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|  | **ALLERTON**  **CONGREGATIONAL**  **CHURCH** |



Chellow Dene during lockdown – taken by David Muschamp

July/Aug 2020 Newsletter

Dear Friends

If you ever visit the Keswick Convention that is held in the beautiful Lake District town of the same name, you will inevitably come across a key phrase for the organisation, ‘All one in Christ Jesus’. This is taken from Paul’s letter to the Galatians, chapter 3 and verse 28. It expresses the amazing truth that in Jesus Christ we are all one, regardless of sex, social status or ethnicity. As Christians we are united in Jesus Christ, regardless of our denomination or other Christian label.

The world in which we live today is clearly one that is divided in many ways. People are divided over the issues of politics, religion, football teams and race amongst many others. Yet, as Christians we are called to a different way of living together. Jesus gave his disciples the command to love one another, and it is by our love that we should be recognised by the world around us. In other words we are to love brothers and sisters in Christ even if they support Leeds United (however difficult that might be)!

The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians chapter 2 of this letter about the wonderful Gospel of grace in the first ten verses. Then in verse 11 Paul turns to the very stark separation of Jews and Gentiles. God himself made them completely separate, or different, by making Israel his own special people through his covenant with Abraham. The effect of this was that God rejected all other nations and peoples. This wasn’t just a case of the Israelites looking or talking differently. They were the only race on Earth that knew God and were special to him.

Paul continues in verses 12 and 13 with this, “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Paul points us towards the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and how this has reconciled us (Gentiles, or non-Jews) to God and to one another. In Jesus Christ we have peace and unity with all our brothers and sisters regardless of our country of origin or the colour of our skin.

In verse 14 Paul continues to remind us that Jesus “is our peace”, and he “has made us both (Jews and Gentiles) one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility”. Compared with the difference between Jews and Gentiles the differences between us of skin colour, sex or social status is much smaller. As Christians we need to live out this reality day by day, that we are all one in Christ Jesus, and by doing this we show love for one another.

What matters most in this world is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in that we are united. Yes, the world in which we live is full of the sins of racism, violence and injustice, but the only true answer to these terrible things is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are called, as God’s people, to go and make disciples of all nations, and it is by doing this that we can and must combat injustice, racism included. The world’s answers to these horrific problems are only partial, but the answer God has given us in Christ Jesus is eternal.

The Gospel is the only thing that can truly unite everyone! The Gospel is the only thing that can completely eradicate injustice! So, as we seek to love our neighbours as ourself and love one another in Christ, just remember that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

Yours, Fred.

The photograph on the front cover was included because there was a lack of articles from anyone else. Any contributions for the next newsletter would be appreciated to any of the contacts on the back page.

Treasurer's notes

I am grateful to all those who have set up standing orders or sent one-off payments to the Church bank account. A total of £1320 has been received in the 14 weeks since we have been in lockdown.

However, various expenses continue and the amount received barely covers two-thirds of the ministry costs. I am sure you will agree that we have been well-served by Fred with the regular service sheets he has prepared for us week by week.

I hope that those of you who have not been able to contribute so far are accumulating the offerings you would have put into the weekly collection and will be able to make your contribution when we come out of lockdown and are able to meet once again for worship.

In the meantime, if you want to send your contributions on to me by cash or cheque, it would be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks,

David.

Every Sunday Suspended for time being

## Website: allertoncongregationalchurch.org.uk

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