

Christ Church News (29)
by and for the Christ Church Family
20th September 2020



Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday we had an amazing time in Priory Park. Where else would you find people worshipping together, a game of cricket, a game of bowls, and several families just hanging out and wondering what was going on!!

Of course it was my Induction Service and the brain child, (primarily,) of Pam Parsons, and it well and truly put Christ Church LEP and Pagham URC on the map!!

What a wonderful witness it was to the community – and together with dignitaries, invited guests and congregants who turned up, I felt that it was a great time of celebration and worship of a God who knows no boundaries.

Thank you to everyone who took part, as well as those who prepared and executed a truly glorious day – it was a first for many, but I hope that it won't be the last!!

Yours in Christ,
Helen
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Word for Today Jonah 3:10 – 4:11 Matthew 20: 1-16

Reflection – Meditation of the Apostle Paul *(from 'A most amazing man' by Nick Fawcett)*

'Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?
Or are you envious because I am generous?' (Matt. 20:15)

Were they jealous of me, my fellow Apostles?

Yes, they probably were at first, and, on a human level, who can blame them, for they'd walked and talked with Jesus before I'd even heard the name, working for his kingdom while I did my best to destroy it.

I was a latecomer, and upstart,
in every sense the least of their number,
yet Jesus called me to faith and service and inheritance among the saints.

I didn't deserve it - not in the slightest -
nothing I said or did earning his favour.

I was grace, pure and simple,
his love poured out,
generous to a fault.

But then that's true for us all, isn't it,
each of us saved through faith, not works,
through what God has done for **us** rather than us for **him**.

We forget that face too often,
turning the gospel into carrot and stick, obedience and reward,
a bargain in which, if we keep our side, God must keep his.

Only there's no gospel there, no message of hope –
quite the opposite,
for we'll get nowhere on merit,
our just deserts to be feared, not welcomed.

So, don't fret about God's dealings with others,
whether he's as fair as you'd like him to be:
that's *his* business, no one else's.

Remember, he's dealt kindly with you,
more than you've any right to expect,
and let that be more than enough.

Prayer

though we talk about your grace, Lord,
your free and undeserved pardon,
we don't really believe in it –
not if we're honest.

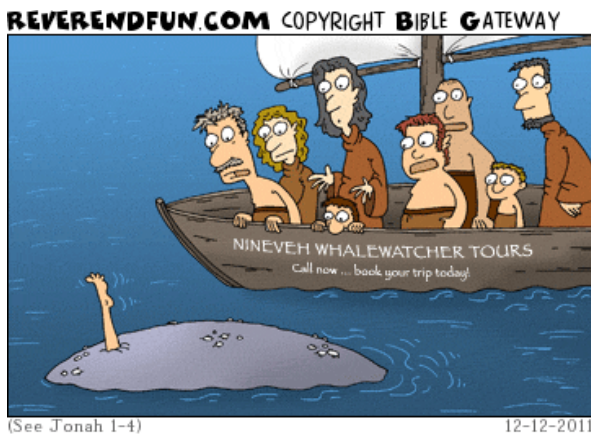
We're drawn, instinctively,
to the creed of an eye for an eye
and a tooth for a tooth,
or at least to the modern-day equivalent:
that punishment should fit the crime.

The idea of wrongdoing being pardoned,
a sentence quashed,
goes against the grain,

contradicting our idea of natural justice,
and, for the stability of society and good of all,
we know we need laws to be fairly
but firmly enforced.

Yet we forget that, in relation to you,
we all fall short,
none of us being blameless,
still less meriting your love and mercy.
Forgive our temerity in being swift to condemn,
slow to pardon,
and help us to leave judgement where it belongs:
with you.

Amen



Chris Coote

It is with sadness that we report that Chris died peacefully on 5 September in St Wilfrid's Hospice, having been diagnosed with a very rare, incurable bone cancer at the start of lockdown.

Despite not being a Christ Church member, he played the piano and organ at some Christ Church services since 2013 and, if necessary, came to the choir practice to rehearse the anthem. We give thanks for his generosity of spirit and willing service.

Church Meeting – 24 September

Helen Higginbotham is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Helen Higginbotham's Zoom Meeting

Time: Sep 24, 2020 07:30 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVVKwWdvand6QT09>

Meeting ID: 574 272 2693

Passcode: xsX5UM

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