

Christ Church Freemantle

Sunday 27th September – 16th Sunday after Trinity

An oversized hedgehog with its nose pointing skywards! That is what our church, bristling with scaffolding, brings to my mind at the moment.

What does the appearance of our church mean to people?

Several non-churchgoers have stopped recently to say how pleased they were to see that the church was open

again. Mariners coming into the port use our illuminated cross to take a bearing to check their navigational instruments. Indeed, Associated British Ports now recognise its importance and are funding its maintenance.

In 2018, the church received a moving email from a woman who had travelled home on the bus from Calmore on one dark December evening. She wrote that it had been,

“an upsetting and very long distressing day....when suddenly, I spotted your lovely cross. It was lit up and beautiful...You will never know just how much seeing it meant to me.”

She goes on to say that many people to whom she has mentioned it, look out for it at the end of their journey home.

Someone else in the community is looking out *for* the church in a different way. There is a solo volunteer litter picker in the area. One Sunday morning, we observed a young man with a long-handled grabber and a metal ringed bin bag, picking up rubbish. We watched him moving swiftly along Payne’s Road from the alley way to Shaftesbury House, deftly plucking up other people’s throwaways as he went. He then crossed to the church and proceeded to delitter our garden. We assumed he was a council employee; such was his professional approach. When we acknowledged the good he was doing, he told us that he ‘just wanted his environment to look good’. What an admirable objective! Our “church without walls” has more members that we know!

How do we, as professed church members, present to the outside world? Do we go about quoting the scriptures from the roof tops, or praying on street corners? Probably not! How then do people know that we are Christians? The Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) gives us a list to aspire to.

“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”



In these uncertain and challenging days of Covid and Brexit, there is a tendency to only speak of the negatives. Maybe we as Christians should pray especially for the gift of joy just now. Maybe we have a duty of care to try to cheer people up, to shed some warmth and light where we can and joy if we are able, into people's lives. Perhaps we should strive to be like our illuminated cross, shining out into people's darkness, giving them some comfort, and encouraging them to persevere in life's bleak moments.

The words of one of the final prayers of the Holy Communion service are very apt.



“Send us out in the power of the Spirit to live and work to thy praise and glory. Amen”

Mary Scott