

The Bigger Picture

Doing Church Differently

Week 35

13th December 2020

Word for the week

Words of wisdom from our Pastor, Mike....

Lately, it's been tricky to do much walking because of the wet December weather. However, I did find myself on the canal towpath the other day and the first boat I saw was called, 'Amazing Grace'.

Grace is a word understood in many different ways. In

a Christian context, however, we tend to think about G R A C E: God's Riches At Christ's Expense. What are God's riches? Let me mention two; QUALITY of life and QUANTITY of life.

At Christmas, we remember the coming of the Son of God who was born as a fully human baby at Bethlehem in order to grow up and live a relatively short but perfect life and die on a cross for all of humanity so that you and I can truly live for evermore!

As Christians, we define God's grace as undeserved favour which results in God offering us what we do not deserve which is forgiveness for our sin and a permanent relationship with him as adopted children in his very large family.

There was something else in the water the other day. There was a graceful swan gliding right past that boat. It seems to me that we should be more 'swanlike'. I don't mean elegance of movement but I do think there is a sense that we should seek to be grace-full! If we are saved by grace then surely we should also live by grace.

We can do that by not treating others as we think they deserve. We can do that by forgiving others even when we think they are the ones in the wrong. We can do that by showing favour to people who wind us up.

So, we revel in, 'Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me' and we remember that God has showered totally undeserved kindness on us, partly, so that we can do the same for someone else. No time like the present!



Lighting the Advent Candles

Week 3 - JOY

We light this third advent candle to remind us that the coming of Jesus is the most joyful event in history.

⁸That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them.

They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹The Saviour—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹²And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

(Luke 2:8-12)

What should we pray?

Please pray for...

Sunday - our service this morning as Rachel leads and Mike speaks about the joy of the mother of Jesus.

Monday - Pam Reeve as she recovers from her recent operation.

Tuesday - Jayne who is Sue Rattigan's cousin. Jayne has recently lost her husband, Graham. His funeral is today, 15th December at 3.30 PM.

Wednesday - June as she struggles to deal with Syd's dementia.



Thursday - everyone involved with All Saints Church, Mackworth. The church building was recently burnt to the ground. The cause was arson. Vanessa's sister and brother-in-law live close to this church and were saddened by this development

Friday - Geoffrey, Graham, Sylvia and Irene who are all siblings of Kathy Austin and are all unwell and needing God's touch on them

Saturday - thank God for the availability of at least one vaccine and that it will be distributed quickly around the country and protect the recipients from the virus.

Five Facts about JESUS—part 2

Mike brings us some thoughts for Advent...

Last week, we saw from the Bible that Jesus will be the ultimate **judge** and we also noticed, that when he was on earth, he was an incredible **example** which we should seek to imitate.

For our third fact this week, we read in Philippians 2: 7 *'that he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant.'*

Jesus gave up the riches of heaven and embraced relative poverty. He gave up the worship of angels to be largely unrecognised and unheralded on earth. He left behind a sublime reputation to be wrongly regarded on earth as a glutton and a drunkard but was rightly regarded as somebody who hung around

with 'lowlife'. Voluntarily, he chose to live as a servant to humanity. He gave up his rights and died to set women and men free.

The fourth fact about Jesus is that he is utterly **unique**. He is the only one who can make it possible us to have a relationship with God. In John's Gospel, we read his amazing claim, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' Thus, adoption into God's family comes through Jesus.

Jesus is also unique in that the universe started because of him, 'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.' So, all life begins with Jesus.

He truly is extraordinary... more next week...

SHARON'S SNIPPETS

Be Joy-filled

Advent week 3 and we remember that Jesus's birth is the most joyful event in history.

When the angels visited the shepherds they brought, 'good news that will cause great joy for all the people.' Do you still have the joy of knowing Jesus as your saviour?

This year has been hard for all and very hard for some. It can be difficult to feel any joy when your emotions are saying otherwise.

If you have Jesus at the centre of your life, you have a joy in your spirit that remains with you even when you are sad and struggling.

It comes with trusting God fully in all circumstances and in knowing that He's looking out for you .

You can find joy when you are in the centre of God's will for you. God has a plan for you, young or old, so follow the path he has set for you.

Worship God with all your heart.

Awaken your spirit and know joy in all its fullness.

