

End the Week with the DTP

- November 11, 2011

11th Nov 2011

Welcome to End the Week with the DTP! This weekly email is sent automatically to clergy and Readers in the diocese (if you don't want to receive it, please send an email to CovEW-unsubscribe@lists.covlec.org) but anyone is welcome to subscribe to the list, and we are especially keen to pass it on to any interested lay people, especially those who may have responsibility for preaching. To subscribe they simply need to email CovEW-subscribe@lists.covlec.org.

Events coming soon

Reminder Handling Conflict and Mediation: Managing Differences without a Fight

Wednesday 23 & Thursday 24 November 2011
at St Michael's House, 11 Priory Row, Coventry CV1 5EX

On this short introductory course, participants will develop an understanding of their personal approach to conflict and learn practical ways of managing conflict within communities. It will explore the constructive role of conflict in human relationships and how difference can be the basis for strong communities in church and wider society. A major focus will be on the concept of reconciliation as a framework for a Christian approach to conflict.

Fees: costs will be covered by participating dioceses, but will be in the region of £120 per person. Overnight accommodation will be available at around £40 per night.

You can download further details and a booking form from <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/learning/resources/opt/-/item/707>.

Reminder In Service Study Weeks at St John's, Nottingham

In Service Study Weeks (ISSWs) offer you the opportunity for in-depth study of a topic of academic interest relevant to the mission and ministry of the church today. They are designed primarily for serving clergy and others in full-time Christian work. Each study week runs from 12noon on Monday to lunchtime on Friday.

ISSWs coming up are:

- **Islam and Christianity in Dialogue** (5-9 December 2011)
- **The Gospels as a Resource for Practical Theology** (9-13 January 2012)
- **Understanding Church** (6-10 February 2012)
- **Engaging Culture** (30 April-4 May 2012)

Each ISSW costs £295 (tuition and full-board) or £215 (Tuition only). For full details, go to www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/study-weeks or email academic@stjohns-nottm.ac.uk.

Reminder Local Ministry Network National Conference - Living out Collaborative Ministry

20-22 January 2012 at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesden, Hertfordshire

The Conference will focus on putting Collaborative Ministry into practice through three themes:

- **Preparation** - what are colleges and ministry courses doing in their training?
- **Strategy** - what are/should dioceses be working out as policy for more collaborative ministry?
- **Practice** - sharing good practice with "grassroots" Parish input.

Clergy and lay people involved in Group / Team Ministries are particularly invited to attend.

The cost will be £160. Programme details and booking forms can be found at www.localministry.net.

Reminder Caution? Older People! Overcoming stereotypes and celebrating a gift to the church

**Multi-parish benefice day conference on Saturday 28 January 2012
at the King's Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES, 10am - 4pm**

Congregations in rural communities can be made up predominantly of older people, often, but not primarily, because that reflects the changing make up of the local population. This day conference will look at how we value older people as the local body of Christ and how we celebrate and use the giftedness of older people. What is their role as holders of stories? How can we utilise the wisdom of age?

This topic contains both celebration and challenge and we invite you to join us to meet with others, learn and share experiences.

There will also be a number of exhibitors from organisations which something to offer in this area.

You can download a flyer and booking form for this event at <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/ministry/learning/resources/opt/-/item/706>.

***Reminder* Going for Growth**

Wednesdays 29 February, 7, 14, 21, 28 March 2012, 2pm to 5pm at St John's College Nottingham with the Venerable Bob Jackson

This course about how churches grow today is for all clergy and other lay leaders who wish to see their churches flourish and grow numerically and spiritually. Each session will focus on a different aspect of the general road to church growth, but will also give time for your own particular concerns and situation.

Price: £85 + lunch or supper as required

Booking deadline: Friday 21 January 2012. Places MUST be booked and paid for in advance.

To book contact Helen Taylor on 0115 968 3221 or 0115 925 1114 or email h.taylor@stjohns-nottm.ac.uk
Download a leaflet / booking form at

<http://www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/assets/PDFs-FORMS-for-download/St-Johns-Nottingham-Going-for-Growth-2012-Bo>

You can find details of all the events coming up, which have been advertised in recent editions of *End the Week*, [here](#).

Notes on the Reading for Sunday 20 November

Ephesians 1. 15-23 • Christ the King / Sunday next before Advent

As I get older I find that Ephesians is becoming my favourite amongst Paul's letters. It has a calm, reflective, looking-back quality about it, on a life well-lived in the service of God. Its authorship is a fraught question, but I'm confident that it reflects his mind and his mood in the twilight of his life. And that may make a passage from it appropriate to be read on the Sunday next before Advent, the last of the old liturgical year, as we stand on the threshold of a new one.

More than anything, Ephesians as a letter is saturated in prayer. As Eugene Peterson puts it, 'From the moment we start reading Ephesians we are immersed in prayer language' (Practise Resurrection Hodder 2010, p.71). In the letter's opening paragraph Paul sings a great hymn of praise to God, yet also weaves his hearers into the prayer, for their salvation is integral to the plan of God; they know this by the pledge of the Holy Spirit, and they become 'a people for the praise of his glory' (Ephesians 1.3-14).

This is what they are, what God has called them and made them to be. But do they really know it? This letter, reflective as it is, has at its heart Paul's desire that the Ephesians should come to realise the truth of what already is, should recognise God's grace already bestowed upon them. So his prayer in Ephesians 1.15-23 is that the 'eyes of your heart may be opened' to what is already before them.

Paul is not here criticising the Ephesians; rather he wants them to grasp more fully what they already know in part. So his commendation of them and thanksgiving for them is genuine (Ephesians 1.15-16). They have already experienced much, but Paul knows that God has even more in store for them.

Seeing Ephesians as Paul's last letter also suggests that it is the fruit of his enforced idleness in prison in Rome for perhaps the last five or six years of his life (see Eph. 6.20). It was an opportunity to think back on what had happened to him and through him; perhaps also to recognise that decisions which he thought were his had actually been God working through him. Coming to this kind of realisation seems to be what Paul prays for the Ephesians. He seeks a spirit of 'wisdom and revelation in fuller knowledge of him' for them (Eph. 1.17). The 'spirit of wisdom' is a phrase found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where it applies to craftsmen (Exodus 28.3; 31.3; 35.31), to Joshua (Deut. 34.9), and to the servant of God (Isaiah 11.2), suggesting both practical and leadership gifts. Paul applies it to all the Ephesians, a radical democratising of the idea of divine inspiration. Deeper insight and knowledge are not the preserve of the obviously intelligent or gifted, but available to all who are in Christ. They are gifts bestowed, not qualifications earned, and G.B.Caird is surely right when he comments that "revelation is always in the New Testament an activity of God, not a faculty of man.' He goes on to say that 'The help of the Spirit is needed because the knowledge of God is something more than knowledge of facts about God. It is a first-hand, personal acquaintance with God, an encounter with him as God. Even the objective revelation of God in Jesus Christ is not of itself enough to produce this knowledge, until the Spirit that was in Jesus becomes a living presence in the believer (cp. Rom. 8.8-10; 1 Cor. 2.11)' (Paul's Letters from Prison OUP 1976, pp.44-45). The content that Paul gives

to this idea of knowledge is revealing: it is the hope of the calling, riches of the inheritance of glory, and the greatness beyond measure of the power of God (Eph. 1.18-19). As so often when Paul speaks of God, the words begin to crack and break under the weight they are trying to bear. Paul is heading to what is beyond words here, straining to express what outstrips human expression. The picture he draws is clear, though: his prayer is for Christians who are blessed with wisdom, burning hearts and hope, who are alive to the glorious inheritance offered to them, and to the utter greatness of the power of God.

It's not all abstract, though. For with his next breath Paul brings us once again back to the reality of where we see God's power manifested: in Jesus, raised from the dead (Eph. 1.20). From this he goes on to elaborate Jesus' place at God's right hand, ruling over all, the name above all names, and the head of his body, the church (Eph. 1.20-23), but it's important to note that the resurrection is the hinge on which the whole point turns. The utterly astonishing power of God's life over death is what Paul's vision of God's greatness beyond measure rests on. It's easy to overlook this in the metaphysical language of Ephesians 1, but Easter morning and the physical resurrection of Jesus is the anchor of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, and what gives him confidence that God will work in the believers. This is what sets Paul's prayers apart from contemporary and later Gnostics (from whom the phrase 'the eyes of the heart' may have been borrowed).

Ephesians is a letter of ringing confidence, produced by a man whose race is nearly run but who knows that God has yet more in store for those who are faithful to him. As we enter a new liturgical year, perhaps it's a good time to ask what we dare to pray for each other for the new year to come. And perhaps like Paul we may pray for a deeper awareness of God, leading us to be people of wisdom, passion and hope with a deep trust both in our place in God's plan, and his power beyond measure to accomplish the salvation of the world.

And Finally...

Judgement Day...

A man died and went to The Judgment, where he was told, "Before you meet with God, I should tell you, we've looked over your life, and to be honest you really didn't do anything particularly good or bad. We're not really sure what to do with you. Can you tell us anything you did that can help us make a decision?"

The newly-arrived soul thought for a moment and replied, "Yeah, once I was driving along and came upon a person who was being harassed by a group of thugs. So I pulled over, got out a bat, and went up to the leader of the thugs. He was a big, muscular guy with a ring pierced through his lip. Well, I tore the ring out of his lip, and told him he and his gang had better stop bothering this guy or they would have to deal with me!"

"Wow that's impressive, "When did this happen?"

"About three minutes ago."

(Thanks to Grove Books again.)

That's all, folks!

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