

Christ Church News (48)

by and for the Christ Church Family

31st January 2021

Musings from the Manse

Due to being on 'leave', this week Rev'd Ian Field brings you his thoughts....

Leadership

I am writing on the day a new president is inaugurated in America. I suspect I am not alone to feel a deep sense of relief! There was so much about the previous president's leadership which gave cause for deep concern.

The coming of a new leader usually brings hope and optimism. At this time there are real grounds for hope because the new president makes no secret of his Christian background. We trust that he will bring Christian values to his leadership.

So, what is distinctive and valuable about Christian leadership? Firstly, and this sounds contradictory, its prime motive should be to serve. At the last supper with his disciples Jesus took the role of a servant. He washed his disciples' feet. In the eyes of some he demeaned himself, but he said, *"Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me teacher and Lord, and so I am. I, your teacher and Lord, have washed your feet. You then should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you so that you will do just what I have done for you."* (John 13:12-15)

The Christian leader's prime concern will not be for self-aggrandisement but for the health and welfare of those he or she seeks to serve. Christian leadership will also spring from a genuine love for those led. Jesus said, *"Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man."*

Loving others means giving time and thought and care to understanding their situation and concerns.

The other key word for a truly Christian style of leadership is "Shepherding." The good shepherd protects the flock, heals its injuries, and holds it together. Christian leadership is serving, supporting, uniting and giving. The good leader's life should match his words. He should also set an example. Billy Graham, a great campaigner and Christian leader, said,

"We are the bibles the world is reading. We are the creeds the world is needing. We are the sermons the world is heeding."

Let us pray and vote for leaders who will be good examples of Christian leadership.

Ian Field

Word for today Mark 1: 21-28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Mark 2:21, 22

Meditation of a member of the synagogue in Capernaum

What was it that made his teaching so special?

I've asked myself that, time and again, and still struggle to answer it fully. Yet there's no doubt he had an impact unlike any other - his words holding us mesmerised to the point that we'd have sat all day listening to him and still have come back for more.

It wasn't just the way he expressed himself – eloquent though he was – nor his voice or manner: such things, in a way, were incidental. It was more the conviction with which he spoke, the sense of assurance that radiated from him, as though he were directly in touch with God - not just interpreting his message but hearing it firsthand and passing it on.

He believed in what he said, and, more important, acted upon it. His words rang true because he practised what he preached – the man and the message as one.

Yet here's the strange thing: though he taught with such authority, there was no arrogance about him - no tub-thumping or intolerance, still less any sense of being holier-than-thou. Rather, he exuded love, gentleness, compassion, humility - his concern so evidently being for us rather than himself.

The scribes and the Pharisees are sincere enough, I know that – explaining the Scriptures as best they can – but this man was different. He brought faith to life in a way I've never known before. He didn't just speak God's word but made it real among us: almost, you could say, giving it flesh.



Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

help us to hear your voice, not just in the words of Scripture, but in moments of prayer,
in times of fellowship, in the beauty of nature and the events of life.

Help us, in all the uncertainties of this world, all its relativism and conundrums, to hear you speaking,
and in your message of love and compassion to recognise the word of life,
humble yet of true authority.

Amen.

adapted from 'A most amazing man' by Nick Fawcett.

Gathered for Prayer....

Gathered for Prayer is back on the 3rd February I'd love to see you there! Here's the link....

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPV0ZJNndRWVVKeWdvand6QT09>
Meeting ID: 574 272 2693 Passcode: xsX5UM

Remembering

Some will remember Rev. Peter McIntosh, who has led Elders Days at Christ Church. Peter has died after suffering from cancer for some years. Long involved in Lay Training, he was, for some years, Director of the URC's Windermere Centre and, in 1999, Moderator of the General Assembly. He and his wife, Kay, (the only Deaconess in the URC), have attended Haywards Heath Methodist Church for the last few years. Your prayers for Kay would be appreciated.

Sheila Wimbush

George would like it to be known that Sheila died peacefully at home last Sunday and a date for her funeral will be announced when known. Below are some of the tributes received from members of Christ Church.

such a lovely lady who will be missed by all who knew her... *Doreen Field*

so easy to talk to and very brave in her final illness. *Gilly Hansford*

such a kind and lovely lady; we will miss her a lot. *Dorothy Armah*

...a valued member of the East Broyle Housegroup; her contributions to our discussions were much appreciated. She was also a great help on the Pop-In team who served on the first Friday of each month over many years. We shall all miss her greatly.

Vanessa Bastow

Sheila was not afraid to embrace the new technology that developed; she was one of the first team that put the service preparation into a program called 'Easy Worship' and then projected the slides onto the screen in the service. She had a great sense of humour; just before Christmas she delighted in telling us that she was able to reassure a lady who had spotted Jeremy on the roof that he was clearing the drains - not stealing the (non-existent) lead!

Mary Quiney

The last time I saw Sheila was when she was very kindly planting some bulbs in the tubs outside Church in memory of Anne Wales, planned to be in flower by the time of the first anniversary of Anne's death and indeed some are already starting to come into bud. This kind act for others was carried out even when Sheila was far from well. *Kathleen Davies*

and from Richard Spong....

Throughout the years that I have been a Church Trustee, I have been very aware of the quiet, but very valued, and continuous contributions that Sheila (and George) made towards the life and work of the Church. I know that their commitment and service in various roles extended back many years before that.

It seemed that I was often the first 'customer' in the queue for a coffee on many weekday mornings that I visited the Church to collect Treasurer's correspondence or to meet contractors visiting the premises for maintenance purposes. Sheila was often on duty behind the counter and always had time for a friendly chat, and to keep visiting workers supplied with refreshments. In recent years, however, Sheila and George reliably undertook important work for Christ Church that few people ever saw.

At frequent intervals they tested the fire alarms on both floors and Sheila always told me if she had seen or heard of any safety issues that the Property Group needed to be aware of. So, they were looking after safety matters long before Safeguarding had the priority focus that it has today. They maintained all the tubs and shrubs around the exterior of the premises. Sheila ensured that the Church never ran out of Communion supplies and probably other tasks that were undertaken quietly in the background. Very recently, it was Sheila who called me to say that she and George were sad that they no longer felt able to continue these responsibilities, so ensuring that the Trustees became aware of roles to be reassigned.

The Christ Church community, and the groups that Sheila supported within it, have lost a great and faithful friend.

The instructions for the live services tomorrow at 9 am and 10:30 am on the 'Together Channel' are attached again – see the previous email