



ST CHRISTOPHER'S 'CATCH UP CHURCH' NEWSLETTER

Sunday 25th April 2021



NEWS UPDATE

Junior Church



A reminder that if you plan on bringing a child to Junior Church you need to notify Louise Walton in advance - youngpeople@stchristopherslea.org.

Numbers will be capped at 15, which includes children and adults. If full capacity is reached we would rather inform families of this in advance than have to turn people away on the day.

St. Christopher's Annual Meeting 25th April

We have made the AGM reports available for those who have not been able to attend the meeting. These can be watched as a video, or read in printed out on request. The reports provide insight into the life of our church as we look back on the year that has been, and look forward to the future.

Malcolm's Leaving Gift



A big THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to the collection for Malcolm's retirement as treasurer. We have obtained some lovely gifts for him. However, as you may know Malcolm suffered a stroke on Easter Monday, and although he is recovering well he is not able to travel to us until the latter end of next month. This is been a source of sadness to us all. He sounds quite bright when I've spoken to him on the phone, and he is doing OK.

For this reason we have decided to defer presenting him with his thank you gifts until a later date when he can be present alongside other members of the church

community.

Congratulations Pat and Eric

Congratulations to Pat and Eric Walton who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on Friday.



BIBLE READING – John 11-18

'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I

know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'



THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE – Written by Mike Clayton

Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."
(verse 11)

I think that these must rank as some of the most stirring words that Jesus ever said – I am the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep, for us. This goes to the heart of the Gospel message, what it means for us to follow Christ, to live as he lived, to pick up his Cross and follow him.

And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Jesus is that Good Shepherd, Our Great High Priest who has gone before us. As John writes earlier in the Gospel, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)



Today's message is very simple really – to think on what it means for us here and now that Jesus is our Good Shepherd. So many things follow because he is that Good Shepherd - earlier in this same chapter we read,

"...the sheep hear His voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out... and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice..." (v.4).

And all this time, the sheep are living under the shadow of the Cross, in the same way that Our Lord Jesus has laid down his life for us, so we too lay our lives down for him and for each other - we no longer live for ourselves but for him. That's who we live for, that's who we fight for, and who we are prepared if need be to die for.

Now I know you might be thinking, but Mike here we are in sleepy old Preston, that all sounds a bit dramatic ...what do you mean to live for Christ, to fight for Christ, to fight the good fight, and yes sometimes that means the way of the cross, the shadow of the cross over our lives. Well, it doesn't sound much fun, I don't much like the sound of that!

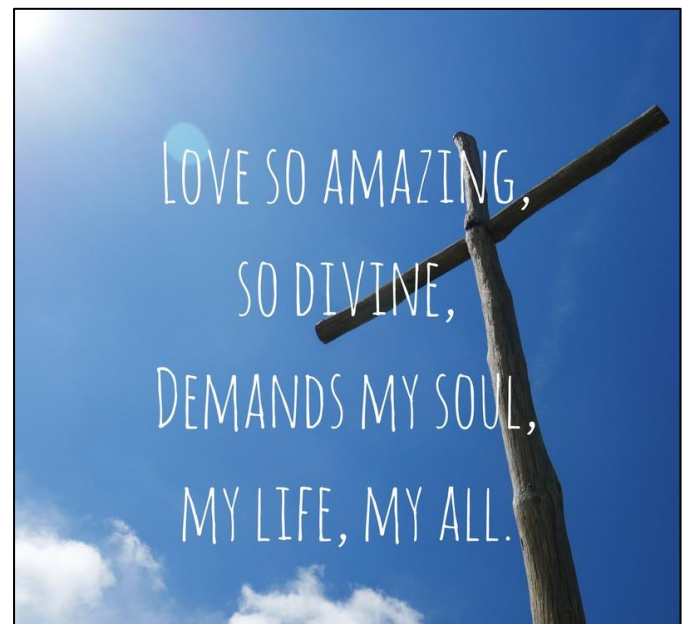
Yet listen again to what Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (v.11)

Quite simply, God's own dear Son the Lord Jesus Christ gave his life on the Cross for you and for me, his blood shed for us all. And it is by his death and resurrection on the third day through the power of the Holy Spirit that we know this new life in Christ Jesus. All our sins forgiven, washed clean by his most precious blood.

The Lord Jesus Christ has done of all this for you and for me.

Really - when push comes to shove - isn't there only ever one true proper response? If someone were to give their own life for you, wouldn't there always from that day onwards that sense that you owe them a debt that you can never ever fully repay? That someone loved you so much and loves you still, and calls you by name to come and follow.

To follow the one true Good Shepherd, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lays down his life for his sheep. **Amen.**



Prayers – Written by Peter

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are our Good Shepherd.

May we know you in our life as our guide, our provider, our protector, and friend.

We thank you that there is no limit to the depth of your love,
that you were even willing to lay down your life.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, may the response of our lives be worthy of your great sacrifice.

Teach us to lay down our lives for others, and for the Gospel, that we might live no longer for ourselves,
but for You.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Sovereign Lord, we pray for ourselves and our nation at this time.

We thank you for the success of the vaccination programme,
and we pray that more and more people will come to be protected against the coronavirus.

As restrictions are steadily lifted, may we remember those who continue to
suffer from long term ill health as a result of the coronavirus.

Open our eyes to see the needs of others around us – where the impact of the pandemic has taken its toll –
and may we be ready to play our part in rebuilding a healthy society.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Father of Creation,

You made a world of wonder, and you declared it to be good.

We take our place within the choir of creation,
within the dance of biodiversity, the rich tapestry of life.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, the Lord's name is to be praised.

From coral reef to grasslands, from temperate forest to savanna,
From mountain high to ocean deep, the Lord's name is to be praised.

And yet, O God, we are making silent the symphony of praise.

Our misuse of power leads to endings and extinctions - forgive our foolish ways.
Our exploitive economic system has encroached into holy habitats - forgive our foolish ways.
Protect our oceans, save our rainforests, and lead us to a new place of respect for your planet.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

We thank you that this week the USA has pledged its commitment to reduce carbon emissions, and other
greenhouse gases. We pray that the governments of the nations will honour their commitment to ending the
harm to this Your beautiful planet, that we may learn to live sustainably, and in harmony with
the whole created order.

Merciful Father; **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

