

Christ Church News (51)
by and for the Christ Church Family
21st February 2021

Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

How do you spend your days during Lent? Is it just the same as any other time of the year, or is there – should there – be a purpose to this time before the celebrations of Easter? There are a variety of resources that we can call upon and I expect we all have our favourites. Today, I write this at the very start of the Lenten Season, Ash Wednesday, and my dilemma is - which resource do I choose to supplement our weekly Lenten Group! Can one have too much of a good thing if we decide to follow more than one publication?

I suppose that it doesn't really matter if we use one or all of the resources at our disposal because they all have something to offer; they all help us to think and reflect on different aspects of what it means to journey through Lent.

Not being much of a Radio 4 aficionado, I am indebted to David Booth for pointing me in the direction of the Radio 4 daily service website and the Lent Retreat offered there, which covers, not just Lent, but also Easter week. www.onlineprayer.net

Here are the details of what it has to offer....

Welcome to 'Knowing Jesus', a retreat open to all who are interested in getting to know Jesus better. Christian tradition believes that the person of Jesus Christ reveals God to us. If we are to follow Christ and imitate him, we need to know him through his words and actions as shown in the Gospels. Walk with us through Lent and Easter and really come to understand and love Jesus. We will ponder Gospel stories, reflect on their meaning and see how startlingly relevant Jesus is to living a truly human life in the 21st Century. This retreat, produced in Scotland by the Society of Jesus – Jesuits - a Catholic religious order, is open to all throughout the world.

Each day, until the 11th April, a guided meditation is offered through picture, prayer and reading in the style of Ignatian spirituality. *'Ignatian spirituality is a Catholic spirituality named after 16th-century St Ignatius of Loyola, who founded the Jesuit order. It is a pathway that is rooted in the Christian tradition which assumes that God is at work within and throughout all that exists and encourages us to get to know Christ and serve him through our lives.'*

However you choose to travel through the days of Lent, I pray that God will bless you and enrich your life through His word in Scripture, and His presence in prayer.

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

Word for today Mark 1: 9-15

'And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angel waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.' Mark 1: 12-15

Meditation of John the Baptist

What was he doing, going off into the wilderness like that? I'd baptised him just moments earlier, seen God's blessing rest upon him – confirmation, if any were needed, that he was the one sent from God. He was the Messiah for whom we longed and I'd expected him to hit the ground running - to rally support, energise the crowds, lay claim at once to his throne. But, instead, he disappeared, heading off into the hills, and no sight or sound of him for weeks to come!

Was he having second thoughts, I wondered? Was the job too much for him? Or had I simply misunderstood him?

I watched ... and I waited ... torn between a mixture of dread and hope, until, at last, word came that he was healing the sick, saving the lost, proclaiming the dawn of God's kingdom. Suddenly I understood. He needed to experience the wasteland of temptation before he was ready to transform the desert of human life. He'd faced the stark choice of self or others, of taking the easy way or choosing the hard way, and he'd resolved to give his all.

Quite simply, but wonderfully, he'd entered the wilderness to lead us out!



Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, when we wrestle with temptation,
struggling to overcome the voice within that seeks to lead us astray,
remind us that we are not left to face it alone.

When we fall to temptation,
giving in yet again to what we know to be wrong,
compromising our convictions, denying your love, betraying our calling,
remind us that you understand.

When we despair of ourselves,
frustrated at our weakness, our lack of faith,
our fragile commitment and our feeble resolve,
remind us that we are not forgotten.

Teach us that you too faced temptation, and overcame it,
that you turned your back on the rewards of this world
so that we might rejoice in the riches of your kingdom.

Help us to receive your generous forgiveness
and to walk your way more faithfully,
not in **our** strength, but in **yours**.

Amen.

Gathered for Prayer....

Gathered for Prayer meets on Zoom **every Wednesday at 9 am and 7 pm** Here's the link....

To Join the Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVKeWdvdand6QT09>

Meeting ID: 574 272 2693

Passcode: xsX5UM

Lent Study Group on Zoom

The second in the series 'Holy Habits – Following Jesus' will be tomorrow evening (**Monday 22nd February**).

I will be opening the meeting **from 7:15 pm** so that we can make a prompt **start at 7:30 pm** – hope to see you then.

To Join the Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82079214648?pwd=NXpMTVNkRnlrQitlenVVK1FINVR1QT09>

Meeting ID: 820 7921 4648

Passcode: 167580

From Ed Martin

The opening prayer in the service on 7 February brought home to me how thankful we should be to God for his love and his goodness towards us. Spurred by similar thinking I had written a short Chorus of Thankfulness back in 2012.

The words draw upon the following scriptures:

Psalm 13:5; Isaiah 54:10; Psalm 89:2; Psalm 33:5; John 10:28; Psalm 139:13-16;

Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5,6; 1 John 3:1; Philippians 2:6-8; Titus 2:14;

Galatians 4:4,5; Colossians 2:13-15; 1 Peter 1:18-21.

Here they are:

Thank you, Lord, for your unfailing love.
It is unshakeable, it fills the Earth.
Nothing can snatch me from your ever-loving care;
You've held me in your hand from my birth.
And I'm so thankful, Lord, that you are always near.
No matter what may come, I have no need to fear.
I am a child of God; to you I'm very dear.
Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

You left your glorious throne,
Came here to die in my stead.
You paid the price for my sin on the cross.
Then in triumph you rose from the dead.

(Sheet music and MP3 files attached with this newsletter)

Remember Sheila Wimbush on
Tuesday, 23rd February at 3 pm
when her funeral will be held at Christ Church.
(All allowed places are taken)