

Christ Church News (50)
by and for the Christ Church Family
14th February 2021

Musings from the Manse

Today is Valentine's Day, but it is not just a day for all you romantics out there! Today is a day when we can remember that the love God gives us, through our relationship with Jesus, is the best love of all because it's unconditional! How good is that! It's not dependant on anything other than our willingness to give ourselves and our lives to Him. The picture on the right - something I came across a few years ago - is called God's Valentine and it reminds us to cherish that love because of the sacrifice through which it was given.

Unconditional sacrifice is also something we can be thinking about over the season of Lent - not just because of the journey to Jerusalem and the Easter Story - but because of something else which was brought to my attention this week by Linda Hawker.

Many of you will have heard of The Leprosy Mission. Perhaps you have supported their work in the past or still support all that they do today, but at the moment (and until the 24th of April), every donation that is made will be **doubled** by our Government. So, when Linda and I talked over the phone, she asked whether it would be possible for us to make this the cause for our Lent/Easter offering. I thought this was a wonderful idea - so thank you Linda for reaching out and making me aware.

It's not that I hadn't heard of The Leprosy Mission before but, to be honest, Leprosy is not something which features too much in our everyday lives. It is an ancient disease featured in the Bible and my heart goes out to anyone, past or present, who is stigmatised and cast out by this dreadful disease. Jesus was not one of those who went out of their way to avoid anyone with Leprosy and, whilst we are unlikely to come across anyone with it in the UK, we are yet to experience a world where it has been eradicated completely.

Today, about 208,000 people worldwide are infected with leprosy (according to the World Health Organization) - most of them in Africa and Asia - but about 100 people are diagnosed with leprosy in the USA every year. However, it is treatable and curable and this year's 'Unconditional Appeal' invites us to support and become Leprosy Changemakers - people who are determined to bring life-changing medicine and care to help communities in Mozambique.

So please consider whether you might donate, preferably through the website, if possible: <https://www.leprosymission.org.uk/campaign/#/> or through Christ Church - making it clear that it is for the Lent/Easter Offering.

There is far more information on the Leprosy Mission website than I could ever put here - plus a wonderful little video, which introduces you to Zaina and other residents in the village of Namatua.

Anyone who suffers from a disease like Leprosy should be able to get the treatment they need;
let's try to make that happen.

Thankyou.

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

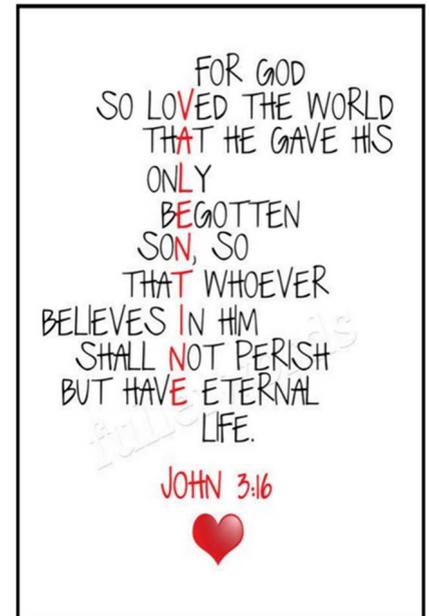
Word for today Mark 9: 2-

'Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.' (Mark 9:2-4)

Meditation of the Apostle John

What happened that day up on the mountain? I'm still not sure even now.

Maybe it was the altitude addling the brain, or perhaps the light playing tricks, but, one moment we seemed to be looking at Jesus, and the next it was as though he were God himself - his face radiant, his clothes dazzling white, his whole being bathed in light, too bright to behold.



And that's not all; for there beside him stood Moses and Elijah, epitomising the Law and prophets, as though everything that had gone before – our life, our faith, our history – had been leading up to this moment, finding fulfilment in this man standing before us.

We didn't grasp all that at first, of course; in fact, we didn't grasp much – just stood there gawping, awestruck, until I blurted out some nonsense about building shelters for them all. But we realised afterwards we'd been granted a glimpse of glory - a sign that this man, who we loved and followed, was more special than we'd begun to imagine, too special for words.

We wanted to stay there for ever, to keep hold of that mountaintop experience, but life's not like that, sadly.

Like faith, it must be lived out in the daily routine, in this world of ups and downs, highs and lows, and, believe me, we were to have both of those aplenty.

But, whatever the trials we were later to face – the depths of despair, suffering and human evil – there was no way those could have the final word.

We'd seen the light that day – literally – and it would never be extinguished.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

we think we have grasped the wonder of who and what you are ... but we haven't.

We think we understand the extent of your love ... but we don't.

We think we can fathom the breadth of your power and goodness ... but we can't.

Teach us that there is always more to be revealed of your truth,

more to learn of your mercy,

and more to discover of your purpose,

your glory being far beyond anything we can fully comprehend.

Give us a greater sense of your greatness,

a fuller awareness of all you have done, are doing and continue to do,

and keep us open each day to fresh insights,

new horizons

and deeper experiences of your unsurpassable grace.

Amen.

taken from 'A Most Amazing Man' by Nick Fawcett

Gathered for Prayer....

Gathered for Prayer meets on Zoom **every Wednesday at 9 am and 7 pm**. I'd love to see you there!

Here's the link...

To Join the Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVVKwWdvd6QT09>

Meeting ID: 574 272 2693

Passcode: xsX5UM

Lent Study Group on Zoom

This coming week sees the start of the season of Lent, and our Lenten Bible Study – '*Holy Habits – Following Jesus*'.

The first session will begin tomorrow – **Monday 15th February at 7:30 pm** – and each Monday thereafter

until the 22nd March.

The following week, (28th March – 3rd April), is Holy Week and there is the possible option to join me each evening for the material suggested. Should we be able to gather in the church for the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services of reflection, this would be my preference – but, for now, this is still unknown.

Here is the link – I look forward to making this journey with you.

To Join the Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82079214648?pwd=NXpMTVNkRnRQitlenVVK1FINVR1QT09>

Meeting ID: 820 7921 4648

Passcode: 167580