



## Christ Church News (41)

by and for the Christ Church Family

13<sup>th</sup> December 2020

### Musings from the Manse

The other day a book arrived at Beth Salem – “not so unusual”, you say!

The book in question was called ‘Adventure’ by Mark Greene (LICC), and it is a collection of Christmas poems and reflections - one for each day from the 1<sup>st</sup> December to the 25<sup>th</sup>. I thought they might come in useful during my Advent devotions – and, indeed, they have. The foreword Mark writes, particularly struck a chord with me.



He says,

*‘Every year I come back to Christmas, like a traveller returning home after a year away in a foreign land. I know this place. And I am pleased to be here. The pictures on the walls are familiar – like the people and the events in the Christmas story. I am enriched, comforted by the old things, but I see new things, and see the old things in new ways. I have changed; I am changing. We all are. Ideas surface, gleam and take flight. Christmas - the Christmas that is not about the bubbly frenzy of all the preparations for the big day still retains its shimmering mystery: ordinary people caught up in the divine drama that is the hinge of history. They are invited to take part, as we are; seeking, as we can; choosing, as we do; pressured, as we are; afraid, exhilarated, and, in the end, grateful, awed, content. Here the poems, the illustrations, the reflections, and, indeed, the quotations from the Biblical accounts which inspire them all, combine, we hope, to bring to life some of the myriad facets of the birth of the one who came to change our world, and us, and still does today.’*

The book can be bought through LICC, or through any book seller, and is well worth taking a closer look.

The final poem is simply called ‘**Invitation**’ and the verse from **John 1: 12-13** introduces it....

To her the invitation came, skyborne on angel’s wings,  
Heaven sent and pregnant with impossibilities.  
For, God knows, she had reasons to say ‘No’,  
Her future, till then so serenely assured:  
A home, her good name, a husband to wed,  
Everything, indeed, for which she thought she’d been bred.

Are such so easily cast aside?  
Would love, security, reputation  
Be so swiftly pried  
From our determined grasp?  
How other people’s risks seem simpler to take,  
Our own stubborn knots so much harder to break.

To us, the royal invitation also comes,  
Though usually in less spectacular script,  
Sans seraph, but daily clear, which way will we go?  
Of course, we are free to decline,  
But ‘No’, promising more for now, always leads to less,  
Better, braver, wiser, surely, to simply say...

I suppose it’s easy to get swamped with the various Advent devotionals and Christmas resources – but I find that it is always useful to look at preparing for Christmas through someone else’s eyes. Occasionally it makes us think again about seeing things through God’s eyes!

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

### Word for Today John 1: 6-8, 19-28

From next week the Wednesday ‘**Gathered for Prayer**’ will meet at 9 am  
**and at 7 pm** for those who are not able to meet for the morning session.  
*(see the email for the link)*





## Meditation of John the Baptist



Who was I, they wanted to know, and I knew full well what they were thinking - that I was the Messiah, the promised son of God, come at last to set them free.

Why wouldn't they listen!

I'd spent weeks, months, out there in the wilderness, pointing to Christ, preparing the way, and still they'd made up their minds it was **me**. Clearly I had to spell things out – so that's what I did.

'Let's get this straight,' I said, 'once and for all: *it's not me!*'

But still they kept on - their minds, it seems, already made up. I could have knocked their heads together - such was my frustration - but the misunderstanding wasn't entirely their fault, much though I wish it were.

Somehow, despite my best intentions, I'd put across too much of **me** and too little of **him**. Perhaps it was the camel-hair clothes, the diet of locusts and honey, the desert lifestyle – who can say? – but, whatever it was, I'd obviously sent out mixed messages - failing to point as unmistakable to the Christ as I imagined.

What about you? Do you make the same mistake?

You may not think so, but, take it from me, it's easily done – what you say and do and what you **think** you say and do are not necessarily the same.

So ask yourself this, prayerfully and honestly: who does your life speak of – you or Jesus?

The answer may surprise you, as it did me.

### Prayer

Remind us, Lord, that we are called to witness  
 not to ourselves, the Bible, or the Church,  
 but to you: to what you said, what you have done, and who you are.

Forgive us for losing sight of that,  
 unconsciously putting across a different message.

Forgive us for confusing incidentals with what really matters.

Help us to seek your glory before our own,  
 putting you first and self second,  
 so that, in all we do, we may truly honour your name.

Amen.

*(Adapted from 'A Most Amazing Man' by Nick Fawcett)*

### REMEMBERING...

#### Shan Davies (1939 - 2020)

Shan, a primary teacher and mother of three, moved to Chichester in 2000 and she and husband, Dannie, became involved with Abbeyfield. Some five years ago, using her fine flair for painting and friendship, Shan created the Christ Church Art Group - meeting weekly as an Outreach venture welcoming non-Christ Church folk too.

#### Gillian Combes (1936 - 2020)

Christ Church fellowship was central to Gillian's life, with regular Sunday services and daily social contact of coffee and chat gratefully acknowledged. As a girl at Sidlesham Methodist Chapel her Sunday school teacher was Winnie Langer. The family move to Chichester took Gillian to the Methodist Chapel in the Hornet (now a takeaway). On being invited to join Christ Church Chapel (South Street) choir she had singing lessons from the cathedral organist. Hymns were always at the heart of her worship.

*Terry Timblick*

I will now start taking bookings for services in January and February – see the website and calendar in the magazine.

**Dates: January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>      February 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>**

Send your booking to [chichristchurch@gmail.com](mailto:chichristchurch@gmail.com) by 6 pm on the Sunday before.

If the service becomes fully booked, a waiting list will be created so that, if someone is unable to attend, their place can be allocated to someone else.

*(In the event of this happening, the date and time of your booking and the number of services you have attended are recorded and will be taken into account)*

Thank you to all those who have knitted Christmas angels. They have all flown via a different route this Christmas

