

## Christ Church Freemantle Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February – Second Sunday before Lent

Today's Psalm tells us that all living creatures look to God. "These all look to thee, to give them food in due season. When thou givest to them, they gather it up; when thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good things." (Psalm 104, v 27-28.)

February is a hard time for the birds and the wild animals. They have to search carefully for what remains from last summer. They don't give up; they continue to forage, and peck at the ground for food. When I see a group of sparrows searching for seeds, I feel that they are teaching me to be grateful. While I have a warm home and can buy food in the shops, they must brave the cold and find food every day.

Many years ago I was given a bookmark with a drawing of some small birds, and the inscription "We are the messengers of Christ." Each time I see wild birds, I think of them as Christ's messengers. They remind me to be glad for all that I have, and for God's love.

Some new messengers have arrived in Southampton. They are a delicate lime-green in colour. Well camouflaged for the summer, they add a splash of colour in February. Their bodies are about the size of a pigeon's, but they have a longer wingspan, which enables them to fly and glide elegantly. You will probably hear them screeching before you see them. Parakeets!

After escaping from captivity some years ago, the parakeets established themselves in parklands in the London area. Now they are here! So, if you are feeling gloomy, take a walk in Southampton's parks, and look for the parakeets. If you are lucky, you might see them flitting between the branches of the trees, in small groups of between about 4 and 10. See if you can distinguish between the females, who are entirely green, and the males, who have a thin red collar, which looks almost like a necklace.

Perhaps the parakeets will help you to think of warmer weather, and of a time when we humans can, once again, be as sociable as they. Perhaps also the Psalmist was inspired by the birds when he wrote: "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have being." (Psalm 104, v 33.)



"I will sing unto the Lord  
as long as I live:  
I will sing praise to my God  
while I have my being.

*Steve Evemy*