



WELCOME

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5TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

12th July 2020

COLLECT

Loving God,
send down upon your Church
the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in all who minister the gospel
your countless gifts of grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



CHURCH RE-OPENING

Please see the attached letter from Richard about the re-opening of church for services, beginning Sunday 19 July.

READINGS

NT: Romans 8: 1 - 11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.⁶ To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.⁷ For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot,⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.



GOSPEL: Matthew 13: 1—9, 18—23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake.² Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach.³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow.⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up.⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.⁶ But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away.⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.⁹ Let anyone with ears listen!' ...

¹⁸ 'Hear then the parable of the sower.

¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;²¹ yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.²³ But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

PRAYERS (From the Anglican Chaplaincy of Costa Blanca)

Loving God, we bring our prayer to you, asking that your blessing of love and peace may be shared with all people everywhere. Help us to bear fruit from the seeds of potential that you have planted within us.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Holy God, we pray for your church, especially for the people you have called to be prophets and teachers in our generation. We pray that they will be strengthened and protected by the Holy Spirit and that through them your Church will reveal the good news of salvation and draw all people together under your rule of justice and mercy.

As we start to move forward to meet once again into our Church buildings, we pray that we may do it safely and sensibly and in ways that help those who are still unsure about attending that this is not a problem and that we and God will understand their reticence.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, we are your chosen stewards of this beautiful world; you provide us with seed and soil to sow them in but sometimes we abuse this privilege and so we look to you for forgiveness for the damage we have done to this earth and pray that you would show us ways of healing the wounds that we have inflicted on the land, ourselves and on each other.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father God, we pray that in our community all will be welcome and accepted regardless of nationality, colour, gender, sexuality or status and that we will seek always to serve you and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in one another.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Gracious God, we hold before you all those who seek healing of body, mind or spirit asking that they will sense the touch of your loving hands and feel your peace and presence alongside them, each and every step of their journey towards healing and wholeness.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, we remember before you all those who have died. May they see your salvation and find their peace and final rest in you and we especially pray for those who were a formative part of our lives, who made us who we are and who we still miss, including: Jean Leech, Daniel Reardon, Savanna Headley and Sylvia Martin.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Faithful God, we offer you these prayers for ourselves and for others. We ask you to accept them and to use them, and us so that your will may be done on earth and more of your kingdom revealed to those who seek you.

Merciful Father: **Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

A special prayer for this week:

We commend Jean Leech into Gods loving hands. We pray for Bud, Jo, David, Jack, Richard and all who mourn her passing. We give thanks for what she gave to the life of our church and community over so many years. We ask God's blessing upon all who mourn her passing and give us all the light of your hope.

Let's say the Lord's Prayer together.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.**

Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Hello, everyone, It's me, Morwenna. I get to talk to you this week. I wish I could hear your side of the conversation!

We've just heard Jesus' 'Parable of the Sower'. Jesus often used stories about the natural world to illustrate his teaching. The cycle of birth and death, of new life, growth, nurturing and harvest, is as relevant today as when he walked with his friends in the countryside of Galilee. It is all created by God, and created good. Perhaps during this time of Covid 19 we will have become more aware of the activity of the natural world, the birds and the flowers, the sunshine, wind and rain. Even if we're very lucky, the growth of fruit or vegetables in our gardens.

Many of us will be familiar with the interpretation of this parable offered later in the chapter. It talks about how people react to hearing the good news of God's kingdom, which through Jesus was beginning to be present in the world. We know that this kingdom is unlike other kingdoms, because it is in harmony with God's will for the world. It is a kingdom of justice and peace and love. A kingdom of flourishing. As Christians we're called to work with God's spirit to bring it about on earth. Like the grain of wheat which has to fall to the ground and die before it can grow and bear fruit, we too need to die to our old ways, to repent. We need to do this time and again! As we were reminded last week, we have good intentions but we often don't follow them up. Today's parable reminds us that there are plenty of reasons why we fail to bring to fruition the potential of the seed sown in us. It's often difficult to see where we've gone wrong, but sometimes we find ourselves having to. We're brought up short. Something happens which we can't ignore.

I think that in the fallow period of lockdown seeds have been sown in our minds. We can choose whether or not to nurture them for the sake of the Kingdom.

This pandemic has shown us that we ignore at our peril our dependence on those whom society has not sufficiently valued – care workers, cleaners, shopkeepers and supermarket staff, lorry drivers, security guards, postal workers. We've seen that all these people, as well as nursing and medical staff and chaplains, teachers and teaching assistants, all these have been prepared to put themselves at risk of this fearsome virus. Why? So that the rest of us can be looked after and our needs met. Many of these heroes are not paid enough to live a decent life. Do you know people like this? Who are they? They can't afford to feed their children and pay the rent

without living in overcrowded conditions, let alone have something put by for a rainy day. As a society, and as Christians who believe that all people are equally valuable in God's eyes, we need to put pressure on the decision makers so that this injustice is put right. When the time comes we need to use the power of our votes.

But there is another great injustice which we've **had** to see in these last weeks. A denial of the demands of God's kingdom. Some of those who were supposed to uphold justice in Minneapolis publicly and shamelessly murdered George Floyd. And this happened in an ostensibly Christian country. That video and the subsequent outcry forced those of us who are white to look again at much of our history and the way black people are still abused. Black people have found a voice and everyone needs to listen and take it seriously. In Britain our wealth, the wealth brought us by the British Empire of which we are so proud, was brought to us by slavery. Slavery refuses to see all human beings as created in God's image and treats some people as possessions who can be abused at will. My history lessons at school had very little to say about how the Empire was experienced by those at its mercy. Their history is also my history. That is not to say that there was nothing good about the Empire, or that no black people ever practised slavery, but the full story must be acknowledged. It's all very well being ashamed at what happened in the past. But today there's still injustice in society, even after Stephen Lawrence's murder and the subsequent enquiry. Black men are still over-represented in our prisons and in the unemployment figures. Even in Deptford very recently it seems that a black man just because he was black was suspected of being a drug dealer and arrested with unwarranted force. A person of colour is less likely to get an advertised job than his white equal. Even with the same qualifications. And in the Church of England, since the retirement of the great Archbishop Sentamu, despite the large numbers of black people in our congregations, there are no black diocesan bishops. Quite recently a black priest was turned down for a job for which he was well qualified 'because he might feel uncomfortable' in a congregation which was very largely white. This is what it means to say that our society, and our church, is still institutionally racist. What about those of us who are white in our church? Have you ever been condescended to because you're white? I was very blessed to have worked in an organisation whose finance director was Sierra Leonian. I admired her enormously. And the best, fairest and most supportive boss I have ever had was a Sikh from Malaysia. But still, if I don't watch myself very carefully, I find myself making unwarranted assumptions about a black person when I first encounter them. I tend

to think of them as a bit alien. 'Where are you from?' I ask someone at church. Not something which emphasises what we may have in common, such as 'What did you think of the service?' I also have to remind myself if I see a group of black teenagers, or a young black man running down the street, that they are much more likely to be doing ordinary teenage things than being any kind of threat.

What does it do to a person to be constantly treated as a second-class citizen? To have to be on your guard because other people may think you're not sufficiently respectful? To feel that it's not safe to say what you think? To be denied opportunities or seen as frightening? To be repeatedly mistaken for a criminal suspect? Just because of the colour of your skin?

We need to speak and listen to each other with open minds. Our society needs to change its ways. Our church needs to change its ways, and so do you and I. It seems to me that God's kingdom demands it.

Morwenna Orton



NOTICES

Giving—From Simon Taylor, Treasurer

Good morning everybody - I hope we are all staying safe. Just a few words to say thank you to everybody for supporting the church at this difficult time. There has been much generosity since the lockdown began and it is really appreciated, given that some of us may face their own financial uncertainties. Our congregation's generosity, and the fact that some expenditure has reduced is definitely helping our position and I and Richard are very grateful. There will obviously be financial challenges over the coming months, but so far we are meeting them.

Cash, envelopes, cash or cheques can be delivered through the vicarage letterbox in Vancouver Road. If you would like to contribute electronically, you can pay into the church account our details are: St George with St Michaels & All Angels PCC National Westminster Bank plc 61 Sydenham Road London SE26 5HW Sort Code 60 21 12 Account 37302337. If you'd like to set up or amend a standing order with your bank, then email me at simont388@gmail.com and I can provide a form. I can also provide a Gift Aid form / advise if we hold one already (for income tax payers this enables the church to get an extra 25%). Thank you once again for your support. Simon

BLESSING

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty, creator, redeemer, sustainer
be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen

