

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 26th September 2021 – Creation 4 - Harvest

Dear Friends,

This year, events have conspired to make us acutely aware of the complex system that gets food to our plates. Shortage of HGV drivers, more complex and costly import and exports, extreme weather caused by climate change, energy costs to the food industry – all add up to potential shortages of some foodstuffs.

There is increasing pressure on governments to tackle these problems and look for more sustainable production and delivery going forward. Harvest festival reminds us of the nourishment the earth produces for us, and the need for humanity to keep in tune with what it needs to do that.

Nick Parish

THIS WEEK

Sunday 26th September – Creation 4 – Harvest Festival

9.30am – Holy Communion at St Stephen's – led by Andris Abakuks

10.00am – Service of the Word with the Baptism of Skye at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish

Guest speaker Alison Moulden, Diocesan Environmental Adviser

Whilst our organ console is being renewed, music will be led a range of musicians – including members of our worship band - under the direction of Richard Dacey.

6.30pm – Evening Prayer – (in Church and live streamed) led by Ruth Foxcroft

Harvest Giving, Sunday 26th September

As usual, donations in goods and cash in thanksgiving for harvest will be most welcome. If you are able, please bring food and toiletries, preferably from the list from the Epsom and Ewell Food Bank further on in this newsletter, to the service on Harvest Sunday, for transfer to the Food Bank.

This year we would like to make a financial contribution to the charity Kids For Kids, sustaining life in Darfur.

Donations can be made by one of the following methods:

1. In Church by debit or credit card using the donation station and selecting "Giving at our Harvest Service"
2. Online by clicking the following link to our Harvest CAF Giving Campaign: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/17966> or scan this QR Code
3. If you are unable to donate via the above 2 methods you can drop in a cheque made payable to 'The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epsom' and clearly label the envelope "Kids for Kids"



Thank you all in advance for your annual harvest gifts.

Laurence Impey

Monday 27th September - EVENT CANCELLED

Sadly, the 'Speak Up For The Planet' event due to be held on Monday 27th September at 6.30pm has had to be cancelled. Schools reported that the combination of being close to the start of term and also this particular school year after 18 months of disruption meant that it was difficult to put pupils forward. When the situation changes, we can look to host a similar event at a future date.

Wednesday 29th September

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

FUTURE SERVICES

Sunday 3rd October – St Francis

- 9.30am – Harvest Service at St Stephen's – led by John Padwick
- 10.00am – Holy Communion at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish. Remerging Saint Francis of Assisi.
- 12.00pm – Baptism of Orla & Raphael led By Nick Parish
- 6.30pm – Evening Prayer – (in Church and live streamed) led by Nick Parish

DISCIPLESHIP /STUDY/ WORSHIP MEETINGS

Pilgrim

A Pilgrim group will be meeting on Monday evenings from 7.30pm starting on October 4th. This group is for those who want a chance to think about the Christian faith, including those who are curious, those whose journey is just starting, and those who want to revisit the roots of their faith once again. You can find out more about Pilgrim by watching this video <https://youtu.be/cNCxhrMiPt0> or at this website <http://www.pilgrimcourse.org/>.

The initial commitment to the course is for six sessions (up to and including November 8th). Its theme will be "Turning to Christ" and will explore the questions posed at Baptism. Each session will last about 90 minutes.

The Pilgrim group will be led by Graeme Lodge and if you want to know anything further you can contact him on 01372 741746, or graemelodge@hotmail.co.uk, or speak to him after church.

Please pass this on to anyone you know who may be interested.

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.

I regret I will be unavailable on Tuesday 5th October as I shall be away.

Mary Gilbert, Pastoral Team

Churches Together in Epsom Monthly prayer meetings:

Following a well-attended and enjoyable social gathering, 'in person', by CTiE reps, at the Old Moat Café, we decided 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 received a positive response. The Old Moat Café has a covered outdoor area 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.

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](#)

News from Churches Together in Epsom

At our recent CTiE meeting, we heard details of Emerge Advocacy, a new charity working at Epsom Hospital, and of the return of Street Pastors.

Emergence Advocacy

Emergence Advocacy is a Christian charity which provides support to young people aged 10 to 25 arriving at Accident and Emergency at Epsom Hospital because of self-harm, emotional crisis or a suicide attempt. They provide God's presence and a listening ear to those young people at a moment of crisis in their lives. The charity was founded by one woman with a vision and now has a presence in all the major hospitals in Surrey and is moving outwards to Kent and elsewhere. Their team mostly consists of volunteers from local churches who are given full training. At Epsom Hospital volunteers are currently on call from 7 pm to 11 pm, usually Monday to Thursday. Emergence in Epsom needs more volunteers in the hospital and also to give prayer support. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more details, see <https://emergeadvocacy.com/> or get in touch with Bethany via email bethany@emergeadvocacy.com, or call 07534 331 455.

Street Pastors

Please pray for the Street Pastors who have recently started going out again after a gap of 18 months because of the pandemic. They are on the streets of our town from 10 pm to 3 am on a Friday night, talking and listening to anyone who is willing to talk to them. They go out in teams of at least three, are DBS checked and are trusted by the people they meet. They show the love of God and, if asked, will pray with someone and talk about God in a non-confrontational way. They help to calm situations and arrange transport to get people home safely. If you would like to find out more, see <https://streetpastors.org/locations/epsom/> or email: epsom@streetpastors.org.uk

Judith Mitchell and Meg Topley

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 give a cheque donation to St Martin's Church, please can it payable to:
'The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epsom'

Donation Station

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

OTHER NOTICES

Rip Ron Smith

Many of you will remember Ron Smith, who sadly died on Tuesday this week aged 88. Having been a regular worshipper, with his late wife Hazel, at St Martins for many years, Ron moved into Firtree Lodge care home 2-3 years ago and has been comfortable and well cared for and made many friends there. John last visited him about 3 weeks ago, and although getting a bit confused he was still his usual smiling self. It was Ron's wish to have his funeral at St Martins so we hope to have details shortly.

John Aronson

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

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

The Memorial Garden

This much appreciated space is beginning to get a little cluttered with memorial items. We understand people wish to put these items near the place where their loved one's ashes have been interred, but after an appropriate period of time, if they are not removed we will place them at the foot of the Church wall. Thank you. **Nick Parish**

MISSION FOR THE MONTH

HOME MISSION

The Sunnybank Trust - supports people with learning disabilities and autism to say what they want and live the life they choose, through their range of services. Voices, Choices, Futures - providing advocacy and social opportunities and transitional support to young adults and their families leaving full time education.

Spinnaker Trust – Engaging, Inspiring, Equipping

The aim of this Christian charity is to support primary schools with assemblies and R.E. lessons. Locally they have worked at 11 schools in Epsom and Ewell.

They aim to inspire this generation of primary school children to engage with the Christian faith and explore its values.

ABROAD MISSION

St Martin's supports by annual donations many International Charities and Agencies, covering a wide range of needs, both practical and spiritual.

These include:

USPG(church in south India)

Barnabas Fund (suffering Christians in Syria)

AMECA (Malawi)

Mission Aviation Fellowship

Wheels for the World

Mercy Ships

The Leprosy Mission

Also including them in our Harvest and Christmas donations and collections.

Please hold them in your Prayers.

Jill Chapman - Mission

--Mission.

Beacon Teas

The Beacon Teas have resumed, and are held in St Martin's Church on the second Sunday in each month between 3.00pm. and 5.00pm. The next one will take place on **10th October**. We look forward to seeing anyone who would like some companionship, sandwiches and cake. You can decide which of these is the most important! If anyone is willing to donate the occasional home-made cake we would be most grateful.

Mary Gilbert and Elaine Snook, Pastoral Team

EVENTS AND MUSIC

**** 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



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

Ashtead Choral Society concert – 7.30pm Saturday 9th October

On the evening of Saturday 9th October Ashtead Choral Society will be celebrating its 71st season of music-making. It has a reputation for presenting varied and exciting programmes with professional soloists and orchestras.

We're thrilled to be back performing 'live' again in St Martin's Church. Join us for an evening of great classical music by two of the world's most famous composers.

We would also like to invite those who aren't able to attend an evening concert to drop in during the afternoon rehearsal from 2.30pm.

Our conductor is Andrew Storey and once again we're delighted to be working with the Kent Sinfonia.

Tickets are £15, half price for under 25s all unreserved For tickets, please email

boxoffice@ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk or ring the box office on **07835 115 716**

www.ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk

ASHTEAD CHORAL SOCIETY

MASTERS
in
CONCERT

MOZART REQUIEM
BEETHOVEN CHORAL FANTASIA &
PIANO CONCERTO No2

Louis Pares *Piano*, Andrew Storey *Conductor*, Kent Sinfonia

Saturday 9th October 2021, 7.30pm
St Martin's Church, Epsom KT17 4PX

All tickets £15 unreserved : half-price for under 25s
From boxoffice@ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk or telephone 07835 115 716
www.ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk @AshteadChoral

St Martin's Music Recitals

Payment for the admission for attending a recital as part of Music @ St Martin's can be made by either :

1. Using the Donation Station in Church and select "Giving at a Recital at St Martin's"
2. Put the following link into your web browser:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/14629>

OR

3. Use your Smart Phone and Scan the QR Code



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
 - Tinned Fruit
 - Powdered Milk
 - Squash
 - Shaving foam
- Bags for Life - we urgently need these
 - Shower Gel
 - Shampoo
 - Female & Male Deodorant
 - Kids Toothbrushes
 - Nappies Size 5+ (Urgent)

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



PEER

SUPPORT GROUP IS BACK FROM 15 OCTOBER

This ongoing group is non-judgemental, an environment where we are learning from others and supporting others. The sessions will help you to improve your emotional health, wellbeing and resilience.



Start Date: Fridays
Duration: Weekly
Times: 11am-2pm
Venue: Brickfield Centre, Portland Place, Epsom, KT17 1DL

MFT supports adults in Surrey to improve and maintain their mental wellbeing through one-to-one support, courses, groups and activities.

MEDITATION WITH SOUND HEALING

Our 4-week course will help you to learn tools to reduce your stress, worry and anxiety. It will be delivered by Litsa, a qualified yoga and meditation teacher.



From Friday 29 October 2021
12pm to 1.30pm
at the Brickfield Centre, Portland Place, KT17 1DL, Epsom

MFT supports adults in Surrey to improve and maintain their mental wellbeing through one-to-one support, courses, groups and activities.

To book your place, you will need to register with MFT first and then contact: 01372 375400, text 07929 024722, email info@maryfrancetrust.org.uk or visit www.maryfrancetrust.org.uk



Registered Charity 1055113

To book your place, you need to register with MFT first and then a Zoom Link will be given to you: 01372 375400, text 07929 024722, email info@maryfrancetrust.org.uk or visit www.maryfrancetrust.org.uk



Registered Charity 1055113

WOMEN'S CRAFT AND SEWING GROUP IS STARTING AGAIN

This term time group will help you to discover how to achieve greater confidence, a more balanced life and improved emotional health, wellbeing and resilience.

There will be guidelines in place to keep people 'as safe as possible' from covid. Wearing a mask will be optional. Sessions will be a small group of 8 people until December 2021. To attend you will need to book a place Mondays each week by texting Parvin on 07380857701. To allow the maximum numbers of attendees, places will be given on a rotation basis to allow everyone the opportunity to benefit from this group.



Start Date: Wednesday 20 October 2021
Duration: Term Time
Times: 10.30am -12pm
Venue: Creche room, King Church, Longmead Rd, Epsom KT19 9BU

MFT supports adults in Surrey to improve and maintain their mental wellbeing through one-to-one support, courses, groups and activities.

To book your place, you need to register with MFT first and then contact: 01372 375400, text 07929 024722, email info@maryfrancetrust.org.uk or visit www.maryfrancetrust.org.uk



Registered Charity 1055113

ARTS & CRAFTS

This ongoing group will help you relieve stress, meet new people and boost your confidence and self esteem. The sessions will be supported by a qualified ceramist.



Start Date: Tuesday 19 October 2021
Duration: Weekly
Times: 2pm -3pm
Venue: Banstead Youth Centre, The Horseshoe, SM7 2BQ

MFT supports adults in Surrey to improve and maintain their mental wellbeing through one-to-one support, courses, groups and activities.

To book your place please contact: 01372 375400, text 07929 024722, email info@maryfrancetrust.org.uk or visit www.maryfrancetrust.org.uk



Registered Charity 1055113



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

**Opening hours are Mondays, Wednesday, Thursdays & Fridays
9.30am to 12.30pm**

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

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless till they find
their rest in you:
pour your love into our hearts and draw
us to yourself,
and so bring us at last to your heavenly
city
where we shall see you face to face;
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

Numbers 11:4-6. 10-16. 24-29

A reading from the book of Numbers.

The rabble among the people had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at." Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the LORD became very angry, and Moses was displeased. So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favour in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child,' to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, 'Give us meat to eat!' I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once – if I have found favour in your sight – and do not let me see my misery." So the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you." So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the

other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, stop them!" But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!"

PSALM Psalm 19:7-end

R *The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul.*

The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.
The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes. **R**

The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever;
the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb. **R**

By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.

Who can tell how often he offends? Cleanse me from my secret faults.
Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;

let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offence. **R**

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. **R**

SECOND READING James 5:13-end

A reading from the letter of James.

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

GOSPEL Mark 9:38-end

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

After Jesus had finished teaching the disciples, John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

POST COMMUNION

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sunday Homily

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

26 SEPTEMBER 2021

YEAR B

“Whoever is not against us is for us.”

Mark 9:40

Illustration

One familiar theme in many great stories throughout literary history is that of the impossibility of loving, or even giving credibility to, someone who does not belong to your group. Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*, its modern interpretation in musical form, are good examples. Problems often arise when people look beyond their own immediate circle of family and friendship allegiances towards those who do not seem to fit.

The intentions of the person reaching out may be of the best. Their minds, unencumbered by the limitations set upon them by their particular tradition, may have become broadened by experience and developed a greater tolerance than their peers. It takes a boldness and courage to step outside acceptable norms. It can take a grand passion (like *Romeo and Juliet*) or great faith to impel us into such risky behaviour. But this course can provoke such fear and anxiety in those around that the likely outcome can range from our own exclusion from the group to violence and even death for one or more participants. Conventional wisdom tells us to stick to our own.

Fortunately for us, Jesus and his disciples and the saints who followed them were foolhardy and trusting, and anything but conventional.

Gospel Teaching

The disciples had tried to stop someone from casting out devils in Jesus’ name because “he’s not one of us”. John obviously expected Jesus to be pleased with them for doing this. Why should he derive credit for miracles which were the work of Jesus and his particular disciples? Surely, he must be prevented, for everyone’s protection? As we know, without any hesitation, Jesus went against this conventional wisdom. It does not matter to him that the man was not a part of his immediate followers. His overriding concern always was that good should be done, whenever and wherever possible. If this was being credited to his power, which was really God’s power, then no harm would be done and evil would have found another enemy.

Jesus stresses the importance of each of us deciding on whose side we are prepared to stand and fight, and what we are willing to defend. But he also asks

us to think about who will suffer for it. God will never ask us to sacrifice the “little ones”, Jesus says. If we are defending our “in-group” at the cost of the vulnerable, we are not working with Jesus. Over and above this there are no restrictions upon the good actions of anyone. God’s kingdom is not a club requiring membership fees, but the free gift of the Father to all his children. There is only one rule in God’s kingdom, that of love. When it permeates our whole being, dedication to God becomes the central driving force of our life and the pivot upon which turns our hope of eternal joy to come.

Application

If we are open to the Spirit of God and recognise the existence of the Spirit within others, then we will rejoice to find God’s work being done, no matter where it is happening and who is conducting it. It is very tempting to allow ourselves to believe that we belong to a privileged “in-group”. This, after all, can give us a sense of identity, a belief in our self-worth. But we have long passed the time when membership of a particular denomination was seen as the only passport to heaven, to the exclusion of everyone else.

We now know that God’s truth is found everywhere, amongst all peoples. Even among those who claim not to know God, we find God at work. The Spirit does not need permission to flood the heart with good intentions. In our fight against evil in its many forms, in the struggle to free people from slavery, from injustice and poverty the important question is not “Are they one of us?” but “Are they doing God’s work and can we help?”

Today, the Gospel reiterates the vital question. Do we truly desire to dedicate ourselves to God’s will and God’s work? If so, let us rejoice that those who take up the challenge are so infinitely varied and sometimes unexpected. Our God of great surprises calls each by name, and the Spirit we share and which draws us into unity is one for all time.

MONDAY
27 SEPTEMBER
 Zechariah 8:1-8
 Psalm 102:12-22
 Luke 9:46-50

TUESDAY
28 SEPTEMBER
 Zechariah 8:20-end
 Psalm 87
 Luke 9:51-56

WEDNESDAY
29 SEPTEMBER
Michael and All Angels
 Genesis 28:10-17 *or*
 Revelation 12:7-12
 Psalm 103:19-end
 Revelation 12:7-12
or Hebrews 1:5-end
 John 1:47-end

THURSDAY
30 SEPTEMBER
 Nehemiah 8:1-12
 Psalm 19:7-11
 Luke 10:1-12

FRIDAY
1 OCTOBER
 Baruch 1:15-end
or Deuteronomy
 31:7-13
 Psalm 79:1-9
 Luke 10:13-16

SATURDAY
2 OCTOBER
 Baruch 4:5-12. 27-
 29 *or* Joshua 22:1-6
 Psalm 69:33-37
 Luke 10:17-24

REFLECTION

This week centres on the festival of St Michael and All Angels on Wednesday. The Gospel set for the day is the story of Nathanael, who is astonished that Jesus can make an assessment of his character without ever having met



Jacob's Ladder, Gothic mural in Tirsted Church, Denmark.
 Stig Aienas / Shutterstock.com

him. Jesus explains that he will see greater things – “the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” These words refer back to the Old Testament reading for the day, which has the evocative description of Jacob’s Ladder, with angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth. The two realms are not as far apart as it sometimes feels, and the angels move between the two to act as God’s messengers.

In the Gospel readings for the remainder of the week we hear about reactions to Jesus’ ministry, as he and his followers bring the message to different communities. Some refuse to accept it, but the seventy who were sent come back rejoicing that the demons have submitted to them.

Heaven and earth are close and, if we have eyes to see, we will know how to interpret the signs of the kingdom of God.

PRAYER

God of heaven and earth,
 we rejoice that your kingdom is close to us, with all it means.
 Help us to notice the signs of your work in the world
 and to hear what you are saying to us.

PART I – CONFESSION

Richard Greatrex considers the prayers that form part of the Holy Communion service.

Often our first major active involvement in prayer during contemporary services of Holy Communion, such as *Common Worship*, is at the confession. It sometimes feels jarring after we have been warmly welcomed to be immediately reminded of our wickedness but, while desiring to worship God joyfully, a key component of praise is the penitent recognition that we have been forgiven and restored in our divine relationship. The Book of Common Prayer places the confession after the sermon and directly before the Eucharistic Prayer. Like the intercessions, which it follows, confession is both a response to God's message in scripture and sermon, and a reminder of our unworthiness to receive communion, Christ's gracious sacrifice of himself to obliterate our sins. *Common Worship* retains this position as an option, but most churches begin with confession, so that with the slate wiped clean we can have fresh ears to hear God's message.

There are four parts to what is known as the Penitential Rite: introduction, silence, confessional prayer and absolution. The introduction directs us to recall our sins, which is done in silence. We then confess them together to God, using either one of several authorised general prayers or through the recitation of a "Kyrie Confession". Using the English text of the Kyrie Eleison – "Lord, have mercy/Christ, have mercy" – interwoven with brief penitential sentences, often focused on the liturgical season or a theme such as our treatment of the environment, these bring before God more specific wrongdoing and negligence. The absolution that follows assures us of God's ongoing forgiveness for all who repent.

While in our private prayers we may say sorry to God for our individual transgressions, the act of confession in the liturgy is corporate, reminding us that all our deeds are interlinked, having consequences for others. Our sinfulness is part of the fallen creation, impairing our relationship with God. This requires contrite acknowledgement if our worship is truly to connect us with each other, creation, and God.

Richard Greatrex is a parish priest, freelance writer and author of Stations of the Resurrection (RP Books product code: 1841, ISBN: 9780852315453, £12.95)

LIVE
the WORDSUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith



Seventeenth week
after Trinity

Monday 27 September
to Saturday
2 October 2021

WEEK

Stepping into the light



Gracious Lord, turn us back from judging others and open our eyes to inequality and prejudice. Grant us the confidence to step out in Jesus' name and bring all on the margins, in the shadows, into the generous light of your love. Amen.

Richard Greatrex *reflects on* Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29, James 5:13-end and Mark 9:38-end

Moses, struggling with the responsibilities of headship, is frustrated with the demands of Israelites unhappy about their desert rations. God's response is not to accede to their requests immediately, but to provide Moses with a leadership team. Seventy elders are chosen to share the burden, but when a further two men play a prophetic role it causes friction because they are perceived to be outside the authorised coterie. Moses' response is to commend these two for taking on the weight of God-given responsibility.

His position is reflected by Jesus, when he is confronted by John's remark that the disciples have attempted to stop someone outside the circle of official

followers from doing good works in his name. John is, perhaps, trying to deflect attention from Jesus' previous statement concerning children being full members of God's family. In the disciples' world, children are "non-persons": like the lone healer (Mark 9:38), they are "not one of us".

However, Jesus has come to break down such boundaries. In God's kingdom children are of as much value as adults; outsiders are equals with the long-term faithful. Moses discovers the strengths of a leadership team, while the letter of James suggests that the Church is more effective when labour is shared. Yet Jesus goes further, challenging us to see God at work in everyone, irrespective of their place or status in society. 🙏

World Tourism Day

by Lisa Tulfer

In Genesis 2:2, God rested after the work of creation, and the holidays we all enjoy reflect this divine example of taking our leisure after strenuous effort. Until 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic saw a global downturn, the tourism industry had been expanding for six decades, due to cheaper transport, labour laws which introduced paid holidays and a growing worldwide middle class. Before 2020, tourism directly employed ten per cent

of people on the planet, with many millions more owing their livelihoods to it. It is an important driver of economic development and a major employer of young people, migrant workers, women and those in rural areas who would otherwise have to migrate to find work. Heritage and conservation rely heavily on tourism revenue.

World Tourism Day, marked tomorrow, raises awareness of tourism as a way to bring people of the world closer together in peace, understanding and celebrating our common humanity. 🙏

“You can do very little with faith, but you can do nothing without it.”

Samuel Butler (1835-1902), English author

Baptism

Part III – beginning a journey

by Heather Smith

Journey is an important image in scripture and for many biblical characters a journey is preceded by God's call. Moses is called to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt, Abraham responds to God's call to leave his home.

Baptism marks the beginning of a journey within God's family. A journey generally requires preparation and the Church of England Liturgical Commission's

(www.churchofengland.org) reflection on baptism sees the Christian journey as no different. To help create a supportive and rounded preparation, it suggests a set of activities that could take place within services in the run up to and after baptism. In the weeks immediately preceding baptism, candidates, or their parents or sponsors, could be given Jesus' Summary of the Law, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Beatitudes. These bring a new emphasis to the importance of baptism, to the welcome into the community of Christ's disciples and to the beliefs, responsibilities and support that will form part of the journey. 🙏



Sunday 26 September 2021
 Mark 9:38-43. 45. 47-48
 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

My name is _____

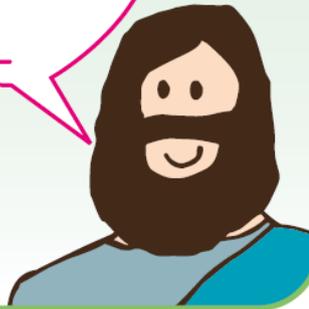
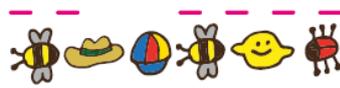
IN THE GOSPEL TODAY

Jesus' friends are worried about someone who is doing miracles in Jesus' name, but who isn't part of their group. But Jesus is not worried at all! Anyone who is helping others is doing what God wants. The Holy Spirit works through all people who are kind and helpful.

HELP OTHERS

What does Jesus do?

Can you work out the code to find out what Jesus is saying?



What good can I do?

Jesus asks us to do good deeds today. Can you fill in the missing letters to find out the good things you can do?

___ p (elh) your friends.

___ d _ (iyt) your room.

S_ a _ e (rh) your toys.

L_ _ t_n (ies) to your parents.

Helping hands

I can use my...  ___ s to l ___ e _ (ntsi) when my

friend is sad,  ___ s to ___ (ghu) him or her

better,  ___ to ___ (ese) when someone

needs help,  ___ to ___ (rnu) to help.

A PRAYER TO SAY

Dear Jesus, help me to show other people that you are my friend by trying to treat other people in the way I know you would. Help me to be kind and helpful. Amen.