

**Christ Church News (35)**  
*by and for the Christ Church Family*  
1<sup>st</sup> November 2020

## Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

Today is All Saints Day and its celebration on the 1<sup>st</sup> November dates from the ninth century, although the saints have been commemorated at other times of the year for much longer. The most ancient celebrations in the third century were in remembrance of martyrs - those who had given their lives because of their faith – but, because so many godly women and men provided an example of faith and inspiration to the Church, a specific day was set.



The day provides an opportunity to look at the witness of, both a few extraordinary Christians, and, also, a lot of very ordinary ones who have followed Jesus in extraordinary ways. They have blessed others through their faith and so have, themselves, been blessed in ways that the Beatitudes call to mind.

All Saints Day was often known as All Hallows and, so, the day before came to be known as Hallows' Eve - or Hallow E'en. The question is - has Hallowe'en now overshadowed All Saints as a feast day as far as the wider world is concerned? It would seem that, as soon as we get into October, the costumes and associated paraphernalia of Halloween dominate the shops and supermarkets. Children, (and many adults), excitedly decide how many pumpkins they are going to carve, what they are going to wear and how they are going to decorate their houses – and the whole thing, (to me), has become far too 'Americanised'. The annual event of 'Trick or Treat' will perhaps be somewhat muted this year – and Halloween parties a low-key affair – and, maybe, that's no bad thing? I'm not being a party pooper, but have we strayed too far away from the original ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, (pronounced sow-in), when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts? Well, if Halloween is all about an excuse to wear grotesque or 'Disneyfied' costumes or watch scary movies into the wee small hours, then I believe we **have**. Do we, then, as Christians, ignore the eve of All Saints Day altogether, or do we encourage one another to mark it - if we so wish - in a less ghoulish way; and is there scope for the Church to reclaim the celebration of Christians of old on All Saints Day - to inspire the present generation? I'll let you decide!

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

**Word for Today** Matthew 5: 10 - 12 (Part of the Gospel reading [Matt.5:1-12] for All Saints' Day)

### Meditation of Simon Peter

I couldn't get it at first. What blessing can there be in persecution - in facing hatred and hostility for the sake of Christ?

OK. So, they slandered the prophets before us - hurling all kinds of insults against them - but that doesn't make it good, does it; let alone desired.

Surely there must be easier ways to secure heaven's rewards - a less costly and demanding path?

What about those other things he mentioned, like hungering and thirsting after righteousness?

Won't one of them do instead?

OK. I'm not as meek and merciful as I should be, as poor in spirit or pure in heart, but I'm working on it and will get there in the end.

But can any of those stand alone, in splendid isolation from the rest?

There's the rub. I want to say 'yes', but his words said 'no'; everything he said and taught speaking of distinctive commitment - a way of life different from the world's - challenging its norms and undermining the status quo.

In other words, true faith will ruffle feathers, get under people's skin, and that spells trouble; for they won't like it – won't like it at all - and they'll silence us if they can, just as they tried with him.

It's easier to keep your head down to conform with the crowd and not ask awkward questions, but from this one, at least, there's no running away.

I can stay in my comfort zone, and leave others in theirs, or I can stay true to Christ.

Sadly, I can't do both.

## Prayer

Living God,

give us, where necessary, the courage to be different,  
to go against the expectations of the world  
when they conflict with your truth, your way, your will.

Help us, as far as possible, to live peaceably with all,  
never seeking confrontations or discord,  
but aware also that there will be times when,  
like those who have gone before us, we must make a stand,  
sticking up for the things we believe in,  
even though that may entail facing scorn, hostility, rejection.

Inspire us through the life and witness of saints of old – their faith, service and commitment –  
to walk in their footsteps.

Save us from loving the world so much that we love you less,  
from confusing the rewards of earth with the joys of heaven –  
blessings you alone can give.

Amen

## Christ Church AGM – 19 November

The AGM will be a Zoom meeting at 7:30 pm on 19 November. Those of you who receive this newsletter by email will be sent the invitation link. Later this week I will email the Agenda, the minutes of last year's AGM and the reports to be read before the meeting. I hope to post these to those who do not receive emails.

*Mary Quiney*

## Final Appeal for items for the Christmas Church Magazine – deadline 8 November



### poems, articles, photographs, drawings

To date I have received 5 items and one more is promised.

If you are wondering whether or not to contribute, please decide to do so and let me know by next week – even if you are not able to complete it by 8 November.