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Weekly Letter

24 January 2021

Genesis 14.17-20: Psalm 128

Revelation 19.6-10: John 2.1-11

The Gift Miracle

We all know the Bible is chock-a-block with different styles of writing, psalms, poetry, parables, myths, history, precise architectural facts (very dull!), apocalyptic (great fun), and so on. We also know that the context (culture, language, history, values etc.) of the first century Jewish Christian communities is vastly different to a 9th century sheep farmer in North Wales, and to a 21st century scuba diving pizza delivery man in Sharm El-Sheikh. Therefore trying to prove if this or that happened such a long time ago and within a radically different culture has only limited benefits.

We know that the miracle stories, transparent for the experience of the early Christian communities showed them how God helps and saves through his love of life. Somehow 2,000 years later we in 2021 need to read this extraordinary 'gift' miracle more as a participant and definitely not as an observer, so that the 'miracle' will both inform and form us. (Apologies for pretending to be a teacher). In other words, the writer includes each story to help the reader understand a living, breathing, dynamic and yes, a complex person called Jesus. (My apologies for the long introduction – priests are notoriously long winded and frequently exceedingly boring!). May I therefore suggest that if you were to read this 'gift' miracle for the very first time you may well be struck by the sheer joy and mischief contained in not only the build up to what must have been, 'one hell of a party', but also the absolute delight of those celebrating.

In this 'gift' miracle we can forget all our endless struggles, anxieties and the complexities of life and just immerse ourselves in the exuberant joy of a huge celebration. OK, so the new minister has just run off again with the organist, and blow me, The Simpsons have once again predicted that Donald will be re-elected to the Presidency of America in 2024! Earthly life has never been paradise, and so we must carry on learning to love and doing our best for Christ, but also enjoy 'Party Time'. Why? Well, in the short term, yes evil sometimes wins, and we feel overwhelmed by the darkness, but the ultimate drama has been sewn up by Christ's victory over death. And another reason for celebrating is that through

celebrating we can enjoy the truth here on earth that we are called to thrive, know that divinity has been given to each individual, and a spirit to overcome evil. And just for good measure, conferred on you is the nobility to ride above the daily shenanigans, i.e. the Minister and Donald. For this 'gift' miracle (the) party is in part to remind us that the Christian gospel is one of hope, joy and of life more abundant – and it is for everyone.

After a period of silence, do say

O God, whose Son the Bridegroom calls us to the feast: may we rejoice in his gift of life, now and always. Amen.

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship will be led by Rev Stephen Baker. The Bible reading is:
John 2.1-11



COVID-19: VACCINE FRAUD

Criminals are using the COVID-19 vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing-looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy.

PEOPLE ARE WARNED TO BE ALERT TO THESE SCAMS. The NHS will:

- ❖ NEVER ask for payment – the vaccine is free
- ❖ NEVER ask for your bank details
- ❖ NEVER arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine
- ❖ NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal document such as your passport

TOP 4 VACCINE SCAMS

TEXT MESSAGES

PHONE CALLS

WEBSITES

IN PERSON

Further Guidance and Support

Public Sector Organisations:

The Cabinet Office has formed a COVID-19 Fraud Response Team to assist the Government with its counter fraud response.

Request for assistance should be emailed to: covid19-counterfraud@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

National Cyber Security Centre: if you receive a call you believe to be fraudulent, hang up. If you are suspicious about an email you have received, forward it to: reporting@phishing.gov.uk. Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to the number **7726** which is free of charge.

Action Fraud: If you believe you have been the victim of fraud or identify theft, you should report this directly to Action Fraud either online: [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk). or **via phone 0300 123 2040**

Crimestoppers: if you have any information relating to vaccine fraud you can stay 100% anonymous by contacting Crimestoppers COVID Fraud Hotline online; [crimestoppers.org.uk](https://www.crimestoppers.org.uk) or phone **0800 587 5030**

Adella has asked for this information to be passed on to you. Fuller details can be found on the Notice Board outside Christ Well.

In the midst of a pandemic

A walk during lockdown

I went for a walk this morning

I paused for breath –

and in that moment,
took time to really look at a tree...

I don't know its name –
 but it was big. And sturdy. And tall.
 Its leaves were full, and so very green.

The next tree along –
 a dramatic splash of burgundy against the sky.

In that moment,
I was enveloped by the colours and sounds I might usually
not notice.

I consciously, deliberately, breathed the air...

And I was reminded –
 life is good!
 It's good to be alive!

Now I am at home
And I don't know why I'm telling you all this –
Because you were there –

You were with me. Around me, and within me.

You always are.

You always will be.

(Karen Campbell - Prayer Handbook 2021)