

**Christ Church News (34)**  
*by and for the Christ Church Family*  
25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

## Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

I hope you remembered to put your clocks back an hour in the wee small hours!! Mind you, as one Facebook post has said, who actually wants an extra hour of 2020!!

Like it or not, it seems that, as we head towards December, we may start 2021 in much the same way as we started 2020 – with a lot of speculation and uncertainty.

I think we are all feeling the effects of all that has happened since we went into full lockdown in March – and, usually, as we look towards the Christmas season, there is a sense of excitement, joy, peace and hope. I'm not sure how I will feel this Christmas, but one thing I am sure of is that the story of Jesus' birth – the Word made flesh – is the same as it has always been and the Book that it comes from, our Bible, is the same reliable source of peace, hope, (and so many other things), that it's always been.

Now, today is Bible Sunday, and - whilst I will not be with you all at Christ Church because I will be with the good folks at Pagham URC - I hope that you will remember why we have this special Sunday. It's not just about remembering the valuable work of the Bible Society, it's an opportunity to reassess the value our Bible has in our lives.

Embarrassingly, or fortunately, (whichever way you want to look at it), I have many versions of the Bible – including a Greek New Testament and a Hebrew Old Testament. Some of them have great sentimental value – one of them was my Dad's Ordination Bible – but all of them tell the history of God's people and the good news of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, and that is priceless.

In this country we are fortunate enough to be able to just buy a Bible in any translation we fancy, as many times as we like; but do we really appreciate how blessed we are to be able to do this?

The work of the Bible Society helps to enable people across the world to have their very own copy of the Bible in their very own language – and the one thing we **can** do is support them in their work and treasure the fact that we are able pick up our Bible and read it any time we want to.

I hope and pray that your Bible holds a special place in your life and that, when you read it, you will always find the comfort and encouragement to endure all that we face.

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

**Word for Today** Matthew 22: 34-46

## Reflection – Meditation of the Pharisaic lawyer who questioned Jesus

Wishy-washy I called it - the idea that you can take our God-given law and reduce it to just two commands based on one little word - '*love*'.

Oh, it sounds good, I grant you - all very fine in theory - but what does it mean in practice, in the real world of squalor, sweat and suffering?

We need rules to set the boundaries - clear guidelines spelt out in black and white - for how else can we know where we stand, what God expects us to do?

'Give people an inch and they'll take a mile'. That's how I saw it and, believe me, I knew; I'm a lawyer, remember.



So, I ignored what Jesus said - dismissing it as well-meant but misguided nonsense. He'll learn, I thought. Give him time and he'll find out where such ideas get him - hung out and left to dry.

And I was right, of course for, before he knew it, love was thrown back in his face - leaving him hanging on a cross.

Yet I tell you what; I've seen people changed since, through faith in him - even the worst of them. I've seen those written off start afresh, shrivelled lives blossoming again; I've seen hardened criminals, not just reformed, but made new - transformed from within.

Can anything else do that?

Not that I know of - not even our law, only love. So maybe - just maybe - he was right and it's not so wishy-washy after all.

## Prayer

You tell us, Lord, that the law can be reduced to one word – **'love'**.

It sounds so easy – **'love you, love one another'**.

Yet when we try it for ourselves it's not so simple after all, for it brings us up against the key question – ***what is the loving way?***

Instead of being able to hide behind moral absolutes, it forces us to assess every situation on its merits, and we soon find that, far from being wishy-washy as some suggest, love is demanding – asking far more of us than any other commandment.

Yet, though it involves genuine cost, it brings equally its own rewards, unlike any other – able to heal, enrich, inspire, renew in a way nothing else can begin to.

Reach out, then, and touch our lives so that your love may flow in, through and from us to your glory.

Amen.

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

## Commitment for Life and Harvest Offerings (Stonepillow and HEART)

The response to all these causes has been overwhelming, but there is still time to donate should you wish!!

Details for giving are the same –

- either by **cheque** made out to **Christ Church Chichester**, with *Commitment for Life*, or *Harvest* written on the back and sent to The Treasurer at the Church address: Christ Church, Methodist and United Reformed Church, Old Market Avenue, Southgate, CHICHESTER, PO19 1SW
- or **transferred online** to the Church bank account at **CAF Bank – Sort Code 40-52-40 and account 0003 3603** with the reference of *Commitment for Life* or *Harvest* in the instructions to your bank.

I'll plan to close the donations at the end of October and will send off our donations in early November.

Graham Manson, Treasurer



## Christmas Angels

If you have been knitting angels, please would you leave them in the **Resource Room by Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> November**.

Sadly, we cannot leave them in the street this year, but intend to give everyone

**3 angels with a special edition of our Church Magazine**

asking people to give them to friends with our special Christmas message.