



ST CHRISTOPHER'S 'SUSPENDED CHURCH' NEWSLETTER

Sunday 29th November 2020



NEWS UPDATE

Recommencement of Church Services



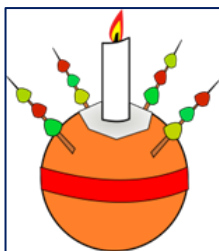
We are back next Sunday! It will be a Holy Communion service on Sunday 6th December, at the usual time of 9.30am. JUNIOR CHURCH will also be running from next Sunday (6th Dec), having had to delay recommencement last month.

Children of all ages are able to come along again this Sunday.

Christmas Services

We are making plans for Christmas, on the understanding that carol services will be allowable with social distancing and hygiene measures in place. At present we can confirm the following:

- Sunday 13th December – Christingle for Junior Church in the back room. Packs will be sent out in advance for families to make christingles at home, then bring them along on the day. When we get to the lighting of the christingles the adult service will connect with the Junior Church via video link. Please let Dawn or Louise know if you would like to participate, with a christingle pack delivered to your home (dawnmay62@hotmail.co.uk).



- Sunday 20th December – Carol service at 6.30pm. *Please note that there will be no morning church service on this date.*
- Thursday 24th December – We propose to hold two identical crib services on Christmas Eve, so as not to go over our covid-safe limit. The first will be at 4.00pm, and the second at 6.00pm.



The Carol Service (20th Dec) and the Crib Services (24th Dec) will need to be pre-booked – more details to follow. In the meantime, if you want to reserve a place you can send Hilary a little email. The address is admin@stchristopherslea.org.

Salvation Army Christmas Appeal



Thank you to those who have managed to provide a donation towards the Salvation Army appeal. We are taking the toys and gifts down to the Citadel on Harrington Street on Thursday (3rd Dec), so there is still potential for a last-minute donation if you get in touch over the next few days.

PCC Charitable Giving



For the last few years, the PCC has given away £1000 of its own funds to outside charities. When the PCC met last week it was recognised that this is not within our means this year, with 2020 hitting us very hard financially.

When we went into lockdown in March, we were collecting for Lancashire Mind during Lent. We have topped up the £50 that was raised in Lent with another £250 from PCC funds, to make our donation up to £300.

A further communication regarding our church finances will follow in the coming week.

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

This week's message has been written by Rev Dr Mike Clayton, and is based on this little passage from the start of St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.



Bible Reading – 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

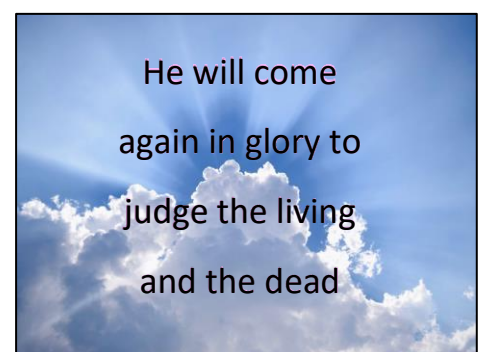
I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Firm in our frailties

“He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Today is Advent Sunday when we begin the season of Advent – and yes we remember Jesus coming into the world as a child in a manger, we look ahead towards the story of Christmas, the Son of God coming into the world, our world, when the word became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us.

But in Advent we also think of his coming on that day when He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. And it is only by grace that anyone will be able to stand before him on that day, only his precious blood shed for us on the cross, only the blood of Jesus which cleanses us from every sin will save us. Only then will we be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.





We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are all “needy” in that sense, all of us need his miracle working saving grace at work continually in our lives, his love, his forgiveness.

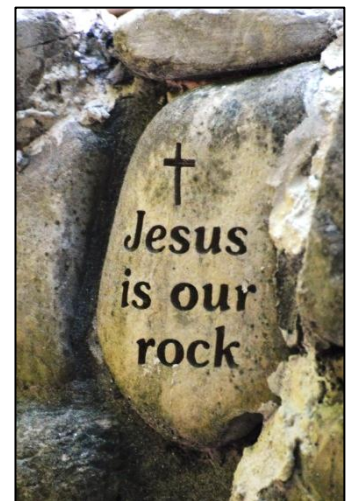
Coming back to our verse, did you notice the first part? “He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Do you notice how Paul is saying that it is God that will keep us firm to the end? It is the Lord who will keep us firm.

And yet it is easy to become down-hearted, aware as we are of our frailties and our weakness, lacking that steadiness, and at times our faith may seem to vanish like the morning mist - particularly in these strange times that we’re all going through. And if there was a Christian “check-point” that you had to drive through at the start of every morning, like a border crossing, where you had to show your documentation, answer some questions correctly, before you were allowed through – then if there was something like that to pass through every morning, then you may be thinking that only on some days might you make it through and be allowed out the other side to journey on.

Well if that’s how things seem at times for you, then all I would say is this:-

We are not the rock, the rock is Christ, he is the rock. Rather than trying to steel yourself, to toughen yourself up - admirable though those things are - let your strength be by turning to him, turning to Jesus, resting on the Rock. For the promise we have is that the Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18).

We are not the rock, the Rock is Christ – why don’t you ask Him to be your Rock today, even if that is all that you can manage to ask?



Prayers – Written by Jim Berry



O God, our loving Father, we thankyou for the hope with which you have filled our lives.

Thankyou that because of Christ’s coming we can live each day in the knowledge that ultimately you hold all things, including ourselves, in your love and care.

Lord, come, and come again. Come into your world.

Come into our lives that we might have hope.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Father, we thank you for giving us your Son to be the light of the world.

As we light our Advent candles and open the doors of our Advent calendars help us to gradually open our minds and hearts to his coming.

Your love came as a baby, may we cherish our children and our families.

Your love came as a preacher proclaiming the Good News of salvation,
may we cherish our Christian faith and share it.

Your love will come again as judge at the end of time,
may we live by the law of love and walk in the light of the same Christ our Lord.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those in need of the hope and joy of the Good News we have to share;

for those who are lonely and those who are alone,
for those whose lives are filled with fear and frustration,
for those who are under pressure at home or at work,
for those who feel that they cannot cope any longer
for those who are being crushed by the strain of living,
and for those whose lives are drifting further and further from God.

Let us pray for any we know in special need at this time.....

(Pause to think of people you would like to pray for)

And we pray for anyone we know who has lost loved ones.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Father we pray for ourselves.

Keep convincing us of your tremendous power.

Assure us of the height, depth, length and breadth of your love.

By your Holy Spirit, save us from despair,

Fill us with your power and be present with us as we prepare to welcome your Son,

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Merciful Father

Accept these prayers for the sake of you Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

