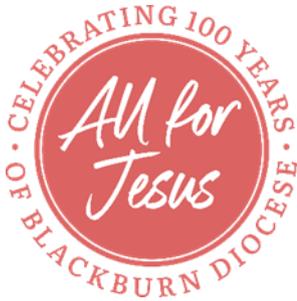


# +WEEKLY REFLECTION

[communicate@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:communicate@blackburn.anglican.org)



## The Hands of Forgiveness

Earlier this week, I listened to a radio programme recounting a tragic attack at a small Amish school in Pennsylvania nearly twenty years ago.

Five young girls lost their lives and five others were seriously injured. What stayed with me was not only the horror of the attack but the response of the Amish community. In the midst of unimaginable grief, they chose not anger or revenge, but forgiveness, visiting the attacker's family and offering compassion.

As a mum, I found myself asking: could I respond like that? It brought to mind Jesus' words when Peter asked how often we should forgive. The answer "not seven times, but seventy-seven times" which speaks of forgiveness without limits.

Jesus himself, in his deepest suffering on the cross, prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." In that moment, Jesus showed us the very heart of forgiveness and this is the example we are called to follow.

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting or pretending that wrong never happened. Rather, it means refusing to be defined or consumed by hurt. It frees us from carrying the heavy burden of resentment and revenge. As we pray, "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us," we are reminded that forgiveness is both something we receive and something we give.

This way of living can feel countercultural. The world often urges us to hold onto anger or seek justice on our own terms. Yet the call of Christ leads us toward mercy instead.

While most of us will never face circumstances as extreme as those experienced by the Amish community, we all encounter moments that require forgiveness; in our families, friendships and daily lives. In those moments, we look to Jesus. We remember the mercy we have received and ask for the grace to extend it to others.

As we journey through Lent toward the cross, perhaps there is someone on your heart you are being called to forgive. In choosing forgiveness, we become witnesses to a love that heals, restores and makes all things new.

**The Venerable Jane Atkinson, Archdeacon of Blackburn**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES