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WEEKLY LETTER – 20 NOVEMBER 2022

Luke 23.34-43

Kindness, forgiveness, mercy and the promise of a future

This is the last of our readings from Luke's gospel, and his last one before Advent. In fact we have had 23 readings from Luke's gospel! St Luke is a wonderful story teller, and he clearly knows Jesus Christ. Perhaps you could think with someone about how St Luke has revealed something to you about Jesus?

It seems surprising to me that on this Sunday we find Jesus crucified to a cross on top of a hill called, 'The Skull'. That said, there is an utterly remarkable scene at the end of this reading.

Out of the blue one of the criminals defends Jesus, and in the same breath acknowledges that his own life has been utterly disappointing. He knows he deserves to be punished. That in itself is extraordinary, as most people make excuses for not hitting the mark. The criminal then goes further by proclaiming Jesus' innocence. To cap it all, he tenderly asks Jesus to remember him when God's Kingdom arrives. Therefore he confesses his sins, shows his faith in Jesus, and believes Jesus' claims about God's new world. Wow.

Jesus responds by saying, "you like me will be physically dead to-day, but also to-day you will be with me – for ever"

In Jesus' response we see him confirming the dignity of the man. Here also in this truly astonishing conversation we see the heart of Jesus' message to all who hear his voice: you are definitely loved, and whatever happens to you, this love awaits you, and so know that your life is good.

Stephen

Sunday, 20th November will be a special Service as we will be led by **Rev Simon Walkling** with a view to becoming our Minister. We hope that everyone who is able to will come in person. If you are unable to attend, the Service will still be on Zoom.

The Bible Readings are: John 4.1-26: Genesis 24-42-51.

If you are want to attend the lunch after the Service, please make sure that you let Jen Thomas know There will be a Meeting at 2 pm at which you will have the opportunity to ask questions.

There will be a **Church Meeting after Morning Worship on 4th December** so that the Church can come to a decision about whether it feels led by the Spirit to extend a Call to the Rev Simon Walkling to serve in Ministry among us.

Church Meetings

1. The next Quarterly Church Meeting will be an “in person” Meeting on Wednesday, 23rd November at 7pm.

Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – we will pray for Tabernacle, Mumbles.

Tea and Chat – 2 pm – Tuesday 22nd November at Christ Well.

PCSO's

During the past months Ffion has been training as a PCSO, which she recently completed, and has now been appointed to continue to work in our area.

We have been getting to know Ffion as she has shared in several activities in Christ Well with Claire and Dan (who have been with us for more than five years) and look forward to getting to know her better in the coming months.



Congratulations on your success, and welcome Ffion.

Words Matter (Lectionary Readings: Jeremiah 23.1-6: Luke 1.68-79: Psalm 46: Colossians 1.11-20: Luke 23.33-43)

There it is again –
the reference to darkness being bad, evil,
something to be avoided and feared
while “lightness” is good, to be desired and embraced –
a sign of being “right” with you.

Words matter. Imagery matters.
Sticks and stones may break my bones,
but words can be so much worse.
Words in action can limit lives.
Words absorbed can kill from within.

So many Scriptures which declare
“darkness is negative”
Reflected in so many prayers ...
and art and literature and film
and television programmes, even for children ...
Reflected in language and thought ... and life –the continuing ways and shape
of our Black and White world.

“Dark is bad!”
“Dark is scary!”
“Dark is to be conquered, escaped or subdued”

Ah, Lord, I know you never intended these words
and images
to be applied to your people -
But they have been. And they are.
Sometimes consciously –
often without realising, without noticing,
without thinking.

Forgive us, Lord, especially when we don’t see
what we are doing.

Give us new words, expanded imagery,
and language which evokes full life for all people –
of every beautiful God-gifted shade.

Karen Campbell (URC Prayer Handbook 2022)

