

Christ Church News (33)
by and for the Christ Church Family
18th October 2020

Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

At a time when the nights are drawing in, the temperatures are dropping and the leaves begin to fall from the trees - it's very easy to forget balmy summer days and long gone holidays in warmer climates!! Last year, Colin and I, plus two friends, visited Bodrum in Turkey; this year that holiday, and any others in this country we love to visit, are just a distant memory!



Normally, holidays are the thing most people look forward to; they are what gets us through the dark days of winter. Of course, not everyone manages, (or wants), to get away to 'foreign climes'; not everyone likes the hot weather. But for me, feeling the sun on my face, the warmth permeating my bones, together with the knowledge that I am miles away from 'normal' life, means that I can truly relax.

They say that change is as good as a rest. Well I've certainly had a lot of that this year, but not all of it has been restful – exciting, but not restful! Now, more than ever, we need to understand that true rest and relaxation is a vital part of our stressful lives. It can have tremendous benefits for our mental health – but, sooner or later, we must return to reality and deal with the things that life throws at us.

Whilst I consider myself very fortunate to have a loving, supportive family behind me, here, in Chichester, I have found myself working with wonderful people who are part of my new church family - who have welcomed, encouraged and, I'm sure, will continue to guide me in my ministry and faith journey. In many ways, I do feel truly blessed – and I pray that - by your association to Christ Church and a new relationship with Pagham URC - you also feel blessed to be a part of all these two churches are, and try to do.

We are here for each other – no matter what we are facing – and sometimes we have to make ourselves vulnerable in order to let those people, who want to help and support us, break through the walls we build around ourselves. So, on the days when life just seems to be too much – when all the relaxation techniques we've tried just aren't working – remember those who truly care. Take time to notice the wonders of nature on the days when the sun is shining, and when it's not; and remember that the changing colours of the falling leaves remind us that trees truly understand what it means to let go.

Things like this remind me of our God - who not only paints the skies in colours I can't even name - but who holds me, (and us), in the palm of His hand.

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

Word for Today Matthew 22: 15-22

Reflection – Meditation of a bystander as the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus

They thought they had him, the two-faced devils, but, thankfully, that ingratiating grin as they sidled up to Jesus fooled no one - least of all him.

They were out for blood, and hoped to be the wolves, but, instead of turning tail, he had turned the tables - leaving them lost for words as he slipped deftly from their trap.

'Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.'

Very nice!

It took the wind right out of their sails, which perhaps explains why they missed what bugged me immediately: How can we tell which is which?

It's all very well pointing to a face on a coin, but does it really answer the question?

I don't think so, or, at least, not a fully as I'd like; for life's conundrums are rarely as clear-cut as that - the edges more often than not blurred, the lines hard to follow.

'What things **are** God's?' – that's what they should have asked, but they weren't sure themselves and feared digging a deeper hole than they were in already.

How about Jesus?
Did **he** know?

Or was his whole point that there are no hard-and-fast rules, no immutable laws set in stone; that what's right in one circumstance might be wrong in another – not even the commandments exempt?

He's suggesting as much, many times - speaking of a **new** command in which love interprets all; and if that's really true – if love alone is what God requires – then that reply of his wasn't just a clever answer, it was the **only** answer he could give.

Prayer

Loving God,
we have responsibilities in this life in relation to our loved ones,
our employers,
our government
and to the world as a whole.

There are laws to observe,
duties to discharge,
conventions to fulfil,
care to show,
and we are honour bound to play our part in each of these as best we can.

Yet we have responsibilities also in relation to you –
a summons to service,
call to witness,
challenge to walk the way of Christ;
in short, to do your will as summed up in the two commandments:
love you and love one another.

Help us, then, to live wisely in this world
yet faithfully to seek your kingdom;
to give of our best, both to others and to you,
by your grace and to your glory.

Amen.
(taken from 'A most amazing man' by Nick Fawcett)

Booking for November services

The deadline for each service is **6 pm** the previous Sunday.

Please email chichristchurch@googlemail.com to book your place(s) at services in November or click 'reply' to this newsletter. If you have already emailed, I have put you on the list(s). (You can also phone **01243 531594** and leave a message – but email is preferred).

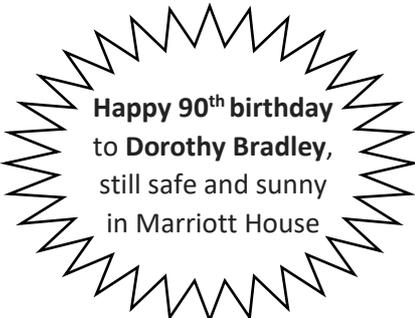
Please give the names of everyone you are booking for and indicate whether you are all in a 'bubble'. Please also indicate if you need to sit in a particular place in the church.

NOVEMBER 2020 SERVICES			
01 Nov	10:30	Holy Communion	The Rev'd Helen Higgin-Botham
08 Nov	10:30	Remembrance Service	The Rev'd Helen Higgin-Botham
15 Nov	10:30	All Age Worship	The Rev'd George Watt
22 Nov	10:30	Family Worship	Mrs Shelagh Morgan
29 Nov	10:30	Family Worship	Mrs Wendy Corney

Articles for the Christmas Magazine

Suggestions: a piece of prose or poetry, a drawing or a photograph about '**Life during Lockdown**'

The deadline for your contributions for the magazine is **Sunday, 8 November**. If you are intending to send something please email me to let me know.



Happy 90th birthday
to Dorothy Bradley,
still safe and sunny
in Marriott House