

St Martin of Tours
Epsom

St Stephen on the Downs
Langley Vale

The parish of
St Martin of Tours
with St Stephen-on-the-Downs

Weekly Newsletter
Registered Charity Number: 1134149

Sunday 11th July 2021 – Sea Sunday

Dear Friends,

As we are told of restrictions easing later this month, we have to decide how we will safely go forward in Church. We are urged to 'use common sense' in deciding how we will behave. Put theologically, being set free in Christ brings with it responsibility. St Paul wrote much about this, emphasising his freedom from observing religious laws as his salvation is in Christ. However, he added that his, and the Churches', behaviour 'should not be a stumbling block to others.' That is 'Christian sense.' I suggest it is a good principle for us all in the coming weeks.

Nick Parish

THIS WEEK

Sunday 11th July – Sea Sunday

- 9.30am – Holy Communion at St Stephen's – led by David Candlin
- 10.00am – Morning Prayer with Baptism at St Martin's in Church and live streamed – led by Graeme Lodge & Nick Parish
- 6.30pm – Holy Communion at St Martin's in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish, music from the worship band.

Thursday 15th July

- 10.00am – Holy Communion– led by Nick Parish

FUTURE SERVICES

Sunday 18th July – Seventh Sunday after Trinity

- 9.30am – Morning Prayer at St Stephen's – led by David Candlin
- 10.00am – Holy Communion t St Martin's in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish
- 6.30pm – Sung Compline at St Martin's in Church and live streamed – led by David Candlin

DISCIPLESHIP /STUDY/ WORSHIP MEETINGS

Evening and Choral Services over the summer

Please note that the last evening service in Church will be next Sunday, 18th July. Thereafter, the choir will be taking their summer break, and evening services will be suspended, resuming on September 5th. Likewise, there wont be any choral services during that time.

Creationtide

Advance notice that from Sunday September 5th to Sunday October 3rd we will be observing this season of the Church year. A programme of events, bible study, guest speakers, music and an eco-fair is being planned. Details to follow.

Thank you

To everyone who contributed to our Remember, Reflect and Restore fortnight last month. Nearly 40 people worked together to make the event happen, and many people took part. One person wrote to say what it meant to them:

'I found the experience uplifting, positive, stimulating and encouraging. Being able to process my covid experience was really helpful, letting go of the losses ... it enabled me to feel God and that I could face the future together, my wellbeing and peace was restored.'

Covid Safe measures from July 19th

The Vicar and wardens have had an initial discussion, and whilst we await formal guidance for Churches our thinking is that we will make the following changes:

1. Masks – we will ask people to wear these whilst moving around the Church, but they may remove them if they wish when sitting down.
2. Hand sanitising – we will move the station currently at the front to the entrance – thus having two places as people enter – and remove the need to sanitise before receiving the communion bread.
3. We will remove the one-way system.
4. Weekly refreshments will be re-introduced from September 5th.
5. Congregational singing will gradually be re-introduced, starting on July 25th with the final hymn of the service, and building up through August for full resumption from September 5th.
6. We shall reintroduce the chalice from September 5th.

Should any of these measures be precluded by formal guidance we will, of course, comply. However, we think these modest changes will continue to keep a safe environment without making anyone feel uncomfortable, and gradually changing practice in line with 'the data' and guidance.

STEWARDSHIP

Donation Station

We now have the equipment in Church to take card donations. This is located just behind the pews on the right hand side of St Martin's.

The process is simple – you choose the giving campaign, the amount you wish to donate and then use your contactless card; you can also gift aid your donation using the machine.

The following giving options have been added onto the Donation Station:

- Cards
- Refreshments

So if you purchase a card or would like to make a donation for refreshments when they resume in September you can use your debit card for this.

Please do not hesitate to speak to David or John on a Sunday or Gina or Nicky in the office who will be able to help you.

Giving to St Martin's and St Stephen on the Downs

For general and stewardship giving you can give online giving via the Charities Aid Foundation.

Donations can be either a one-off donation or a regular donation using direct debit.

To make a donation either:

1. Click on the following link:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/13377>

OR

2. Use your Smart Phone and Scan the QR Code below

There is also a "Donate" button on our website.



Thank you for your continued giving directly and via online giving.

Cheques to St Martins

If you would like to give a cheque donation to St Martin's Church, please can you make the cheque payable to:

The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epsom

Many thanks.

OTHER NOTICES

You may be aware that the Church of England is encouraging churches and cathedrals to look at aspects of contested heritage - for example, monuments in and around the building which are linked to slavery. There are guidelines about this on their website. The PCC has been discussing the matter, as there are several cases within the grounds of St Martin's church. PCC members have written papers, and first-hand accounts (from previous centuries) have also been researched. Recently, on Radio 4, I came across a series called 'Descendants': "Descendants looks into our lives and our pasts and asks how we are connected to slavery. And, in turn, who does that mean our lives are connected to?" I recommend listening to as many of them as you wish, as they offer often surprising viewpoints on the matter!

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000wdgh>.

Helen Williams

MISSION FOR THE MONTH

HOME

Cross Rhythms

XRhythms has grown to be recognized as one of the pioneering media initiatives proclaiming Christ into the mainstream market place. Media should be able to engage with the wider community whether attending church or not. They believe in collaborating with other organisations whose impact on society is different to their own.

ABROAD

AMECA

AMECA is committed to health care delivery, training healthcare professionals and to healthcare education in Sub-Saharan African Countries through sustainable initiatives. The latest project was the building of a maternity clinic and this has been completed. With the completion of the new maternity clinic, initial feedback was hugely positive. All the mothers commented on the quality of care and attention given by the excellent maternity staff.

Can you please hold these Mission areas in your Prayers – Thank you

Meg Topley

Sunday 1 August: St Martin's Choir sings at Guildford Cathedral

After over a year's disruption to singing together, we are thrilled to announce that St Martin's Choir will sing the services at Guildford cathedral on Sunday 1 August.

Many of you will recall that, prior to the pandemic, the choir enjoyed a programme of termly musical excursions to sing at Winchester, Chichester, Rochester and Southwark cathedrals. It will be a particular pleasure to visit our diocesan cathedral next month, and we'd be delighted to see you there too, if you can make it. Details of the services are as follows:

09.45 Sung Eucharist -including music by Richard Shephard and Felton Rapley

18.00 Choral Evensong -including music by Sumsion, Dyson and Stanford

Iain will be playing the organ for us as usual, and we certainly intend to 'make a joyful noise' together on behalf of you all!

Richard Dacey

Judith Mitchell Report for the PCC

Judith has prepared a report giving details of her training. This is available to view in the newsletter section of the website.

Vaccination Clinic

There will be a Pfizer pop up vaccination clinic at the Market Place next Tuesday 13th July, from 10am to 4pm. Please see the information below:

- No appointment needed. First and second doses for all adults aged 18 and over. Second dose for adults if it has been 8 weeks since the first dose. You must also have received Pfizer as your first dose.
- For full details please see: <https://www.surreyheartlandsccg.nhs.uk/covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-centres>
- FAQs: <https://www.surreyheartlandsccg.nhs.uk/covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-faqs>



EPSOM

Enabling churches to house the homeless

Coffee morning and sale

Hope into Action are organising a coffee morning with a cake, plant and garden produce sale along with some fun activities for all ages on **Saturday 31st July at Epsom Methodist Church from 10.00 to 12.00hrs.** (Covid permitting). We will also be providing an update and will answer questions. Please do 'pop in' even if only for a few minutes.

CONTACT US

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The Revd David Candlin – Curate - 07723 849 477

Email: revcandlin@gmail.com

The Revd Canon Adrian Esdaile - Priest in Retirement - 01372 723770

Email: esdaileadrian@yahoo.co.uk

**(available for Contemplative Prayer, Counsel,
Spiritual Direction and the Healing Ministry)**



The Children's Society



The Children's Society and The Trussell Trust: Holiday Hunger and Well-being – reflections and sharing real life stories
Thursday 15 July 2021, 11.00am to 12.00pm

The Children's Society and The Trussell Trust invite you to a free **National Church Audience Webinar** to hear about supporting children, young people, and families over the school summer holidays. Hear reflections from experiences of living in poverty and about the work of The Trussell Trust in collaboration with churches and their communities. Examples will be shared of how to support those affected by holiday hunger and to improve mental health and well-being.

Hosted by **Ruth Andoh-Baxter** (The Children's Society Relationship Manager for the South), with **The Reverend Lizzi Green** (Curate of St Albans, Gossops Green, Crawley in the Diocese of Chichester), **Dr Heather Buckingham** (Head of Church Engagement at The Trussell Trust) and a local Trussell Trust Foodbank Manager/practitioner.

Sign up even if you can't attend on the day to receive a recording with the presentations as well as all the relevant resource links.

Tickets are **free but registration is essential** via this **Zoom link** -
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_pxjnJMj0QmKU3dfSy4X45Q



Bereavement Support Group

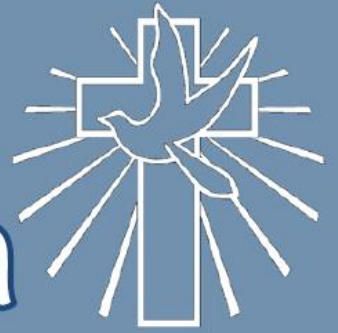
The Brigitte Trust will be running free structured 8-week bereavement courses run by a professional facilitator for anyone in Surrey in need of bereavement support.

The course will be limited to a maximum of 12 people and will be run in different parts of Surrey according to need. The first course will be held on a **Monday morning** from **10.00 am to 12.00 pm** and will be based in Dorking starting in July.

The next course is likely to be in the West of Surrey in September. There will be refreshments along with parking and disabled access toilets.

For more information or to book a place contact **Sarah Pattenden** on **07469 932192** or email sarah.pattenden@brigitte-trust.com

Christ Church Epsom Common



GUARDIANS OF **ANCORA** HOLIDAY CLUB

Date:

Monday 2nd August - Friday 6th August

Time: 9:30am - 12:30pm

Where: Christ Church, Epsom Common

Book your place **now** by downloading a Registration Form from

[https://www.christchurchepsom.org.uk/event-details/
guardians-of-ancora-holiday-club-1](https://www.christchurchepsom.org.uk/event-details/guardians-of-ancora-holiday-club-1)

or email Jen @ yfw@christchurchepsom.org.uk

Become a **Guardian of Ancora** and help find and return the wonderful story-treasure items to the Hall of Memory. Each day the Guardians will learn more about Jesus and the amazing things he did through with craft, cooking, games and much more! Also interactive game available via App.

Open to children currently in Reception - Year 6.

Fee £35 including Guardian t-shirt

(This event takes place with applicable Covid Restrictions)

Latest message from Chris Shortt at Food Bank

We are so grateful to all of our wonderful supporters, every donation really does make a difference!

Thank you to those who arrange supermarket deliveries to us. This is a fantastic way for people to make a direct donation. If you want to arrange a delivery to us, please pick a morning slot with your chosen supermarket and drop us a message letting us know when to expect it.

You may prefer to make a small donation by text, details are at the bottom of this email.

A huge thanks, as always, for your continued support.

Wishlist: This week we need help with:

Urgent:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Powdered Milk• Custard• Instant mash• Milk UHT (SS & FF)• Coffee | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long life fruit juice• Hot chocolate• Honey• Crisps and treats• Bags for life |
|--|---|

Wanted:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noodles• Tinned sweetcorn• Shaving foam• Long life sponge puddings• Tinned vegetables• Pasta/beans with meat• Tinned fish• Shower gel• Biscuits• Washing up liquid | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tinned soup• Spaghetti in sauce• Meat• Adult toothpaste• Squash• Shampoo• Pasta sauce• Tinned potatoes• Ketchup/brown Sauce• Hair conditioner |
|---|--|



Please, no more donations of the following items at this time: pasta, tampons, honey/marmalade, cat/dog food, spam/corned beef, adult toothbrushes.

You can donate at the usual supermarket points, or bring donations to our car park (please wear a mask);

Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, Generation Resource Centre, (Behind West Ewell Primary School), Ruxley Lane, Ewell, KT19 0JG

Donation Drop Off Times: Monday to Friday 9am – 2pm

*** PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL DONATIONS ARE SEALED, IN DATE AND DO NOT CONTAIN ALCOHOL***

Can't get to the shops? You could text to make a small donation, send us a supermarket delivery to the address above, or contact us about sponsoring some fresh fruit & veg!

You can help by texting 70450 to donate:

Text **FOODBANKGIFT2** to donate £2

Text **FOODBANKGIFT5** to donate £5

Text **FOODBANKGIFT15** to donate £15

Text **FOODBANKGIFT3** to donate £3

Text **FOODBANKGIFT10** to donate £10

Text **FOODBANKGIFT20** to donate £20

Kind regards, Chris Shortt

COLLECT

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our
understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above
all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Amos 7:7-15

A reading from the book of the prophet Amos.

This is what the Lord God showed me:
the Lord was standing beside a wall built
with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his
hand. And the LORD said to me, "Amos,
what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb
line." Then the Lord said, "See, I am
setting a plumb line in the midst of my
people Israel; I will never again pass them
by; the high places of Isaac shall be made
desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel
shall be laid waste, and I will rise against
the house of Jeroboam with the sword."
Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent
to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, "Amos
has conspired against you in the very
centre of the house of Israel; the land is
not able to bear all his words. For thus
Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by
the sword, and Israel must go into exile
away from his land.'" And Amaziah said
to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the
land of Judah, earn your bread there, and
prophecy there; but never again prophesy
at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary,
and it is a temple of the kingdom."
Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no
prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am
a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore
trees, and the LORD took me from
following the flock, and the LORD said to
me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

PSALM Psalm 85:8-end

R *Show us your mercy, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.*

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying,
for he is speaking peace to his faithful
people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.
Truly, his salvation is very near to those
who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land. **R**

Mercy and truth have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each
other.

Truth shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from
heaven. **R**

The Lord will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness shall go before him,
and peace shall be a pathway for his
feet. **R**

SECOND READING Ephesians 1:3-14

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

Blessed be the God and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in
Christ with every spiritual blessing in the
heavenly places, just as he chose us in
Christ before the foundation of the world
to be holy and blameless before him in
love. He destined us for adoption as his
children through Jesus Christ, according
to the good pleasure of his will, to the
praise of his glorious grace that he freely
bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we
have redemption through his blood, the
forgiveness of our trespasses, according
to the riches of his grace that he lavished
on us. With all wisdom and insight he
has made known to us the mystery of his
will, according to his good pleasure that
he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the
fullness of time, to gather up all things
in Christ, things in heaven and things on
earth. In Christ we have also obtained
an inheritance, having been destined
according to the purpose of him who
accomplishes all things according to his
counsel and will, so that we, who were
the first to set our hope on Christ, might
live for the praise of his glory. In him you
also, when you had heard the word of
truth, the gospel of your salvation, and
had believed in him, were marked with
the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this
is the pledge of our inheritance towards
redemption as God's own people, to the
praise of his glory.

GOSPEL Mark 6:14-29

*Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Mark.*

King Herod heard of the healings and
other miracles, for Jesus' name had
become known. Some were saying, "John
the baptizer has been raised from the
dead; and for this reason these powers
are at work in him." But others said, "It is
Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet,

like one of the prophets of old." But when
Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom
I beheaded, has been raised." For Herod
himself had sent men who arrested John,
bound him, and put him in prison on
account of Herodias, his brother Philip's
wife, because Herod had married her.
For John had been telling Herod, "It is
not lawful for you to have your brother's
wife." And Herodias had a grudge against
him, and wanted to kill him. But she could
not, for Herod feared John, knowing that
he was a righteous and holy man, and
he protected him. When he heard him,
he was greatly perplexed; and yet he
liked to listen to him. But an opportunity
came when Herod on his birthday gave
a banquet for his courtiers and officers
and for the leaders of Galilee. When
Herodias' daughter came in and danced,
she pleased Herod and his guests; and
the king said to the girl, "Ask me for
whatever you wish, and I will give it."
And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever
you ask me, I will give you, even half of
my kingdom." She went out and said to
her mother, "What should I ask for?" She
replied, "The head of John the Baptist."
Immediately she rushed back to the king
and requested, "I want you to give me
at once the head of John the Baptizer on
a platter." The king was deeply grieved;
yet out of regard for his oaths and for
the guests, he did not want to refuse her.
Immediately the king sent a soldier of the
guard with orders to bring John's head.
He went and beheaded him in the prison,
brought his head on a platter, and gave
it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her
mother. When his disciples heard about it,
they came and took his body, and laid it
in a tomb.

POST COMMUNION

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sunday Homily

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

11 JULY 2021

YEAR B

“Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man...
When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed.”

Mark 6:20

Illustration

Imagine you are in the supermarket, doing your weekly shop on a busy Saturday morning. As you reach second place in the queue, the unremarkable person in front of you starts ripping the packaging off all the things in their trolley and throwing it in a heap on the floor. As they begin loading their undressed purchases onto the conveyor belt, they also start to proclaim loudly the dreadful wastefulness of our society. “All these plastic containers are made with oil we cannot spare; they will pollute the ground for centuries; and all this time God’s precious children are lost and starving. I want the food, but not the packaging; you are killing our planet and all you care about is making money, no matter who gets hurt.”

It’s not just embarrassing and disruptive; it makes you uncomfortable. Your trolley suddenly seems full of packaging, too. You look anxiously for another checkout; you try to stand apart from the rumpus. Then the manager appears, and the security staff; they manhandle the miscreant out of the way and try to clear up the mess.

Gospel Teaching

Herod may have had similar feelings about John the Baptist. He was torn between the position of the supermarket manager and the discomfited fellow-shopper. In a position of authority he could not allow John to damage his reputation. He has vested interests in the way that things are, whether he thinks John is right or not. Then again, despite his sneaking suspicion that John may have God on his side, he realises that his own behaviour cannot escape John’s criticism. He personally has too much to lose from sparing the Baptist. He has the power to silence John’s protests and lets himself be forced into doing so by someone who is more resentful and less scrupulous.

Mark, by careful ordering of his material, hints that the same fate awaits Jesus, who has still greater authority than John, the prophet who has prepared his way. The people are too stubborn and self-willed to listen to the voice of God. They are too preoccupied with worldly matters and self-interest to repent. Changing their mind about past and present behaviour would be humiliating – there is simply too much to lose. So the uncomfortable disturbances must be silenced.

Application

The prophets who revealed God's insight into contemporary behaviour were members of a long tradition in ancient Israel. They were rarely welcomed, not only because their behaviour was often bizarre, but because people did not want to hear the truth. Yet with the benefit of hindsight their message was better understood, their divine inspiration perceived and their words respected.

As Christians we are called both to heed the voice of the prophets and to be like them – speaking out for God. It is not a prospect we relish because it may make us stand out in ways we will find uncomfortable. Influenced by our liberal, rights-orientated times, perhaps we are more prepared to tolerate what is clearly unacceptable. But, like the uncomfortable shopper, we sometimes recognise underlying issues and know we should not remain silent.

Yet we are not alone in our calling: being a Christian is not so much about lone voices crying in the wilderness, as being a God-centred community. We can choose to live according to different values from the rest of the world. To do this we must be self-aware and honest about our own behaviour. We must pray: always seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit when faced with moral dilemmas. We must use well the rich resources of scripture, tradition and reason. We must think carefully about the issues which face humanity and we must do our best to agree on ways to respond. We should be prepared to change our minds and our behaviour, and not afraid of ridicule or criticism.

It seems far simpler to keep well away from people who make a scene, however much we secretly admire their motives. Yet apathy and inaction may have been just as crucial in bringing John and Jesus to their deaths as aggression and fear. If we do not have the "gift of prophecy" ourselves – the insight and ability to communicate – perhaps, as Christ's body on earth, we should associate ourselves with those who do. For only with our active participation can the kingdom of God be realised.

MONDAY**12 JULY**

Exodus 1:8-14. 22

Psalm 124

Matthew 10:34 – 11:1

TUESDAY**13 JULY**

Exodus 2:1-15

Psalm 69:1-2. 31-end

Matthew 11:20-24

WEDNESDAY**14 JULY**

Exodus 3:1-6. 9-12

Psalm 103:1-7

Matthew 11:25-27

THURSDAY**15 JULY**

Exodus 3:13-20

Psalm 105:1-2. 23

Matthew 11:28-end

FRIDAY**16 JULY**

Exodus 11:10 – 12:14

Psalm 116:10-end

Matthew 12:1-8

SATURDAY**17 JULY**

Exodus 12:37-42

Psalm 136:1-4. 10-15

Matthew 12:14-21

REFLECTION

When everything seems to be going wrong, it's hard to trust that God is at work. At the start of our Exodus readings things appear bleak for the Israelites. God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation and possess the land of Canaan, seems in tatters. Abraham's offspring are now very far from the promised land, enslaved in Egypt and facing annihilation as Pharaoh seeks to wipe them out.

However, Pharaoh completely fails to thwart God's plans, for the Lord subverts his wicked schemes. The drowning of Hebrew boys leads to Moses being rescued from the Nile and becoming part of Pharaoh's own family. This not only ensures his safety but is likely to have provided him with an education which will be helpful in leading the Israelites later.

Even when Moses is forced to flee into the wilderness far from his own people, God's plans are not frustrated. The Lord speaks to Moses through a burning bush. And when Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go, God finds a way of overcoming his resistance and delivering the people. What a reminder that, no matter how bad our circumstances, there is always hope in God.



Victorian stained glass window showing Moses and the burning bush. BasPhoto/Shutterstock.com

PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you that we can always trust you
no matter how trying and hopeless
our circumstances appear.

Help us to grow in our faith
and keep going when we are unsure of your plans
and struggle to see a way forward.

PART XXXV – HABAKKUK – A BOOK OF BIG QUESTIONS

Georgina Byrne continues our book-by-book series about the Bible.

"God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights." (Habakkuk 3:19)

Why are wicked people able to do as they please? Why is there no justice? When we are afraid or anxious about the state of the nations, where is God?

Such questions echo through centuries as faithful people wrestle with matters of justice and equity. One such wrestler is Habakkuk, whose name means *"embrace"* or *"wrestle"*, capturing something of his short and passionate tussle with God. The book see-saws between Habakkuk's protestations and God's responses, culminating in the prophet's prayer and, ultimately, his trust in God's goodness.

The book is set in the context of the late seventh century BC, on the cusp of the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem and the exile. This is a time of fear and increased anxiety – an atmosphere in which prophets usually expose the sins of the people that have brought them to this state of affairs. But Habakkuk does not challenge his hearers; he challenges God. Why, he asks God, why do you allow evil to go unpunished? *"O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?"* (Habakkuk 1:2). God responds by saying that the Chaldeans (Babylonians) will, by their coming invasion, punish the wicked.

But why, Habakkuk laments, does God use the wicked Chaldeans in order to punish unjust and faithless Judeans? God counters by saying that ultimately the Chaldeans too shall be crushed and the righteous shall be saved. Habakkuk's response is to pray for mercy, and to trust in the salvation of God. God, who has covered the heavens in glory and filled the earth with praise, will surely bring good things, and Habakkuk can rejoice.

This is a short book that asks big questions of God. It asks where God is to be found in matters of justice and oppression. God does not give an entirely satisfactory answer, but the strength of the book rests in the prophet's deep and abiding trust that, however distressing the world is now, God will ultimately act justly.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith



Sixth week after Trinity

Monday 12 July to
Saturday 17 July
2021

WEEK

How to be a super-hero

Julian Smith *reflects on* Amos 7:7-15

Our thirst for super-hero movies seems unquenchable, but in reality there is no one to sweep in and sweep away our problems. Last year showed that our heroes come from a very different mould. They included healthcare staff, workers at our local care homes and supermarkets, corner-shop owners, volunteers at community shops and food banks, postal workers and delivery drivers. Many were immigrants, on the minimum wage and, until then, largely taken for granted. Unlikely heroes all.

This is nothing new for God. The Bible shows us how God calls and empowers ordinary people – Amos is a good example. He is not a smooth-talking professional; he is a plain man, a herdsman and dresser of trees, who has been called by God to prophesy to “my people Israel”. Amos is sent to set Israel straight. Amos is abrasive and uncompromising, he is from a class of people beneath contempt, and he is an immigrant.

But Amos has some things going for him – he is open to God, willing and able to listen, and he has the courage to say “yes” when God calls.

Super-heroes may be fictional, but God’s calling of unlikely heroes continues. If you are open to God, willing and able to listen and are brave enough to say “yes”, the next unlikely hero could be you. 🙌



Dear God, we thank you for calling unlikely people to be heroes in your earthly kingdom and for those who have touched our lives. Give us grace to be open to you and courage to say “yes” to your call. Amen.

Making Ordinary Time anything but

by Caroline Hodgson

One of our greatest challenges is to stop thinking of “ordinary” time as wasted or “dead” time. So here is an exercise in thinking and praying about what’s “ordinary” in our lives. First, set aside at least half an hour – and stick to it. Then take a piece of paper

– the bigger the better – and a bold pen, and start compiling a list of activities you find “ordinary”. You can work as a group, but each person should create their individual list. You might include washing up, commuting to work, visiting a relative. Be honest (but sensitive) and resist the temptation to get into big discussions at this stage. Every time you find yourself faltering, take a minute to pray – this is a wonderful exercise in achieving clarity through prayer. Keep the list visible during the week, and every time you find yourself doing something “ordinary”, add it to the list. 🙌

Characters from the lectionary

by Julian Smith

St Swithun, bishop, is commemorated on Thursday. Julian Smith looks at his life and legacy.

Immortality is assured when a rose is named after you. St Swithun has a “large, strongly-scented, soft-pink bloom of more than a hundred petals” to his name.

But his fame does not depend upon a rose. Nor does it depend upon knowledge of his holy and humble life, his ten years as Bishop of Winchester in the mid-tenth century or his time as an

adviser to King Egbert. Swithun is remembered for the legends that attend the moving of his body.

According to his wishes Swithun was buried in a simple grave outside his cathedral. When a new cathedral was being built it was planned to move his remains to a shrine within the building. Despite dire warnings of storms and tempests, Swithun’s remains were moved on 15 July 971 and forty days of storms ensued.

Never mind the rose, Swithun is remembered for his link to the weather and his day is anticipated with trepidation. 🙌

“God is faithful even when his children are not.”

Max Lucado (born 1955), American author and pastor



Sunday 11 July 2021
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mark 6:7-13

My name is _____

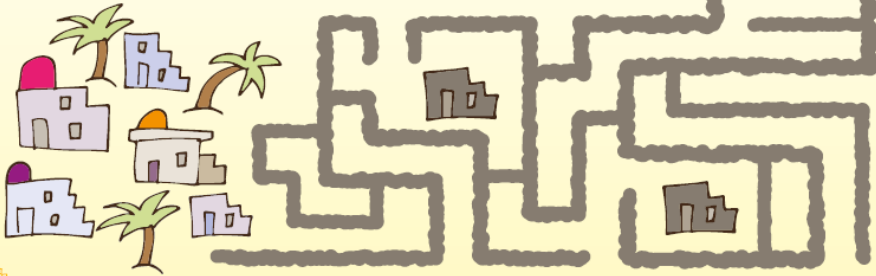
IN THE GOSPEL TODAY

Jesus tells his twelve special friends, the apostles, to go, in pairs, to all the villages, healing people who are sick and preaching the Good News of God's love. Jesus asks them not to waste time by packing too much. They will reach more people if they are not weighed down with baggage.

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS



These two apostles are going to a village to tell everyone about God's love. Help them find the way.



What would you pack?

Choose which things you would pack if you had to walk a long way for a picnic.

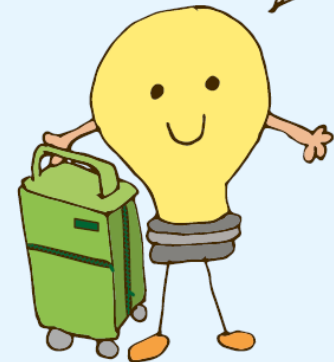


Rebus puzzles

These picture puzzles tell us something about the apostles in today's Gospel.

Can you work out what they are saying?

2 at a



Missing words

Can you fit these words into the right space?

The p were twelve special of s . They were the first people that Jesus sent out to spread the G about God's .

love

Jesus

friends

Good News

apostles

A PRAYER TO SAY

Dear Father in heaven, we know that when we do difficult things we grow braver and stronger. Help us to grow stronger in love by giving up what we want and by doing what shows love to others. Amen.