

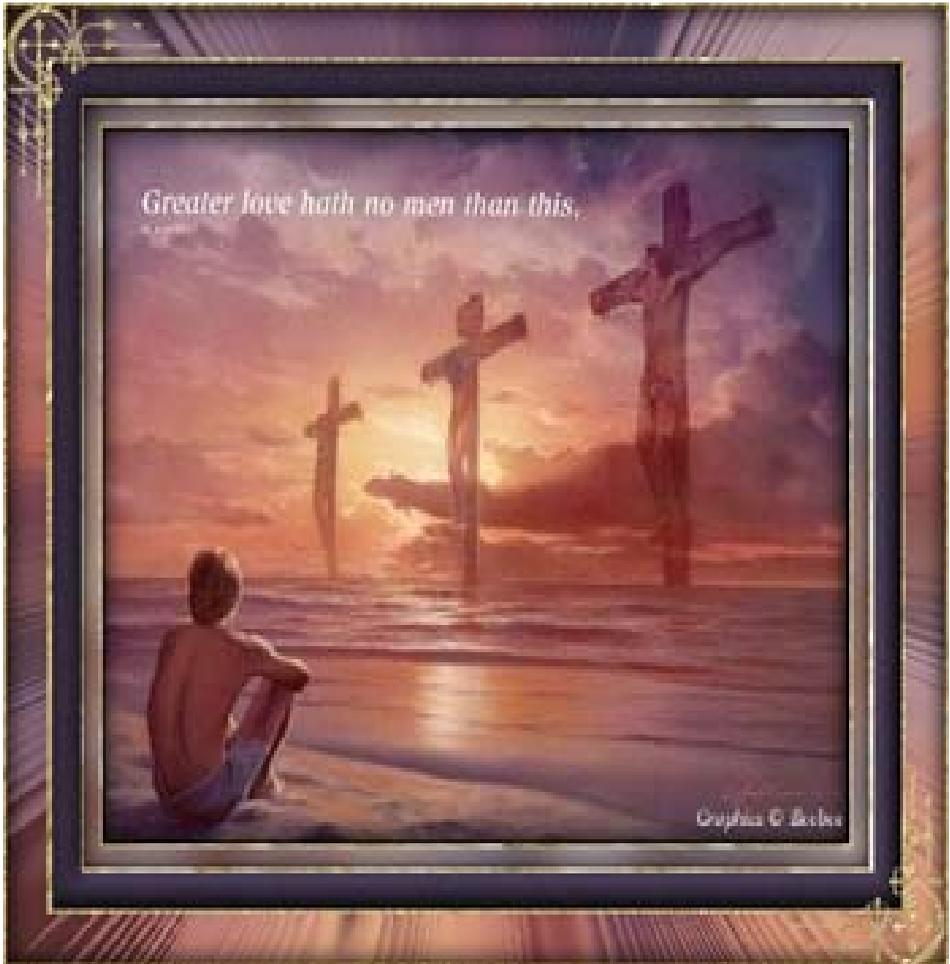


CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX

CROSSLINKS

JESUS DIED IN MY PLACE

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



FEBRUARY 2008 ISSUE 8.93

Vicar's seven-minute reflection

THE CROSS, SIN, ATONEMENT AND GOD'S GRACE



Sin is man's basic problem, and religion attempts to provide an answer to this difficulty. Separation from God is due to our sin. Fellowship between God and humanity has been broken because of our shortcomings. Removing this barrier between human beings and God is what the cross and the atonement are all about.

If people really understood the Cross, Atonement and God's grace, they will be humbled by what God had done for them, and would rarely refuse to be converted. To many who are yet to taste the salvation and freedom offered in Christ, the church is like a club, Christianity like simple psychology, and the Cross like a sentimental story.

A preacher aroused the curiosity of his congregation when he walked into the pulpit carrying an old bird cage. He began his sermon by telling the story of a little, dirty lad about ten years old in an alley. The pastor asked the boy how he got the birds. "I trapped them," he said. The pastor then asked what the boy planned on doing with them. "Play with them; have fun with them." "But what are you going to do when you get tired of them," he questioned. The boy thought a moment and concluded, "I have some cats at home. Cats like birds. I'll feed them to my cats."

The preacher then asked the boy if he would sell him the birds. "Mister," he said, "You don't want to buy these birds. They're just plain old field birds. They're ugly." Again he asked if he would sell them and how much he wanted for them. The boy hesitated, calculated, squinted one eye, and then settled on \$10.00. The pastor quickly paid him the money, and the boy ran away down the alley. Further down that alley, in a sheltered corner, the pastor opened the cage door and stepped back. He watched as the frightened little birds all found their freedom.

Then the pastor told another story to his congregation. Jesus and the devil were talking. The devil had laid a trap in the Garden of Eden and had caught a whole world through sin. Jesus asked the devil what he was going to do with mankind. He said he would tease them, play with them, and cause them to throw bombs at one another. "What will you do when you get tired of them," the Lord continued. "I will kill them. They're no good anyway." Jesus then asked the devil how much he wanted for them. The devil asked Jesus if he was truly serious: "If I sell them to you they will just spit on you and hate you. They're no good." The Lord again asked for a price. "All your tears and your blood," the devil answered. Jesus paid the price, opened the door, and let man go free. This illustration is very close to the ransom theory of the atonement which is also called the patristic theory.



It emphasizes that the devil had dominion over man. God regained the freedom of mankind through the cross of Jesus Christ. There is certainly a lot of truth in this theory, otherwise motifs found in this theory would not have been so popular for the first thousand years of Christian history. **The difficulty with this theory is that we must be careful not to make too much out of the devil. Although he is pictured in the scriptures as a dangerous and powerful being, compared to God he is nothing. While we as Christians should view evil as a very serious matter, we should take our victory in Christ as being even greater. To make the devil the recipient of the ransom might imply that he has a supremacy over God, and nothing could be further from the truth.** It may surprise some of you to know that forms of this theory were very dominant until the thirteenth century. Certainly there are concepts we can learn from the ransom theory. A sense of struggle and the ultimate delivery from evil is portrayed very vividly in the ransom theory. That is often missing in modern man's view of the Cross.

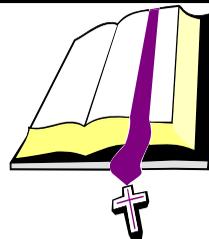
We can also explain the Cross, the Atonement and God's grace in terms of substitution. The principle idea is that man cannot pay for his own sins. Sin needs infinite payment since God's honour has been offended. Sin is so serious that it deserves the death penalty. Jesus came into the world, not just to be an example that would influence us, but to literally take our place and be a substitute for us. His death was the penalty that mankind deserved. In this manner God can forgive sinful mankind and remain both just and loving.

In substitutionary theories the death of Jesus is not only directed at man but it is also directed at God. It is not that God needs to be paid off, but God would not be just if he winked at sin. Many Scriptures point to this concept of Christ taking our place as a substitute: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5). "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "We are convinced that one has died for all" (2 Cor. 5:14). (continued on page 6)

Memory Verse

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

John 3:16. (The Message)



THE BEST PRESENT YOU CAN GIVE



A friend says his grandfather used to whisper this into the ears of brides and grooms: “Marriage is like a hot bath. Once you get in it, and used to it, it’s not so hot anymore.” Indeed, one thing you can count on in marriage, is that between kids and careers and the junk that clutters the days, it’s hard to sustain hotness and bliss. But in spite of tepid stretches, showing your love well beyond Valentine’s Day is a sure way to enjoy a marital bliss that can last.

...they could have saved their marriages by simply paying more attention to the person who slept next to them.

We can confirm from our years of marital counselling experience that partners who are hugged and kissed and hear “I love you” behave better. There’s real power in a soft and unexpected brush of the lips on the forehead of your husband at the dinner table. What wife doesn’t want to be told she looks beautiful?

Many people have confessed, with wrenching remorse that they could have saved their marriages by simply paying more attention to the person who slept next to them, night after night, instead of letting other tasks distract their focus and consume their energy. Many people shop for roses, clothes, and jewellery on Valentine’s Day. Yet the euphoria of opening a small box and unveiling something expensive is fleeting. Consistent loving behaviour, exhibited when you wake up tomorrow, and the rest of the year, is the real prescription for the ongoing health of a marriage, more than any diamond or Italian suit.

Benjamin Disraeli said: “We were born for love. It’s the principle of existence and its only end.” But this force at the heart of existence isn’t just handed over to us; we must nurture it, earn it, and surrender to the hard work it takes for love to endure. Long-term love, when properly fed and watered, makes us better, nicer, and stronger.

We love our children wholly and unconditionally, showering them with emotional and physical affection. Over-scheduled and overwhelmed too often, we forget to love – even forget to talk to – the most important

The Best Present You Can Give

(continued from page 4)

person in our life, the man or woman who gave us those kids, the foundation of family and dreams for the future.

Marriage needs to be fussed over or else it will break. Intimacy takes work. Washington divorce lawyer Robert Liotta. said of some men and women who are on parallel tracks—"they never come face to face. I mean, they don't talk at all. They don't even know what the other person has done in the past week. They literally say good morning and good night and that's it. This is a disaster for a marriage."

Disconnected couples charting out divorce agreements have much to teach us on the importance of thawing the deep freeze before someone turns stone-cold and wants out: Ask your spouses about their days. Court them, compliment them, and seduce them. No touching is bad news for married couples.

Christ Church Needs Your Help!!!

We made an appeal for donations towards our church internal re-decoration last month. We believe you are praying about it. If God lays a burden on your heart to give towards the restoration of this place of worship and centre for Mission, we are enclosing a flyer and a Gift Aid envelope to facilitate your donation.

Please make your cheque/s payable to Christ Church PCC, and send it to Christ Church (Renovation Appeal), c/o The Vicarage, 32 Crescent Road, London, N8 8AX.

Thank you and God bless you.

Rev Canon Dele Agbelusi

Behold the Lamb!

Under the Old Testament system, every worshiper had to bring his own lamb. If he had no lamb, he had to buy a lamb. He could not borrow a lamb. No one could give him a lamb. He had to provide his own lamb. In the New Testament everything is reversed. God provides the Lamb!

-- Robert C. Shannon

The Cross, Sin, Atonement and God's Grace

Many movies have been built around the theme of a person being wrongly accused. Such a theme is extremely powerful, and can evoke strong emotional responses in the audience. The solution to this seeming difficulty in a substitutionary theory is to remember who died on the Cross.

First of all Jesus was not forced to go to the Cross. It was a voluntary decision on his part. He said, "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17-18). We must not think of God as an unjust Father who made his innocent Son suffer for someone else against his will.

There is a second part of the solution. Realize that we are dealing with four parties: 1 the criminal, 2 the offended party, 3 the judge (law) and 4 a substitute. The criminal is easy to identify. That refers to mankind, to you and me. The other three parties, though, are all one person--Jesus Christ. As deity, Christ is the offended party. Our sin is against him. Likewise he is the judge and our substitute. Why would it be unjust if Christ required himself to be a substitute, so that he might execute justice with love?

Let me illustrate. In Scotland a man was taken before a judge, and he cautiously looked up at the judge to see if there was any mercy in his eyes. To his surprise he recognized the judge. The judge was an old friend of his, a classmate from Edinburgh University. He relaxed and figured he would get off free. He was sorely disappointed, though. The judge gave him the maximum fine for his misdemeanour--five pounds sterling. As soon as judgement was declared, the judge left his bench and paid the fine. He then informed the accused man that the demands of the law had been satisfied. He stated, "I paid your fine and you are now free." Who could say this was unjust? An innocent person was not forced to be a substitute for the guilty man. Rather the judge who declared judgement was himself the one who paid the fine. Rather than injustice, it was an expression of love and grace. (concluded on page 9)

NOTICE BOARD

Stewardship Boxes 2008/2009

Envelope boxes for 2008/2009 stewardship giving, will be available from Sunday 9th March 2008, for members of the stewardship scheme.

Members of the congregation who are not in the stewardship scheme, and want information on Stewardship and Gift Aid giving, can contact Vera Freeburne, Stewardship Secretary.

The Women's World Day of Prayer

Imagine attending a service which was taking place simultaneously not just throughout the country but all over the world. Same hymns. Same prayers. Same Bible readings. And in churches of every kind of Christian denomination.

Every year this remarkable service takes place on the first Friday in March. The whole thing is organised and run by women (though men are very welcome to attend), and is called the Women's World Day of Prayer. It was started in the United States, and has been taking place in England for 75 years. In the Hornsey area we hold the service twice, morning and evening, to give everyone a chance to attend. This year the services are:

Friday 7th March

11am at Stroud Green Baptist Church, Stapleton Hall Road, N4

8pm at Holly Park Methodist, Crouch Hill, N4

This year's service has been written by the women of Guyana, and its theme is "God's Wisdom Provides New Understanding." Come and join an act of worship that will be taking place all over the globe.

Sheila Wheeler

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

This month we pray for members of our church family whose surnames begin with M, N

Macauley Grace; Madada William; Mamas Helen; McFarlane Susan; Mercer Richard & Mary; Miller Lisa; Mole Andrew; Mucha Joanna; Murphy Charles; Musolo Bright; Mutyaba Joy; Myers-Nobbs Andrew; Nabirye Rose; Nobadula Thembekile

ARE WE ALL EARS? - LISTEN TO ISAIAH

A legend described a scene where a pious man died and went to heaven. He was given a sightseeing tour of the wonder that is called heaven. He saw the streets paved with gold and precious stones and the beauty of what he saw surpassed his earthly expectations. Then he came to a large room and he saw what looked like a merchant's shop. Lining the walls were shelves on which were stacked and labelled what looked like dried mushrooms. On closer examination, he saw they were actually human ears. His guide explained that these were the ears of people who on earth went diligently to worship, listened with pleasure to the teaching of Christ, yet did nothing about what they heard. After death, only their ears made it to heaven!

We may smile at such a story but the painful truth is that church people seem at times to be mostly ears—people who easily substitute hearing for doing. This was the dilemma Isaiah had to contend with in Isaiah 58:1-11. The prophet called the attention of the people to the type of fast God approved. This was a call to move beyond public displays of piety to a faith that touches every aspect of our private and public lives. It is a call to get rid of hypocrisy in worship. The Greek word from which we derive our English term 'hypocrite' literary means actor. And in every age, the great temptation of religious people is to go through the motions of piety without letting their faith permeate every aspect of their daily lives.

It was not wrong for the people to fast, but their motives had to be right. I know that the talk about fasting may sound ridiculous to our modern ears. In a landscape that is dotted with shrines to an assortment of burger bars and pizza temples, if fasting exists in our time, it is in connection with dieting and hardly as a religious duty. Others fast because they want to arm-twist God into doing what he does not intend to do.

If you fast, you must decide who really is your God. What are the priorities in your life? What is of first value? Fasting as a religious exercise whereby the self is denied shows who our God really is. For many, self is the god who is seen in our selfishness, self centredness, overeating and lack of care for the environment.

Are we all ears? - Listen to Isaiah

(continued from page 8)

To deny self is to deny that god. We sacrifice false gods to glorify the true God seen in Christ Jesus. If God is our God, then we have a new scale of values. Fasting helps us to put first things first, to put God first and ourselves last. Is this what your own fasting does or is it another avenue to feed your desires?

Isaiah called for deeds of justice and a life of holiness. Fasting should enable us understand God better, and enable us to be passionate in our devotion to him. The parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25:31-46 reflects what our Lord expects from those who are hearers and doers of the word. A writer renders the passage like this:

I was hungry, and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger. Thank you. I was imprisoned, and you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release. I was naked, and in your mind, you debated the morality of my appearance. I was sick, and you knelt beside your bed and thanked God for your health. I was homeless, and you preached to me about the spiritual shelter of the love of God. I was lonely, and you left me alone to pray for myself. You seem so holy, so close to God, but I am still hungry, and lonely and cold.. What does it profit a person to page through their book of prayers when the rest of the world is crying out for help? Closing the gap between belief and behaviour is not something we can achieve in our human strength and wisdom, but in the power of God's Spirit.

D.A.

(continued from page 6)

The Cross, Sin, Atonement and God's Grace

The final conclusion of this matter is that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the ONLY means and hope of our salvation. Peter declared, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus himself said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Dele Agbelusi

LAUGHTER LINES

WE BRING THE SACK...

A little boy was sitting in church next to his mother one evening. In the middle of a song, the mother thought her son was singing the song a little differently. She leaned over and heard him sing, "We bring the sacks of rice and beans." The song was "We bring the Sacrifice of Praise."
Tiffani Treadwell



THEOLOGY, KID'S STYLE

Dear Mr. God,

I wish you would not make it so easy for people to come apart. I had to have 3 stitches and a shot.

Janet

God,

I read the bible. What does beget mean? Nobody will tell me. Love,

Alison

Dear God,

Is it true my father won't get in Heaven if he uses his golf words in the house?

Anita

Dear God,

I bet it's very hard for you to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it.

Nancy

Dear God,

I do not think anybody could be a better God than you. Well, I just want you to know that. I am not just saying that because you are already God.

Charles

Dear God,

It is great the way you always get the stars in the right place. Why can't you do that with the moon?

Jeff

LAUGHTER LINES

THINK FAST

One day, my husband announced to the family that he was going to fast and pray. Ginny, our 5-year-old, had recently learned that fasting meant not eating. "No!" she shouted. "You can't fast! You'll die!" Her dad carefully explained that many men and women fasted in Bible times. Ginny paused a moment. Then, with a flash of insight and a note of warning, she proved her point. "And they all died," she said.

Kathy Cash, Dallas, TX. Today's Christian Woman, "Heart to Heart."

DEATH BY VEGETABLES

The youth in my church had been studying the Book of Esther. I knew my son had been paying attention when we had Brussels sprouts for supper. Spearing one and looking at it distastefully, he placed it in his mouth, saying, "If I perish, I perish."

Frankie Roland, Coffeyville, Kans. Christian Reader, "Lite Fare."

ROLEX RIP -OFF

A materialistic yuppie was driving his new BMW on a winding mountain road in California. He hit a slick corner and lost control of the car. Just before the automobile tumbled over the road-side cliff, he jumped out. In the process of jumping, his arm was cut off. A trucker quickly ran to the young man and found him weeping over his lost car. The trucker tried to console him. "Don't worry about your car. The way your arm's bleeding you're lucky to be alive." The yuppie looked down at his severed arm and screamed, "No, not my Rolex, too!"

The Purpose-Driven Church, Rick Warren, Feb. 26, 1993

Story of the Month

GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS

Is it not a sad thing that we should think it wonderful for God to hear prayer? A little boy in one of the schools in Edinburgh, who had attended a prayer meeting, had much better faith. He said to his teacher who had conducted the prayer meeting, "Teacher, I wish my sister could be made to read the Bible. She never reads it."



"Why should your sister read the Bible, Johnny?"

"Because if she should once read it, I am sure it would do her good, and she would be converted and be saved."

"Do you think so, Johnny?"

"Yes, I do, sir, and I wish the next time there's a prayer meeting you would ask the people to pray for my sister that she may begin to read the Bible."

"Well, it shall be done, John."

So the teacher mentioned that a little boy was very anxious that prayer should be offered that his sister might begin to read the Bible. John was observed to get up and go out. The teacher thought it very rude of the boy to disturb the people in a crowded room, and so the next day when the lad came, he said, "John, I thought it was very rude of you to get up in the prayer meeting and go out. You ought not to have done so."

"But sir," said the boy, "I did not mean to be rude. I thought I would just go home and see my sister reading her Bible for the first time."

In the same way we ought to believe and watch with expectation for answers to our prayer. Do not say, "Lord, turn my darkness into light," and then go out with your candle as though you expected to find it dark. After asking the Lord to appear for you, expect him to do so, for according to your faith he will answer.

-- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Quotable Spurgeon*, (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, Inc, 1990)

A MOTHER'S LOVE

There is no love, like a mother's love,
no stronger bond on earth...
like the precious bond that comes from God,
to a mother, when she gives birth.

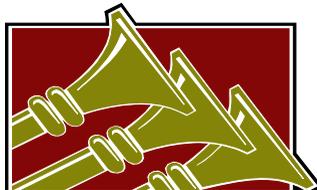
A mother's love is forever strong,
never changing for all time...
and when her children need her most,
a mother's love will shine.

God bless these special mothers,
God bless them every one...
for all the tears and heartache,
and for the special work they've done.

When her days on earth are over,
a mother's love lives on...
through many generations,
with God's blessings on each one.

Be thankful for our mothers,
for they love with a higher love...
from the power God has given,
and the strength from up above

Jill Lemming



**Because Jesus lives, I can
face tomorrow.**

FORGIVE AND FORGET?

One of the stories in the Bible that haunts me is Joseph's naming of his sons. Joseph, of course, was Jacob's self-assured favourite son whose jealous older brothers beat him up, sold him into slavery, and told his father that Joseph had been killed by wild animals.

The Book of Genesis reports Joseph's life as bitter-sweet. Far from home, he earned a position of trust in his new master's household. But when his master's wife tried to seduce him and he refused, the spurned desperate housewife turned venomous, falsely accused him, and had him thrown into prison.

After years in prison, Joseph's ability to interpret dreams brought him to the attention of Pharaoh, who rewarded Joseph's wisdom by giving him a

Naming your son "Forget" puts a whole new twist on "forgive and forget," doesn't it?

position of great responsibility and a wife. After 13 years as a slave, it would have been natural for Joseph to brood over his lost years and the mistreatment he'd received.

But when Joseph had a child, he named his firstborn Manasseh—taken from the Hebrew word that means forget. Joseph said, "It is because God has made me *forget* all my trouble and all my father's household" (Genesis 41:51, italics added).

Naming your son "Forget" puts a whole new twist on "forgive and forget," doesn't it? Every time he saw his son or called his name, Joseph was reminded of what he was forgetting. More precisely, he was reminded to forget.

Forgetting, as it complements forgiveness, isn't an absence of awareness. This kind of forgetting is a conscious decision to put the matter behind us, to embrace the situation without malice, without bitterness, without reopening old wounds. Joseph's decision to forget the hurt was tested when his brothers showed up in need of food and didn't recognize their formerly despised brother.

(concluded on page 15)

Forgive and forget?

(continued from page 14)

His creative response demonstrates not only that his brothers had changed, but that he had, too. I like to think that a few years of calling "Forget" every day helped give Joseph the grace to forgive when he encountered the real source of his pain.

A SPECIAL APPEAL TO YOU, OUR READERS, TO CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES

If God has given you a testimony, a personal experience you have lived through which has ended up in a positive way – one that could help and encourage others as they deal with love, children, bitterness, in-laws and forgiveness within marriage, we would appreciate it if you would write it down and send it to us for publication. We will also appreciate your feedback on any of the articles in our Crosslinks publication, and if you want us to discuss a particular topic of interest, please write to the editor – the address is on page 16.

KARTOON KNUGGETS

By Troy Knechtel



And as a sign of my sincerity, Lord, I vow to give up... uh...
I won't... um...oh! I give up asparagus! That's what I give up

I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord of that which cost me nothing 2 Sam 24:24

Motto /Text for the year
"I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES
ME STRENGTH" *PHIL. 4:13*

FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are trying to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ.

As a body of believers, we offer to all who come regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resources in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities. You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:

- Sunday** - **8.00am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- **10.30am.** Main service with Crèche facilities

There is family/parade service once every month– usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.

- **5.00pm.** Evening worship

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

- Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group (**10.00 am to 12 noon**)
- Brownies meeting in Church (**5.30 pm**)
- Next Prayer Meetings 3rd,17th, 31st March, 21st April. (**8pm**)
Wednesday - Lent Course at Union Church, Ferme Park Road (**7:45pm**)
Friday - Scouts meeting in church and hall (**6.00 pm**)

Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer helpline - please phone 020 8340 1566

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YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

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