

The Parish of Christchurch



*The Priory Church of the Holy Trinity, Christchurch
St George, Jumpers • St John at Purewell*

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Sunday 13th June 2021.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Acts 2. 42.

Dear Friends

Have you ever stopped to think about how life for those very first Christians was different to the one that we encounter in our daily lives today? Well in many ways the Christian life that we both enjoy and treasure has little in common, in a visible form at least, to that experienced by our earliest brothers and sisters in Christ. For them, danger loomed in seemingly every direction, from the Roman authorities to the Jewish leaders. This ever increasing number of disciples of Jesus of Nazareth were at best troublesome and at worst a real threat to the established status quo that others had worked hard to establish, and to which these Christian converts, if allowed to do so, could challenge the carefully ordered state of being that the existing leaders were so content with. They had just executed the ring leader and the last thing they were prepared to allow now was for his deputies to carry on preaching His Good News to anyone and everyone prepared to listen and to follow them.

So these early Christians were often forced to meet in private, underground as it were, with fellow minded men and women, to listen and learn from the eye witnesses of Jesus, to share fellowship, break bread, to pray and as St Paul adds in his letter to the Ephesians, *“To sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Ephesians 4. 19 – 20.) There were no grand and purpose built Churches for such meetings, no fixed liturgy to follow and I feel sure that such gatherings followed far more closely a question and answer session, perhaps in the style of our own “Small Group” study sessions, than that of the Sunday Worship style and content that we freely enjoy today.

Well if such differences are accepted between the then and the now, what unites us is of equal importance and truth. They, and we met and meet together to Worship God, to learn more about God’s purposes and the part that we are called to play in His Kingdom here on earth. Doing this together, in fellowship with one another and in the safety of the Church, we today just like generations before us, feel strengthened, confirmed and equipped to accept the calling that Christ makes to each one of us to be sent out into the world, having been fed with word and sacrament, to live and work in the power of the Holy Spirit, for His praise and glory.

Our Worship and our ability to meet together for such fellowship has been seriously curtailed during the global pandemic. Those elements of Church life and participation that we have hitherto taken somewhat at least for granted, have been stripped away from our faith journeys, and let us be honest here, many of us have struggled with our discipleship, separated as we all have been from the support network which has been so important to our spiritual growth.

Well restrictions are easing now. Life as we had previously known it to be, is at long last returning to some form of normality and the Church doors are once again open to welcome each one of us very personally into the fold and the flock of Christ. Some features will be different, we have had both the time

and the space to focus afresh on our vision personally and collectively as the Church in this parish, and that is something for us all to embrace rather than to fear. But other parts of our faith journeys have never changed, nor will they. The fellowship that we crave for, the desire to grow together as God's people and the willingness to be sent out as beacons of Christ's true light and love are identical to those felt by the first Christians, and each has its grounding in all that we hold so dear in our common identity with one another in our Lord's Church in this Parish today. I hope that each one of you feel that to be both active and true and that we all will feel the true love of God shining in and through our lives today and every day, as we seek to be His faithful people in whatever lies in front of us.

With my love and my Prayers

Richard.

Thank You.

I would like to thank our Churchwardens Colin and Tracy, our PCC secretary Sue, our Lay Pastoral Visitors, Lyn, Virginia and Pat, and my clergy colleagues, Charles, Angela, Graham and James for all of their help and assistance with the coffee and tea sessions that we held in the marquee on Priory House lawn. Thank you also to Susan and Vicky from the Cloisters Café and for their team of volunteers for providing the refreshments and to Maureen for taking the bookings. Thank you to all of you who came to one of these welcome back to Church Parties, it was lovely to see so many of you, to share time with you and to hear all of your news. I hope and pray that each one of you felt something of the joys of fellowship that I have tried to highlight in my letter this week. I hope that we might be able to do something similar, all be it on a rather smaller scale, once again in the not too distant future. I can personally recommend ALL of the cakes on sale in the Cloister's café now!

The Priory Fete. Saturday 3rd July.

The Summer Fete and Craft Fayre will be held on the Priory Lawns from 10-30 a.m. to 4-30 p.m. on Saturday, 3rd July. This will be a perfect opportunity to meet up again with family and friends and enjoy the many stalls and entertainments that we have all missed for so long. To make this a wonderful success we need: Books, Bric-a-Brac, Cakes, Bottles, Plants, Jewellery, items that are "nearly new," Raffle and Tombola prizes and anything else that you are able to donate. If you would like to offer your help in any way, please contact the Event Co-ordinator - Peter Warren - 07912 696990 - coleenwarren@hotmail.com. Please do put this date in your diary and tell your family, friends and neighbours as well.

Clearly the above is subject to good weather and holding the fete outside. A different plan will be devised in the event of bad weather and the necessity to hold the fete inside the Priory. The summer fete will comply with all Government regulations that may be in place on the 3rd July.

Organ Recitals.

The Current series of Organ Recitals is already underway on Thursdays at 12.30pm in the Priory. A warm welcome awaits you.

Cloister's Café and the Priory Gift Shop.

The Cloister's café and the Priory gift shop are both open now between 10.00am and 4pm. Why not take advantage of the good weather and meet up with friends and family at the Priory.