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Weekly letter - 12 March 2023 – third Sunday in Lent

Do you know what is on offer?

For the next three weeks, the readings come from John's Gospel, and these gospel passages take us right through to Palm Sunday. As you know, John's gospel is in many ways quite different to Matthew, Mark and Luke – the synoptic gospels. Do read a few sections from John's gospel and note what you sense John adds to your understanding of Jesus. The evangelist of course writes about the same Jesus, but focuses on other aspects of who he was and is, and therefore adds a memorable richness to our understanding about the Son of God.

John 4.5-42

This is quite a long passage, and somehow is stunningly memorable. I'm going to focus on verse 10.

Here Jesus says to the Samaritan woman, if you knew what God has to offer you, you would truly believe, and your eyes would be opened, for I have come to reveal God's feast with you, the self-giving of God has begun. Or put it this way, however hard you try, nothing will or can compare to the feast of joy that comes through God's gifts. Perhaps the question we could ask today, and I of course include myself in this, "why don't we truly believe these words from the Son of God? For in many ways we are like the Samaritan woman – cautious! Let me try and express our dilemma/context like this.

In general we are honest people, and we are therefore willing to pay our taxes, because in principle we know taxes are essential for social justice, for good order/and for the common good. So we pay what is asked of us. But behind the acceptance is the anxiety that we might have to pay more, much more taxes, and this we think will be uncomfortable!

Or put it this way, we like to go down to Langland or Caswell, admire the view, and possible go for a walk which may include taking our shoes off and allowing the water to run over our feet. But, all lovers of the sea, say over and over again, "come in, yup you will get an initial fright, but wow you will so enjoy the refreshing salt water, and you will be so pleased to have gone in!"

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom, will be led by Rev Lewis Rees

Bible Reading: John 4.5-30: 39-42

Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – we will pray for Hall Street, Llanelli

Tea and Chat – Tuesday, 14th - 2 pm.

People are invited to contribute an optional £1 subs which will go towards refreshments and resources, or people are welcome to donate refreshments instead.

Group activities that are carrying on in the Community after the end of the Winter Warmer activities are as follows:

Manselton Community Centre, Elgin Street - Sunday Lunches from 1pm to 4pm - just for March

Circus Eruption at St Luke's, Stepney Street - Wednesdays from 2-6pm - just for March

St Michael's Church, Manor Road - Craft Group, Fridays from 2-6pm - indefinite.

ADVANCE NOTICE: Church Meeting – Tuesday, 28th March – at 7pm in person

Real need is scary (Lectionary readings: Exodus 17.1-7: Psalm 95: Romans 5.1-11: John 4.5-42)

You got exhausted and very thirsty, Jesus;
you longed for a drink, please understand our longings.

Life is full of hopes and dreams and things to want.
Just a few things we really need when we can't get them we're afraid;
afraid for our loved ones and for ourselves.

Some days our fears are small:
challenges to be faced confidently.
Other days not so much ...
Some days we are sure of your presence: we can feel it confidently.
Other days not so much ...

Arguments start quickly when we're afraid.
Afraid of thirst or hunger or disease.
We long for security; we long to be sure of your presence with us.
When our need makes us scared and our fear make us angry,
hold us safely, offer us living water, until we hope again.

Anne Lewitt

(URC Prayer Handbook 2023)

