

Christ Church News (49)

by and for the Christ Church Family

7th February 2021

Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

I wonder how long it is since you stepped through the doors of Christ Church? Sadly, some folks have barely left their homes since the first lockdown and, even during the brief respite during the latter part of 2020, new restrictions and a further lockdown has meant that, once again, our vision of church has been that of empty spaces and the fading echo of worship.



Well, whilst we may not have been open for Sunday services, the work of maintaining the Christ Church premises has been carrying on despite our absence. It's amazing what you can get done when no-one is around!! More importantly, our community mission has still been active in the form of the Child Contact Centre and the valuable work that they do.

As Kathleen Davies told me:

'Chichester Child Contact Centre has continued to facilitate supported contact for local families since we were able to reopen in August 2020. How have we done this? Primarily, it is thanks to the support and goodwill of Christ Church members as the Trustees allow us to continue to open. We do not regard this as a passive response honouring room bookings but as a generous gift in these difficult times.'

'We would be delighted if we could recruit more male volunteers as many of our non-resident parents are fathers. A contact centre volunteer job is rarely exciting and often, quite frankly, mundane, but there is a unique joy in seeing children grow in confidence at being able to meet their much loved but absent parent on a predictable schedule and for both parents to move towards positive co-parenting.'

We long to see the time when Christ Church will, once again, resound with the chatter of voices at the daily Coffee drop-in, the hustle and bustle of groups meeting, and the walls echoing the sound of music, singing and praising God during worship. But for now, we must be patient – though sometimes that feels like it's wearing precariously thin! There will come a time when we can gather again in our building; but let us not forget, and give thanks for, the work which goes on unnoticed - nor the fact that church does not necessarily need four walls and a roof – as Carol Rose Ikeler wrote in her *Hymn* to the tune *'The Bard of Armagh'*

The Church is wherever God's people are praising,
knowing they're wanted and loved by their Lord.

The Church is wherever Christ's followers are trying
to live and to share out the good news of God.

The Church is wherever God's people are loving,
where all are forgiven and start once again,
where all are accepted, whatever their background,
whatever their past and whatever their pain.

The Church is wherever God's people are seeking
to reach out and touch folk wherever they are --
conveying the Gospel, its joy and its comfort,
to challenge, refresh, and excite and inspire.

The Church is wherever God's people are praising,
knowing we're wanted and loved by our Lord.

The Church is where we as Christ's followers are trying
to live and to share out the good news of God.

Wherever you are, never forget that the family of faith you belong to is always there and always ready to respond when help is needed.

Yours in Christ, Helen <><

Word for today --- Mark 1: 29-39

'In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.'

Meditation of Simon Peter

It wasn't just **us** searching for him; it was **everyone**, or so it seemed at the time – a never ending procession coming up with the same question: where's he gone?

And the truth is we'd no more idea than any of them, for Jesus had got up during the night and vanished.

We found him later, out in the hills, deep in contemplation and we assumed he'd simply gone to spend time with God – to pray and reflect on his calling.

Looking back, though, I wonder if there was more to it than that: whether there was a lesson behind his disappearance - as important for you and me as for any.

You see, he knew the crowds would be clamouring after him, his name the talk of the town after the wonders he'd performed. So why not milk the applause, make the most of a receptive audience while he could? That's what **I'd** have done in his place.

But not Jesus: quite the opposite.

He wanted them to **look** for him - to seek until they found – and, by that, he meant finding, not just **him**, but the truth of who he was, the meaning of his message, the reason he'd come.

That's what he was after: not admirers or thrill-seekers drawn by his signs and wonders, but people hungry to know more and truly ready to search.

They'd glimpsed a little but there was more to discover, more to be revealed – and the same is true for us.

Seek, and you **will** find.

Prayer

Saviour Christ, what do we look for in you?

We like to think that it's truth, light and life but, in reality, our motives are less exalted:
more about the secular than the sacred, about **our ends** rather than **your will**.

Teach us to long to know you better, to seek your way
and to yearn for deeper faith and understanding,
so that, in searching, we may truly find.

Amen.

Gathered for Prayer....

Gathered for Prayer meets every Wednesday at 9 am and 7 pm ...I'd love to see you there! Here's the link....

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVKeWdvdand6QT09>
Meeting ID: 574 272 2693
Passcode: xsX5UM

Another Composition from Ed Martin

files attached to the email

'Our church in Florida was an independent church that was not associated with any denomination. So, we were responsible for all the property owned by the church and all costs relating to its upkeep. In 2008 we completed the building of a new 400-seat worship building to replace the 220-seat one that had been built in 1956. As we brought the new building into service, I began thinking of a song inspired by Psalm 84. I didn't eventually complete it until 2011.'

Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord. ... Better are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. ... Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.