

Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

For better or for worse 2020 is behind us now, though I suspect we may never be free from the fallout of such a traumatic year. Now that 2021 has begun, there is hope that Covid-19 can be brought under control and, though we are still in the depths of winter and nothing is the same as it was, it is now more important than ever that we try to stay connected as a church family. Once again we are a scattered church – and, until we can return to some semblance of normality, we are given this opportunity to reflect on how we might do things better when that time comes.



Some years ago I came across something called ‘Lessons from Geese’ – a reflection, which might be a starting point for our thinking....

‘Lessons from Geese’ provides a perfect example of the importance of teamwork and how it can have a profound and powerful effect on any form of personal, business, or, even, church endeavour. When we use these five principles it will help us to foster and encourage a level of passion and energy in ourselves as well as in those whom we walk alongside in our journey of faith.

It is essential to remember that teamwork happens inside and outside of business life when it is continually nurtured and encouraged.

Lesson 1 - The Importance of Achieving Goals

As each goose flaps its wings it creates UPLIFT for the birds that follow. By flying in a 'V' formation the whole flock adds 71 percent extra to the flying range.

Outcome - When we have a sense of community and focus, we create trust and can help each other to achieve our goals.

Lesson 2 - The Importance of Team Work

When a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back to take advantage of the lifting power of the birds in front.

Outcome - If we had as much sense as geese we would stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

Lesson 3 - The Importance of Sharing

When a goose tires of flying up front, it drops back into formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Outcome - It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks. We should respect and protect each other's unique arrangement of skills, capabilities, talents and resources.

Lesson 4 - The Importance of Empathy and Understanding

When a goose gets sick, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to the ground to help and protect it.

Outcome - If we have as much sense as geese we will stand by each other in difficult times, as well as when we are strong.

Lesson 5 - The Importance of Encouragement

Geese flying in formation 'HONK' to encourage those up front to keep up with their speed.

Outcome - We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups and teams where there is encouragement, production is much greater.

'Individual empowerment results from quality honking'

Author Unknown

Whatever this New Year brings – may the love and friendship of our church family be a constant in our lives, and a source of hope for us all.

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

Word for today

'In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?'' (Matt. 2: 1, 2a)

Meditation of the magi

We weren't just looking for a child – we were searching for **meaning**, an answer to the riddle of life. That's why we'd spent so long studying the stars, poring over ancient texts, seeking knowledge, for we wanted to understand why we're here, and whether there's anything beyond our brief existence giving purpose to it all.

So, we left our country and travelled, mile after mile, following that star – not clear it would lead **anywhere**, but hoping and believing that it was a sign portending a newborn king. We were right too, though it wasn't, ultimately, the star leading us; it was God – God as we'd never known him before: mighty and mysterious, sovereign over all, yet, somehow, there in a little child before whom we instinctively bowed in worship.

We can't explain it for he was just a kid; yet each of us, as we knelt before him, knew he was much more – the goal, not just of our journey, but of our lifelong quest, our restless longing for truth. Strangely, others didn't see it that way - even his own people - though whether they **couldn't** or **wouldn't**, who can say?

All we know is this: that we had questions and found answers - learning that those who seek **will** find.

Prayer

Living God,

in a world where so many search for meaning, where people feel lost and hopeless,
confused about who they are, why they are here or what they should do,
give guidance.

Prompt and challenge through your Holy Spirit,
so that those who long for answers may find in Christ an end to their seeking –
their questions resolved and lives fulfilled.

Amen.

(adapted from 'A most amazing man' by Nick Fawcett)

Gathered for Prayer....

During these difficult times, 'Gathered for Prayer' continues to meet
every Wednesday morning (9 am) and evening (7 pm) on Zoom
for a half hour of guided and extemporary prayer – all are welcome!

To Join...

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVVKeWdvand6QT09>

Meeting ID: 574 272 2693

Passcode: xsX5UM

Service on 3 January

The service on Sunday, 3 January is the Covenant Service. The link to the on-line service is supplied below as well as in the email accompanying this newsletter <https://youtu.be/kot4WsTmOv8>.

Also attached to the email are the covenant responses.

Where have the Christmas Angels gone?

We are thinking of sending out a special newsletter –
depending on the size of your response:

We are inviting you to respond with your comments on your angels' travels -
including the following:
where the angels went (without giving names)
and reactions of the recipients.

Over to you...

You should all have received an email with a message from Helen telling you that **Christ Church is closed for services until further notice**