

Connected

Sunday 14th February 2021
Sunday before Lent

Verse For The Week

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

(Acts 3: 19)

Sermon Snippets

Acts 3: 11-20

We're continuing to look at the apostle Peter's speech to the crowd after the healing of the lame beggar. He sets out the facts first and then looks for a response. The facts are that this Jesus was "the author of life" (v 15); our very world was made through him and, as God, he sustains our very life and breath. Yet the deep irony was that a very similar crowd allowed life to be taken from him only a few short weeks before as he died on the cross. The wonder was that death could not hold him and he was raised back to life and brings life to all who follow him now.

That was quite a message but it wasn't given to them for "their information only" - no - this gospel demanded a response. . . and the first part of that was to recognise their own part in rejecting this 'author of life' and repent. What does that word "repent" actually mean for you and me? We weren't in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago but, in different ways, we've all pushed God's way to one side.

That's followed by the best of the gospel news - our sins wiped out and times of refreshing from God to come . . .

Who was St Valentine?

There are differing reports regarding this saint. It is even possible that there may have been two people of the same name! But who was he and why is 14th February known as 'Valentine's Day'?



The most common story was that in the 3rd century he was Bishop of the province of Terni in Umbria, central Italy and was placed under house arrest. The Basilica di San Valentino (pictured above) can be found in modern Terni. It is believed that Saint Valentine is buried there.

Having converted the local judge to Christianity, who then as a result released his Christian prisoners, Valentine was sent to Rome. He was alleged to be marrying Christian couples as well as helping Christians who were being persecuted.

It is generally agreed that he was martyred under the reign of Claudius II when Christianity was outlawed in the Roman Empire. In 496 AD Pope Gelasius marked February 14th as a celebration in honour of his martyrdom.

The first reference to the idea of St Valentine's Day being a special day for lovers comes in the Chaucer poem *The Parliament of Fowls* written around 1382. The romantic tradition grew in Europe in the middle ages and became popular in England in the 18th century.

Watch Sunday's service

at www.ccwsm.org.uk

Go to the 'Church Life' menu and click on the 'Sunday Services' page.

Prayer Pointers

Monday

'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof'. Creator God, please inspire those implementing ways to protect the environment by investing in technologies that reduce carbon and tackle pollution. Please pray for all the members of our churches involved in leading or managing businesses.

Tuesday

We pray for wisdom and protection for all Doctors, Nurses, Receptionists and other support workers in our local Surgeries and Vaccination Centres. May we give thanks for the good work of all those working for the NHS locally.

Wednesday

Please give thanks for the work of each teacher that you know; praying for protection and wisdom for them and similarly for each teacher and member of Staff at Christ Church School.

Thursday

We pray for Andy Page as he serves through Crosswinds in the worldwide Prayer and Mission community, mobilising, connecting and informing prayers across the continents using his media and technology skills. We pray for his work among the international Bible translation and outreach organisations who are mobilising prayer for their shared vision - to reach all of the unreached people-groups with the Word of God and the message of HOPE that we have in Jesus by 2030, a vision entitled 'How will they know if they have not heard?'

Friday

By this time in the week the Church At Home packs will be available in the Christ Church lobby. Please pray for all who benefit from them, either individually or in groups, as they use the packs to further study what is preached. Give thanks for those who work hard to create them.

Saturday

Please give thanks for all the unseen work that goes on behind the scenes even as the Churches are closed most of the time. Please pray for all four Church Wardens: Pat and Meg at Emmanuel, and Bev and Angie at Christ Church, for the Church Treasurers and Church Secretaries, and those who clean and sterilize the churches.

Sunday

Please pray for all the folks that you see on the screen during the 10.30am online joint service this morning. Please pray for spiritual protection on the person delivering the sermon and God's blessing on all those who will take part. Please visualise three other people whom you might otherwise have met in church this morning and pray God's special blessing on them this week.

Notices

Church Office Closed

The office will be closed on Wednesday 17th February. Please note that as this is half term, the church building will not be open for private prayer that day.

Prayer Opportunities at Christ Church

Even though our two churches are closed for public worship, Christ Church is open on weekday mornings (except 17 Feb) for private prayer from 09.00 to 12.00. There are two helpful prayer stations in the church which provide visual prompts.

Please use the hand sanitiser as you come in to the church, wear a face covering (unless exempt) and follow the rules on social distancing.

In addition we now have a Bible Story Trail in the church garden. This is a great opportunity for people of all ages to engage with the story of God's love in Creation. It even has something to say about Coronavirus!

Church has got Talent

If you would like to record yourself singing, playing music, reading a poem that you have written, or anything similar, please send it to Tom this week. We will then be able to include it in our 'show' which can be accessed on the Christ Church website on Saturday 20th February at 7.30pm.

The idea is not to prove how talented we all are but to use this as a chance to connect with members of the church family and have a bit of fun.

See the box on page 4 for more details, or you can get in touch with Tom.

CAP Newsletter

The January newsletter from Christians Against Poverty is now available to view on the Christ Church website. [Please click on this link](#), and let's pray for CAP as demand increases.

Coffee after the Service...

Church At Home Packs

Each week we produce a Church at Home Pack to go with the Bible Teaching from our Sunday Service. You can find them In the NOTES section underneath the service on our website, just above the BULLETIN section where you can find the Connected newsletter!

Download Files

- Notes
- Bulletin

The packs are full of ideas and material to help you think about and explore the teaching more over the week. We recognise that not everyone learns in the same way and that we each have different ways of meeting with God. With this in mind, the pack includes lots of different ideas, activities and suggestions. Each section has a different purpose and will appeal to people of different ages and stages of faith.

We start with **'Gather Together'** which gives us a written prayer to start and a regular 'Action reminder'. The idea is to get yourself ready to meet with God.

Some people really benefit from structure and repeated words or actions – just like the familiar things we say and do in a church service (The Liturgy).

The next section is **'Read Together'** which includes two versions of the Bible passage from the service. Sometimes we include other versions if it is helpful.

Looking at different versions of the same text can help our understanding and it's good to re-read the passage.

'Watch Together' follows next and this contains a number of videos on the theme of the sermon, some animated and some not. This section can be helpful for more visual learners and can provide a different perspective on the Bible passage or theme.

The next two sections are **'Talk Together'** and **'Study Together'**. For those who enjoy discussion or a Bible study, these sections are ideal. In fact, some of our Life Groups are using the packs each week as they meet over Zoom. The 'Talk Together' questions can be used in families, individually, or you could arrange to phone a friend each week and chat about them together – the same goes for the 'Study Together' section! Sharing experiences with people at all stages of the faith journey is really helpful!

There's so much good stuff here that it didn't all fit in this week! See next week's Connected for Part 2.

Here are some comments from people who have been using the packs over the last year:

"The Church at Home Packs have been fantastic as there are activities and something for everyone to take part in to grow in faith. We use some of the material in our Life Group, the study together and talk together parts of the pack are used each week to guide us through our studies. It is a great way to reflect in the Sunday service and a great way of sharing our thoughts and what God is saying to us all.

The packs have helped to keep the connection to church during lockdown and are an extra resource to help focus on God"

Ray P

"We find the relevant references in the Bible which refer to the Sunday sermon very helpful."

Rod & Sandra

"We have found them helpful to perhaps find a more child friendly version of what is being talked about in the main service. The prayers and readings aimed at the children have been helpful."

Steph C

One Life Group uses the pack beginning with the Gather Together Prayer, followed by the Talk and Study Together sections. It sometimes uses thoughts from Reflect Together and finishes with the Pray Together section:

"WE THINK THAT THE CHURCH AT HOME PACK IS REALLY USEFUL FOR REMINDING US OF SUNDAY'S SERMON MESSAGE, AND THEN POINTS US TO RELATED BIBLE REFERENCES. THE QUESTIONS ENCOURAGE US INTO DEEPER DISCUSSION."

Jane & Dave

"We love all the links to the videos and music. Definitely introduced us to songs we didn't know and the boys love anything with cartoons or puppets. We link them all on a YouTube playlist made on my phone and cast it to the TV."

Vikki H

Another coffee, anyone?

A Thank-you Note

To our friends at Christ Church and Emmanuel,
On behalf of the staff, children and parents of Christ Church Primary School, I would like to say a huge thank you for the kind donations of laptops and tablet computers. As you know, the school serves children from a wide range of backgrounds, some of whom have been greatly affected by the pandemic and/or who are unable to afford a computer to access education. Your kind donations have already been allocated to children in need and are being used to ensure that all children are getting the education they deserve.

We would also like to thank you for the individually named gifts and beautifully painted thank you card. It is so heart-warming to know that we are being thought of. Thank you all once again.

God bless.

Aaron Rogers (KS2 Leader at Christ Church Primary School)

Book Review

The Bible - A Story That Makes Sense of Life

Andrew Ollerton

In November I read a review of this book in the Church Times and ordered a copy from Life Bookshop.

I only started reading it in January and feel it has been written for me! It illustrates how the Old Testament is tied up with the New Testament and then with life today with all its stresses and strains, joys and sorrows.

Andrew Ollerton writes "The Bible's ancient history remains relevant. We are not Israel enslaved in Egypt, but the Israelites' quest for freedom mirrors our own. We are not with Jesus on the shores of lake Galilee, but our need for a Messiah is just as real. In our modern age, perhaps we need the Bible's grand narrative and ancient wisdom more than ever".

It is a book I highly recommend to everyone and anyone.

Meg

In the Beginning

We all learnt last Sunday that the opening words of the opening book of the Bible were 'In the Beginning...' But which two other books of the Bible start with that sentiment?

The answers are John's Gospel which starts with exactly the same words, and Mark's Gospel which begins 'The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus..'. The word Beginning is the same in each case but are not the same as the word 'start' as in the start of a race. They are much more like the word 'Origin'; the very beginning or the event that brought about.

Why do you think that two of the four Gospels begin with echoes of Genesis?

Terry

Church has

**GOT
T★LENT**

Whether you have a talent for singing, poetry, playing music –or any hidden talent you would like to share.

Film your performance on your mobile phone (in landscape please).

Send your recording to Tom: either using WhatsApp on 07922 214028 or e-mail to Tom on vicar@ccwsm.org.uk using 'wetransfer' (can be found on google and is very easy to use)

Grab some drinks and snacks and let the show begin on

Saturday 20th February at 7.30 pm

You will be able to access the recorded show via the church's website

Contact Details

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