

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

Weekly Newsletter
Registered Charity Number: 1134149

Sunday 12th September 2021 – Creation 2

Dear Friends,

Life has become very busy! It's quite a shock after the relative inequality of lockdown. I was at a clergy meeting this week and came away with a quote (can't remember who from) 'Not all things that can be counted count, and not everything that counts can be counted.'

We are increasingly concerned with counting things – attendance at services and events, money in and out, how much time we sleep, how many steps we take etc etc. All good things in themselves, but in danger of replacing consideration of what counts – how is our prayer life, our worship, our relationships with others, with our planet and, chiefly, with God?

Nick Parish

THIS WEEK

Sunday 12th September – Creation 2

- 8.30am – Holy Communion – led by Nick Parish
- 9.30am – Holy Communion at St Stephen's – led by Nick Parish
- 10.00am – Choral Morning Prayer at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Graeme Lodge
- 3.00pm – Beacon Tea in Church
- 6.30pm – Holy Communion – (in Church and live streamed) led by Nick Parish

Monday 13th September

7.30pm to 9.30pm Bible Study: John 1

Wednesday 15th September

10.00am – Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel– led by Nick Parish

Saturday 18th September

4.30pm Music at Saint Martin's Recital: The Twilight Ensemble

A programme of music inspired by our beautiful planet and the wilds of nature including arias and songs by Rameau, Vaughan Williams, Rutter, Liza Lehmann, Schumann and Orlando Gough.

FUTURE SERVICES

Sunday 19th September – Creation 3

- 9.30am – Morning Prayer at St Stephen's – led by Howard Bluett
10.00am – Holy Communion with the Baptism of Imogen at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Andrew Haviland
6.30pm – Choral Evensong – (in Church and live streamed) led by Graeme Lodge

Morning Prayer will be said, **Mon – Fri**, at **9am** in the Lady Chapel.

New Log-In Details for Zoom Evening Prayer

Evening Prayer will continue on Zoom at 5pm so that those who are unable to get to church can join together to worship and pray for all those in need in our parish, our community and in the world. Please note that the Zoom joining instructions for Evening Prayer changed from 1st September so do contact me directly or via the Parish Office for the new details if you would like to join us. You don't need to commit to coming every day, just come when you wish to or are able, but we would be pleased to welcome newcomers.

Judith Mitchell

DISCIPLESHIP /STUDY/ WORSHIP MEETINGS

Our ministry for children.

Ark will resume regular meetings from today during the 10am service on a fortnightly basis. Please pray that they will prosper and nurture faith in the youngest members of our congregation.



The children's ministry to those who have outgrown Ark will begin after Creationtide on Sunday October 17th. Volunteers for this group are still needed so if you feel called to help please contact Graeme at graemelodge@hotmail.co.uk

The Pilgrim Course

Starting in October, this will be led by Graeme Lodge. Described as a 'discipleship course' it is for anyone who wants to explore Christianity and life following a Christian way. Full details soon.

Wednesday morning study group

This has resumed, after the 10am service, led by Howard Bluett.

Morning Prayer and Pastoral Support

Every Tuesday, Morning Prayer is held at 9.00am lasting between 20 and 30 minutes. From 9.30 am I shall be available in the church until 12.00 noon. If anyone wishes to talk to me about their worries or anything on their mind, please feel free to come for a chat which will of course be in total confidence. When I am not available for any reason another member of the Pastoral or Ministry Team will be there in my place.

Mary Gilbert, Pastoral Team

All who worship at one of the CTiE churches are warmly invited to attend and contribute.

Monthly prayer meetings:

Following a well-attended and enjoyable social gathering, 'in person', by CTiE reps, at the Old Moat Café, a decision was made to alternately locate the monthly prayer meetings to 'Zoom online' or 'in person', for a trial period. We were able to pray at the end of our social gathering at the Old Moat Café and felt very encouraged by the positive response we received. We look forward to sharing prayer in this community setting in the future. The Old Moat Café has a sheltered covered outdoor area to meet which should prove a Covid-safe environment. The gatherings will start at 9.15 on zoom and at 10 am for the 'in person' meetings, to avoid school traffic.

Dates of our monthly prayer meetings for Autumn 2021 are:

- Friday October 8th: 10-11am at Old Moat Café
- Friday November 12th: 9.15-9.45am on Zoom
- Friday December 10th: 10-11am at Old Moat Café



Old Moat Garden Centre Café is in Horton Lane, Epsom

[Find Us — The Old Moat Garden Centre & Cafe](#)



Creationtide at St. Martin of Tours, Epsom

A programme of events in church to celebrate God as the Creator and Sustainer of life and to explore the challenges facing the natural world.

All are welcome to these events.

Sunday 12th September

10am Choral Matins: A living community

Monday 13th September

7.30pm Bible Study: John 1

Saturday 18th September

4.30pm Music at Saint Martin's Recital: The Twilight Ensemble

A programme of music inspired by our beautiful planet and the wilds of nature including arias and songs by Rameau, Vaughan Williams, Rutter, Liza Lehmann, Schumann and Orlando Gough.

Sunday 19th September

10am Holy Communion: Need, not greed.

Guest speaker Katie Williams, UK Youth Climate Coalition

Sunday 19th September

3pm Keynote Debate: Question Time on the environment with a panel of local politicians

Monday 20th September

7.30pm Bible Study: Song of Songs 7

Saturday 25th September

9am-12 noon EPSOM ECO FAIR In conjunction with

SUSTAINABLE
EPSOM&EWELL

Our Eco Fair is a great opportunity to discover a wide range of local (and not so local) green groups, businesses and campaigns. Pop in at any time during the morning.

The Eco Fair will provide:

INFORMATION: practical ideas about what we can do individually and as a community around climate change issues. For those who don't know where or how to start the stalls will provide an opportunity to chat to others and explore the opportunities

LINKS: there are amazing things happening, so it is good to meet like-minded people for mutual support

RESOURCES: a forum for climate-focused action groups

Sunday 26th September

10am Harvest Festival with Holy Communion: Water of life.

Guest speaker Alison Moulden, Diocesan Environmental Adviser

Monday 27th September

6.30pm Speak up for the Planet.

A public speaking competition giving young people a voice on the environment

Sunday 3rd October

10am Holy Communion: Saint Francis of Assisi.

Guest speaker Rachel Hill, Eco-lead at Saint Martin's School

Additional services will be held throughout Creationtide on Sunday evenings at 6.30pm and Wednesday mornings at 10am. If you have any questions about these events please contact Helen Williams (helen@canossa.co.uk) or Graeme Lodge (graemelodge@hotmail.co.uk)

STEWARDSHIP

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.



Cheques to St Martin's

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'

Donation Station

If you wish to give via contactless payment, please use the donation station in Church. You can give a pre-set amount or choose one. You can also gift aid your donation.

OTHER NOTICES

Volunteers for Eco Fair

Dear congregation, the Eco Fair is almost upon us (Saturday 25th September, 9am - 12 noon) and I'm hoping some of you may be able to volunteer for a few things:

Light Work - helping on the St Martin's stall - welcoming people to church, talking to them, taking any donations for produce. Using the clicker to count the number of people attending the fair.

Hard Work - helping move about 16 tables from Church House to church on Friday 24th in the morning; helping move the nave chairs to the sides of the building/into Northey area/between the choir stalls between 5pm and 7pm on Friday 24th. Moving it all back after 12 noon, once the fair is over. 5 -10 people would be a good number for helping with the chairs.

In addition, please bring along plants (see Jean Wright for more details), any pots/jars of preserves you can spare from the Christmas Fair. Homemade biscuits or individual cakes (labelled with ingredients) would be welcome for the refreshment area (donations rather than selling), as we are serving drinks.

THANK YOU in advance!

Helen Williams

Volunteering at St Martin's

As we go through the autumn we need to find a volunteer to help keep the terrace outside the west door of the Church in a tidy state. The job entails sweeping up the leaves on a regular basis and disposing of them. This job is confined to the terrace and steps leading down to the car park only.

If you are able to help us with this, please contact the office in the first instance.

John and David - Churchwardens

Volunteering at St Stephen's

As our churches come out of the pandemic and get back to normal, there are two jobs at St. Stephen's that we need to find volunteers for:

- Gardening: We need a gardener to maintain the gardens of the church in a clean and tidy state. This should take no more than about 1 hour a fortnight or so.
- Cleaning: We need a volunteer to clean the church once a week after Sunday service. This is mainly vacuuming the carpets and should take not more than about 30 minutes or so each week

If you are able to carry out one or other of these jobs, please let the office know.

John and David - Churchwardens

EcoFair Plant Sale

To misquote the Bard "Now is the Summer of our discontent" but it is time to think about the Autumn tidy in the garden viz remove clumps, selfsown and other unwanted extensions. Your excesses will be good inputs for a plant sale - as a welcome outside church at the EcoFair on Saturday September 25th.

I've earmarked items in the church garden for this purpose including Michaelmas daisy, helleborus, hypericum, crocosmia. Which may give you ideas for searching your patch. These orphans don't need posh pots to go to their new homes and recycling is very IN at the EcoFair. Our prices will be low-to-go - this whole idea was motivated by seeing a clump of crocosmia, in flower, at Dobbies - for £9.99!

You could start bringing offerings from next week Sept 15th and place them in the trays I will have put on the wall with the two potted hydrangea (by the door to the tower). Please name your plants - with helpful horticultural hints if you wish.

If you would like more info please contact me at wrightjean09@gmail.com

Many thanks.

Jean Wright. Head Gnome



Beetle Drive – Saturday 16th October 2021

You are all invited to a **Beetle Drive** on **Saturday 16th October 2021** between 5.00pm – 7.00pm in Church House. We will be supplying



tea/coffee and cake and all you need to play "Beetle" as well as little prizes for completed beetles! You need to provide a die and a pencil (we will have few spares if required). We will be seeking donations for this event with proceeds raised going to the church.

If you would like to attend this event please sign up on the sheet provided in Church, before close of play on *Sunday 10th October*. If you are unable to do this, please contact Mary Holloway-Neville at mary.hollowayneville@sky.com or on 01372 723453 to let us know that you would like to attend. We will continue to follow the relevant COVID guidelines and be socially distanced although we cannot speak for the beetles! We hope that you will come, meet with friends, enjoy a slice of homemade cake and have a fun filled afternoon.

Events Team

**** **SAVE THE DATE** ****



St Martin's Christmas Fair will be held on **Saturday 27th November 2021** between 11.00 am and 3.00 pm. Please put this date in your diaries so that you can come and support us. The Christmas Fair is always very successful with lots of goodies to buy, food to eat and friends to meet. Watch out for more information in due course.

Thank you

Events Team

Chris Hyde

Chris and Sue thank you for all your good wishes after Chris' small stroke. He is making steady improvement. Your continued prayers are much appreciated.

Afghan Emergency

Thousands of refugees from Afghanistan will need to be housed and integrated into our national life over the next few years. Talks are taking place with councils up and down the country seeking commitments of accommodation and support. The Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network (ERN) is in talks with our Borough Council to try and help them be part of this scheme. If you would like to encourage them to take part, please write to your local Councillor.

ERN are urgently looking for local landlords who will rent properties to refugee families under the Afghan Resettlement Scheme. Please encourage any landlords you know to get in touch, even if their property is not currently vacant. Jo Sherring of ERN, who rents two properties to refugees, can explain how it works, to the good of all.

If you know anyone who speaks an Afghan language, please encourage him/her to contact ERN.

Please look out any clothes, shoes, phones or other essentials that you might like to donate to Care4Calais, who are collecting in anticipation of a huge influx from Afghanistan. If you bring them to church or to the Parish Office, I will see that they reach the distribution hub in Ashford. Thank you.

Laurence Impey

MISSION FOR THE MONTH

HOME

St Martin's supports by annual donations many local and national charities and agencies covering a wide range of needs, both practical and spiritual.

Local include: Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network, The Food Bank, PHAB, Street Pastors, Sunnybank Trust, Love Me Love my Mind.

National include: Through the Roof, Mission to Seafarers, Church Army, Children's Society, CMS England, Cross Rhythms (Christian Radio Station). Also included Harvest and Christmas donations and collections Please hold all these in your prayers.

Jill Chapman

ABROAD

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)

MAF is a Christian organisation that provides aviation, communications and learning technology to more than 1,000 Christian and humanitarian agencies as well as thousands of isolated missionaries and indigenous villagers in the world's most remote areas. There are three major operational centers one of which is situated in Ashford, United Kingdom. These centers provide operational support to programs in the Americas, Africa and the Asia Pacific regions.

Meg Topley

MUSIC@ST MARTIN'S

AUTUMN RECITALS RETURN 2021



Sat 18 Sep 4.30pm
TWILIGHT ENSEMBLE
music by Rameau,
Vaughan Williams,
Rutter and Schumann

Sat 23 Oct 4.30pm
TAILLEFERRE ENSEMBLE
music by Brandon,
Burton, Stolzel,
Samuel and Dring



Sat 20 Nov 4.30pm
OXBRIDGE ORGAN DUO
music by Briggs, Tomkins,
Wesley and Stravinsky



www.stmartinsepsom.org

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH, EPSOM KT17 4PX

Registered Charity No 1134149

Admission £10 Children £5

SING WITH ST MARTIN'S CHOIR, EPSOM



St Martin's Choir, Epsom provides music for Sunday services throughout the year. Our wide repertoire from the great Anglican tradition includes music by Byrd, Handel, Brahms, Mozart, Wesley, Stanford and Howells as well as newly composed works. We welcome new members of all ages who like to sing heavenly music and share in the following:

- Complete the RSCM Voice for Life Programme
- Sing regularly in regional cathedrals
- Perform in concerts and make recordings
- Enjoy our social events

Contact Richard Dacey, Director of Music

Tel: 01372 722567

www.stmartinsepsom.org

Latest message from Food Bank

Wishlist: This week we need help with:

Urgent:

- Long life sponge puddings
- Meat pies
- Sugar (500g bags)
- Tinned vegetables
- Rice
- Tomato ketchup
- Mayonnaise
- Washing powder & pods (bio & non-bio)
- Peanut butter
- Jam
- Rice pudding
- Shaving foam
- Baby wash
- Washing up liquid
- Shampoo

Bags for Life - we urgently need these

Please, no more donations of the following items at this time:

- pasta,
- baked beans,
- porridge,
- baby shampoo,
- tampons & sanitary towels,
- marmalade,
- cat/dog food,
- adult toothbrushes

You can donate at the usual supermarket points, or bring donations to our car park 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

To give:

You can help by texting 70450 to donate:

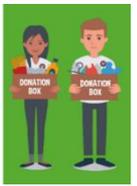
Text **FOODBANKGIFT5** to donate £5

Text **FOODBANKGIFT15** to donate £15

Text **FOODBANKGIFT10** to donate £10

Text **FOODBANKGIFT20** to donate £20

Epsom & Ewell
foodbank
HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS



A free course to help you manage your money better and learn to budget, save and spend well.



budget. save. spend.

Tuesdays // 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th Sept // 7:30pm
Signup at www.epsomvineyard.org/cap

Walk for 'Kids For Kids' on Sunday 12th September

On Harvest Sunday this year we will be hoping to raise money for **Kids For Kids**, a charitable organisation that sustains life in Dafur, Sudan.

If you would like to make an early donation of £5 and at the same time enjoy a 4 mile walk around the beautiful Holmwood Common south of Dorking, organised by Dorking Rotary, please consult the Rotawalk'21 website. Walkers may start out on the trail at any time between 10am and 3pm.

Happy hiking!

Laurence Impey

RotaWalk'21 – Step with us for Sudan! September 12 @ 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

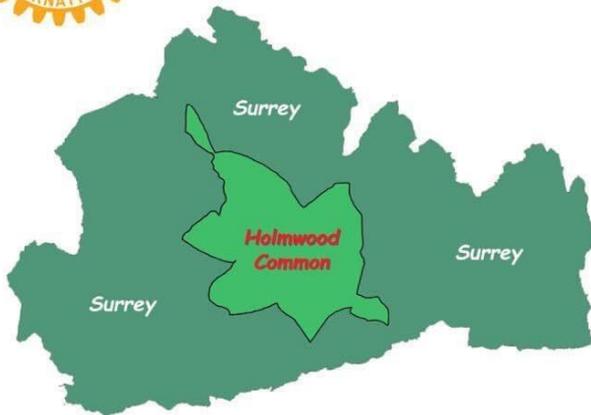
September 12 @ 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Blackbrook Road, Dorking, RH5 4NX United Kingdom [+ Google Map](#)



Rotawalk'21

Sunday 12th September 2021
Holmwood Common



Join us for this year's RotaWalk'21, organised by **Rotary in Dorking** which will take place on Sunday 12th September 2021, on the National Trust land of Holmwood Common, due south of Dorking.

Help us raise desperately-needed funds for the children of Darfur by raising sponsorship and challenging yourself to complete this 4 mile circular route with family and friends around the beautiful Holmwood Common. The route is a flattish, cinder-based all-weather circuit, suitable for all ages, and easily

negotiated with push-chairs and mobility scooters.

Enjoy the countryside and perhaps do a bit of bird-spotting too!

Our walk will start at 10:00 am from the Northerly point close to the car park at Inholms Lane and North Holmwood Church. We will finish at this same point, where we will check-in to confirm we have safely completed the route. En route, there will also be a waystation at 'The Viewpoint' where you can relax, enjoy the view and sample the drinks and cake on offer – yum!

We're asking for a minimum donation of just £5 entry per adult walker. Children under 16 are more than welcome to join too and will be free!



We are all in this together

Epsom Mental Health
and Well-Being Festival
9th - 16th October 2021

www.epsommentalhealthweek.org.uk



Follow us @
lovemelovemymindepsom
lmmepsom



Epsom Mental Health and Well-Being Festival is organised by Love Me Love My Mind, a charity dedicated to promoting understanding about mental health issues. Registered charity no: 1177683

CONTACT US

Parish Office:

**Church House, Church Street, Epsom,
KT17 4PX Phone: 01372 722567**

E-mail: stmartinsepsom@btconnect.com

Website: www.stmartinsepsom.org

The Revd Nick Parish – Vicar – 01372 743336

Email: vicar@stmartinsepsom.org

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)***

COLLECT

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; 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 Isaiah 50:4-9a

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The servant of the Lord said: The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he awakens – awakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

PSALM Psalm 116:1-8

R I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him. The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; I came to grief and sorrow. **R**

Then I called upon the name of the Lord:
"O Lord, I pray you, save my life."

Gracious is the Lord and righteous; our God is full of compassion. **R**

The Lord watches over the innocent; I was brought very low and he helped me.

Turn again to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has treated you well. **R**

For you have rescued my life from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from stumbling. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. **R**

SECOND READING James 3:1-12

A reading from the letter of James.

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

GOSPEL Mark 8:27-38

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

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." Jesus asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

POST COMMUNION

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy; and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall, keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sunday Homily

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

12 SEPTEMBER 2021

YEAR B

“He asked them,
‘But who do you say that I am?’”

Mark 8:29

Illustration

Gossip makes the world go round. None of us can resist the latest rumours and scandals, as newspaper and magazine sales figures make clear. Even if we have ourselves been the victim of false rumours, we can't quite help believing stories about other people. “No smoke without fire” must be one of the most depressing maxims in existence, when applied to gossip. We even manage to pass on gossip with a clear conscience. We say, “I have heard... but of course I've no idea if it's true or not.” We seldom expect to be confronted with the person whose reputation is under the microscope, or to be held accountable for the truth or otherwise of the story we are helping to spread.

Gospel Teaching

Jesus' ministry was attended by a great many rumours. For a lot of the time, he was followed about by large groups of people who had heard stories about him and, in those pre-newspaper days, could only join in the gossip by being there. In the Gospels, we hear the stories of those who come into direct contact with Jesus, but we hear very little about these others, this shadowy mass of people hanging round the edges of all the action. In the tremendous whirlwind of Jesus' ministry, there isn't really time to worry about those who are just looking for a sensation. Jesus and the disciples have their hands full with potential friends and enemies, without bothering with those who don't really want anything in particular.

But in today's Gospel reading, Jesus suddenly asks his disciples what people are saying about him. The disciples answer so quickly and with so many options that it sounds as though this was a discussion they had been longing for. After all, their own reputations were bound up with Jesus'. They are thoughtful friends. They do not pass on the unkind rumours, the doubts about Jesus' sanity, the suggestions about his paternity and so on. They only pass on the acceptable gossip, and wait to hear what Jesus has to say.

But then Jesus goes to the heart of it. “Who do you say that I am?” And the disciples go quiet. It is so much easier to pass on gossip, taking no responsibility

for it, than to stand up for their own opinions. Only Peter is prepared to risk an answer, and gets very little reward for it. Technically, Peter is right. Jesus is the Messiah. But he is just as much wrong as right, because what Peter thinks is a Messiah is not at all what Jesus is going to be. Jesus is going to free his people and lead them to victory, just like a good Messiah should, but he is going to do it through suffering, and, even then, it might not end up as the kind of triumph his disciples have in mind. Peter has been so influenced by what “everyone says” a Messiah should be that he even tries to contradict Jesus. Perhaps Jesus just hasn’t read the right books and newspapers, Peter thinks, as he tries to teach Jesus what his mission should be.

But centuries of history have shown what comes of trying to do things the way “everyone knows” they should be done. In Jesus, God has come to make plain that there is only one way to change everything, and that is the way that Jesus is walking.

Application

Like the disciples, we would usually rather live with borrowed opinions than venture our own. We would prefer not to stand out against the crowd, and declare what we believe. We, too, would prefer our God to be strong and victorious, so that our own reputations can be vindicated along with his.

How very hard it is to allow God to make his own definitions. But that is just what God does in Jesus. God shows us how he defines himself, what his nature is and how he chooses to act. We can reject God, but we cannot make him be a different kind of divinity. This is God, take it or leave it. Jesus is not swayed by what others say about him, or by what his disciples long for him to be. He knows what he must do and be, for our salvation. As his followers, we must keep our eyes fixed on him, and resist any other rumours or definitions of God.

MONDAY
13 SEPTEMBER

1 Timothy 2:1-8
Psalm 28
Luke 7:1-10

TUESDAY
14 SEPTEMBER

Holy Cross Day
Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 22:23-28
Philippians 2:6-11
John 3:13-17

WEDNESDAY
15 SEPTEMBER

1 Timothy 3:14-end
Psalm 111:1-5
Luke 7:31-35

THURSDAY
16 SEPTEMBER

1 Timothy 4:12-end
Psalm 111:6-end
Luke 7:36-end

FRIDAY
17 SEPTEMBER

1 Timothy 6:2b-12
Psalm 49:1-9
Luke 8:1-3

SATURDAY
18 SEPTEMBER

1 Timothy 6:13-16
Psalm 100
Luke 8:4-15

REFLECTION

God's love for the world is so great that he sends his Son to save all those who believe in him and look to him for forgiveness and eternal life.



A Roman centurion looks to Jesus to heal his critically ill slave. His faith is so strong that he can send a message asking Jesus simply to *“speak the word, and let my servant be healed,”* and the servant is healed.

A woman comes to Jesus while he dines at a Pharisee's home. Because of her faith in him he tells her that her sins are forgiven – she is freed from them. Her grateful love is poured out over his feet and he understands. *“Your faith has saved you; go in peace,”* he says in loving tenderness.

Men and women down the ages have received the seeds of faith with eagerness and nurtured them so that they bear an abundance of fruit. We too receive those seeds, faith takes root in us and if we allow it to happen, we too will bear lasting fruit.

What is asked of us is that we look to God's Son and believe in him. Then we too will be forgiven and welcomed into eternal life.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us to trust you with a strong and simple faith, believing that for you all things are possible, and that you will lead us on the road of eternal life. May we always hear your loving voice saying to us, *“Go in peace, you are healed and forgiven.”*

THE THEOLOGY OF ST PAUL

PART IV – PAUL’S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Becky Mynett concludes her series about the life and theology of St Paul.

Paul’s letter to the Romans was written to a church he had not yet visited, so by way of introduction he tells them his view of what God has done through Jesus. Most of the people he was writing to would have been Gentiles, but there may have been some Jews who had newly returned having been expelled from Rome for five years under the Emperor Claudius.

For Paul, it is self-evident that the world was made by the one creator God, and he can’t really understand how the Gentiles could have come up with their pagan gods. He seems to think that Gentiles should be ashamed and guilt-ridden for ignoring what he sees as obvious. But God is kind and patient, so Paul is sure that Gentiles who do the right thing and are not self-seeking will gain eternal life.

Paul notes that the Jews were given the Law and he thinks they should have kept it completely, but – perhaps drawing on his experience as a Pharisee – he recognises that this is nigh-on impossible. So Jews who do the right thing and trust in Jesus are also saved. Paul uses various precedents to explain why continued, strict observance of the Law is not necessary, especially that of Abraham, whose faith in God was reckoned as righteousness before he was circumcised.

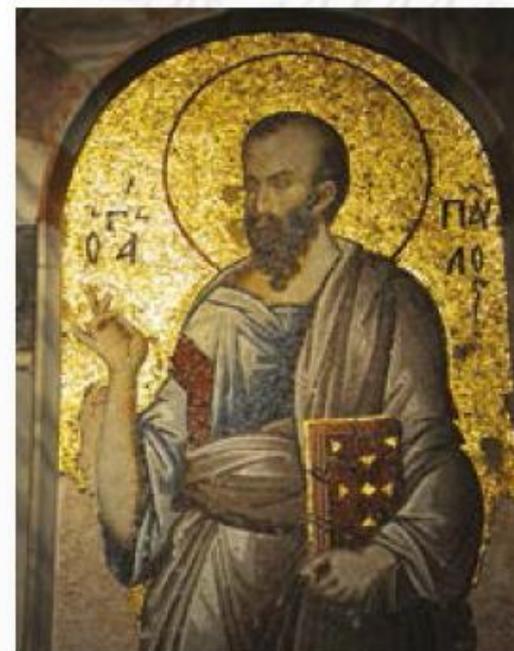
Paul’s point is that all – Jews and Gentiles alike – have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). But Paul the Pharisee has found freedom from hyper-strict observance of the Law through faith in the risen Christ. God had ignored past sins and provided a way for everyone to be made righteous through faith in Jesus.

Paul sees his fellow Jews’ failure to recognise Jesus as an opportunity to include Gentiles in God’s kingdom, but he believes that ultimately the Jewish people will also learn to trust in the Spirit of God rather than a strict interpretation of the letter of the Law.

LIVE theWORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith



Byzantine mosaic of the apostle Paul

Fifteenth week
after Trinity

Monday 13 September
to Saturday
18 September 2021

WEEK

Talking tongues



Holy God, break through our daily distractions, that we might hear your voice in our hearts, the world and each other and, encouraged by your word, may we be transformed into compassionate builders of your kingdom. Amen.

St Paul

Part IV

by Becky Mynett

Becky concludes her series about the life and work of St Paul.

What can we learn about Paul's theology from his letters?

Firstly, his understanding of God and Jesus was based on his experience of meeting the risen Christ. Having been a persecutor of the Church, he became convinced that Jesus was sent by God. As a Pharisee, he already

believed that when God rescued Israel from bondage the dead would be resurrected. He saw Jesus' resurrection as proof that he was from God. In 1 Corinthians he explains that everyone would have a new spiritual body. In his earlier letters, especially 1 Thessalonians, he clearly assumes that this will happen in his lifetime.

Secondly, we learn that there was a controversy about how Gentiles should follow Jesus. Did they need to become Jewish, be circumcised and obey the Law? In Galatians, Paul is clear that this is not necessary. It is faith in Jesus (rather than the Law) which puts one right with God. 🌸

“Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'”

1 Corinthians 15:33

Richard Greatrex *reflects on* Isaiah 50:4-9a, James 3:1-12 and Mark 8:27-38

Dominating this week's readings is the invitation to hear God's voice over our own cacophonies. Both Isaiah and James focus on the tongue as the organ of speech. For Isaiah it is a tool for encouragement, especially when coupled with a listening ear. James is more wary: tongues may be small, but misguided or malicious speech causes great damage. Today we might compare tongues to fingers swiping an injudicious comment into the maelstrom of social media.

Jesus, in Mark's Gospel, finds his disciples better at speaking than listening, with Peter proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah one minute then the next rebuking him for not adhering to the traditional messianic template. Throughout

Mark the disciples struggle to hear the truth of Jesus' words; they still view the Messiah as an all-conquering hero. Jesus regularly informs them that the necessary route for God's Son is death and resurrection, yet they continue to block out his message.

Isaiah listens carefully and catches the truth – faithfully following God isn't always going to be popular; there's a high probability it will lead to suffering. Jesus, referencing his sacrifice in language that the disciples will only comprehend after his resurrection, proclaims the same: taking up our crosses without shame may bring pain, but such action will give us the tongue of a teacher, leading by example and declaring through our deeds God's hope of life lived well. 🌸

Baptism

Part I – history and sacrament

by Heather Smith

Christians have been baptised since the very beginning of the Christian faith, and ceremonial washing with water is mentioned in Jewish tradition long before Christ. In Exodus (29:4), as part of the ordination of priests, Aaron and his sons were brought to the entrance of the Tent of the Meeting (tabernacle) and washed with water. In the New Testament, the story of baptism

begins with John the Baptist's ministry, including the baptism of Christ himself.

After the resurrection, Christ commissions his disciples to make disciples and to baptise them with the Trinitarian formula: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19), while in John's Gospel the disciples baptise during Christ's ministry on earth (John 4:2).

Once we reach the Acts of the Apostles, the familiar pattern is established, of coming to Christ followed by baptism. Paul was baptised (Acts 9:18) as was the Ethiopian eunuch (8:38). Baptism soon settled into a set liturgy, and today *Common Worship* provides forms of baptism, both within and outside a Eucharist. 🌸



Sunday 12 September 2021
 Mark 8:27-35
 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

IN THE GOSPEL TODAY

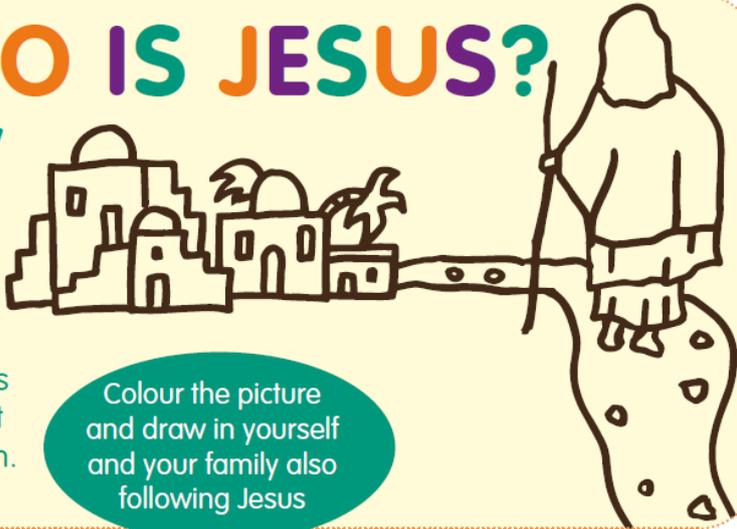
My name is _____

Jesus asks his friends, "who do you say I am?". Peter knows that Jesus has been sent by God, but doesn't understand yet just what that means. Jesus has come to show us how to put other people first. It may be a difficult journey but Jesus will lead his friends to new life and happiness.

WHO IS JESUS?

Follow God!

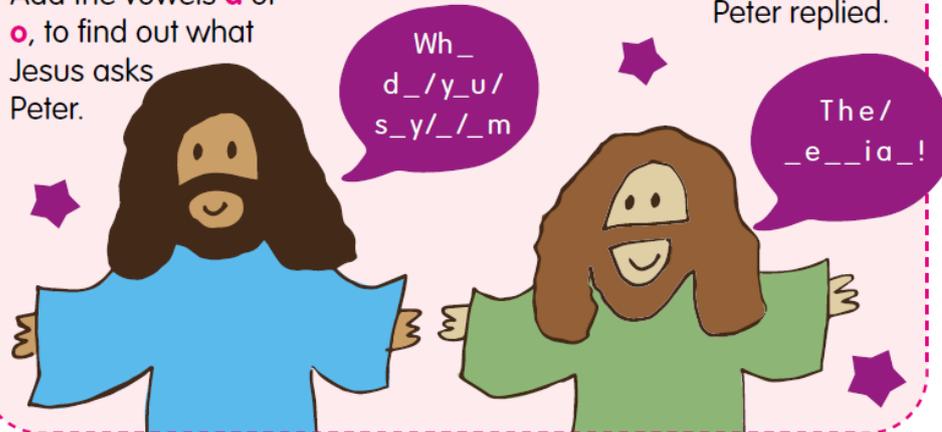
Jesus has gone on ahead on the road. His friends want to follow him.



Who says what?

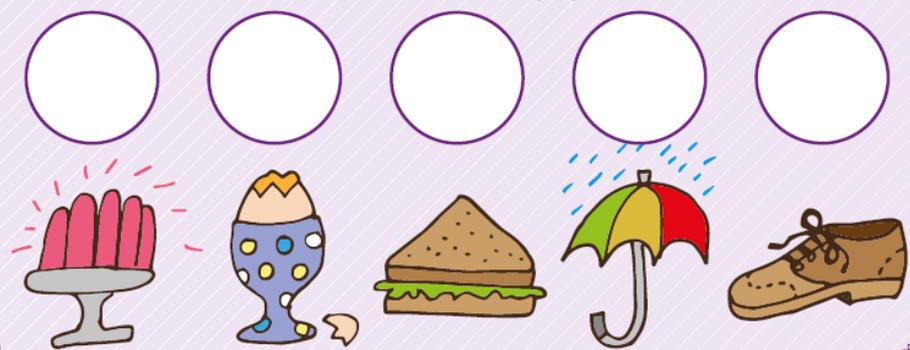
Add the vowels **a** or **o**, to find out what Jesus asks Peter.

Add the consonants, **M**, **s** or **h** to find out what Peter replied.



Who am I?

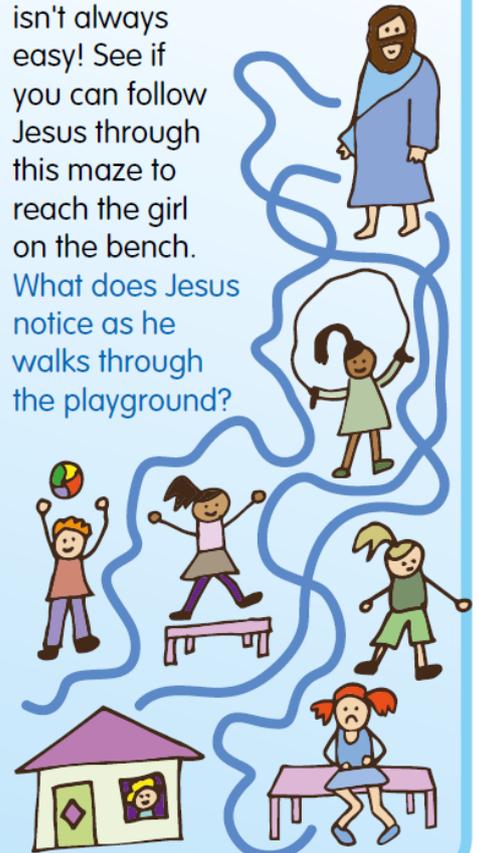
Write in each circle the first letter of the word describing the object. You will find the name of someone very special.



Following Jesus isn't always easy! See if you can follow Jesus through this maze to reach the girl on the bench.

Maze

What does Jesus notice as he walks through the playground?



A PRAYER TO SAY

Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, sent to save us. Help me to follow your example and put other people first, even when it is hard. Help me to spread your love and life all around me. Amen.

"Who do you say I am?"; "The Messiah!"; Jesus.