to earn what we can never deserve; but God taking the initiative, accepting what we are and directing what we shall become. It's been our hope, our goal, our dream for so many years - foretold by the prophets, yet always out of reach. But not any more; for Christ has come, the redeemer of the world who makes all things new. *I* wash with water, *he* with the Holy Spirit. *I* cleanse the body, *he* the soul. We can really change, truly start again. Don't settle for less.

## Prayer

Lord,

we yearn to change, try to do so, but for all our best intentions we can't do it alone.

Our spirit says one thing, our flesh says another – time and again weakness causing us to fall.

Forgive our faithlessness, and, in your mercy, write your law of love on our hearts,  
so that we may know your will and delight to do it.

Amen.

## Gathered for Prayer....

During these difficult times, 'Gathered for Prayer' continues to meet every Wednesday morning (9 am) and evening (7 pm) on Zoom for a half hour of guided and extemporaneous prayer – all are welcome!

To Join...

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVVKwWVdand6QT09>

Meeting ID: 574 272 2693

Passcode: xsX5UM

## Updating the history of Christ Church

There has been discussion in many quarters whether life will ever be quite the same following the lock-down and the rising of restrictions. There is talk of a 'new normal' and this will apply to churches as much as any other aspect of life. It is an opportunity to look back and contemplate the past as well as look forward and anticipate the future.

This could apply to the community based upon Christ Church. It seems that there are no historical records within the building itself, and, indeed, the County Records Office in Chichester holds only a few documents. These include

*'Methodism in a Cathedral City. Southgate Methodist Church, Chichester, 1877-1977'*

*by John and Hilary Vickers, and*

*'Christ Church (Methodist and United Reformed) Chichester, The Story - 2 October 1982 -  
To Commemorate the Opening and Dedication.'*

Both are somewhat sketchy but still fascinating. Did you know that a former minister's wife was killed by a bottle thrown in an anti-Methodist riot in the City? The bottle was subsequently incorporated into the brickwork of the Broyle Road chapel. Is this an example of a Methodist martyr? Also, the City was represented in Westminster Abbey at the Queen's Coronation by a Methodist, Alice Eastland, who was mayor at the time.

I think it would be good to discover, or rediscover, the back story of Methodism, and, indeed, other Dissenting churches, in the area as part of the process of establishing identity. Also, **it would be good now to fill in the gap between 1982 and now before it is lost to posterity.** I would be happy to collate the information if people have any documents or photos of places or people squirreled away in lofts and cupboards. These I would scan and return. To avoid the tedium of writing, I could also collect oral histories. There are now clever computer programmes that can transcribe from recorded voices. Much of this could be done during present restrictions.

If you would like to express an interest in or have some comments to make on the proposed project, please contact **Paul Devonshire on 01243 641457** or e-mail: [pauldevonshire@hotmail.com](mailto:pauldevonshire@hotmail.com)

### **Note from Helen:**

In an attempt to keep the balance and respect both parent denominations in Christ Church – if anyone has stories or archives of Chichester's URC presence, pre and post 1972, (when the URC was first formed), I'm sure Paul would welcome these as well!

Thank you.

Helen <><

### **Remembering...**

Angela Bunker (1930 - 2020) died in the Brighton care home she moved to after Peter's death. With their respective nursing and law backgrounds, they brought their Congregational commitment to Christ Church in 2000.

Vera Quinton (1930 - 2020) and Ken attended Derek Wales' first church and were lively contributors to Christ Church life. Vera moved to be near family in Norfolk after Ken died.

*Terry Timblick*

### **Jesus Prayed for Us...**

*by Ed Martin*

... a song I wrote in January 1979 for the Anniversary Sunday at Bearsden Baptist Church, Glasgow, Scotland, where I served as pianist and guitarist from 1976 until 1982. The words are based on the following scriptures:

John 17:6-25

Romans 8

1 Peter 2:4-6

Galatians 4:4-7

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Ephesians 1:4-5

*The words, the sheet music and an mp3 file  
are all attached with this newsletter*