

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 5 July 2020

Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use for this week's Sunday morning service. This is based on a service that is being broadcast as a video on Sunday morning through the YouTube channel. It will be available on YouTube from 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it (viewable from any smartphone, tablet or computer, and also from most "smart" TVs). If do not have access to watch the YouTube video, we hope you will be able to use these words and join us too in spirit.

Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to this service today. Today some churches will be beginning to offer worship in the buildings again. Whilst we are keen to continue to offer online and written content, we recognise the desire of many to meet together in person, and fully connect with that desire. However, the church guidance issued this week includes many things we would not be allowed or recommended to do if we meet together in person, which asks as many questions as it seeks to answer. As such we ask you to bear with us as we work out what is right in our context and what we offer going forward, and when. In the meantime, I hope that this service continues to be a source of nourishment, support and challenge for all of us.

Greeting

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
And also with you.

Alleluia. Christ is Risen
He is Risen indeed. Alleluia

Prayer of Thanks

Sometimes it takes special days, birthdays, someone's leaving event, Mothering Sunday or Father's Day, to make us sit down and write the good things we think of them. We can be just the same with God, it is easy to list our needs, they come to mind quickly, but listing our thanks can require an intentional choice. So let us do that now. If it helps you to imagine writing a thankyou card to God what would be in it?

Thank you Lord for all you have given us – for the people that brighten our days, the love that you surround us with, your presence with us and the beauty in the creation around us. Help us in all the joys and sorrows of our week to find causes to be thankful.

Amen

Hymn: Lead us heavenly Father, lead us

I Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing,
if our God our Father be.

- 2 Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us:
all our weakness thou dost know;
thou didst tread this earth before us,
thou didst feel its keenest woe;
lone and dreary, faint and weary,
through the desert thou didst go.
- 3 Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.

J Edmeston (1792-1867)

"Lead us over the worlds tempestuous seas". Perhaps there are battles you are facing, storms you find yourself in right now. I pray that you may find God in the middle of those storms. Let us give those to God now.

The Collect

Gracious Father,
by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation to our wayward world:
draw us into harmony with your will,
that we may find all things restored in him,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen

Reading :

Read by Sarah in the video

Romans 7:15-25
(The Message version)

I can anticipate the response that is coming: “I know that all God’s commands are spiritual, but I’m not. Isn’t this also your experience?” Yes. I’m full of myself—after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary.

But I need something *more!* For if I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t *do* it. I decide to do good, but I don’t *really* do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time. It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

I’ve tried everything and nothing helps. I’m at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn’t that the real question? The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all

my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Confession

Today’s first reading speaks of being a slave to sin, or the versions we heard read says in “sin’s prison”, and a battle within us to do what is right. You may find that language a bit daunting. Perhaps though that is not helped by the fact that our minds assume which sins are being spoken of. And yet sin is whenever we let ourselves and God down.

Whenever we act in ways that are not how we would wish to act, treat people as we would not wish them to be treated, make assumptions about others that are too easy to make. And when we do those things something inside us is hurt. We regret what we have said or done, we feel guilty for the impact it may have had and we worry about the consequences. We can’t avoid the impact of the mistakes we make, we can’t dodge that, but we can be assured of God forgiveness and peace.

On the video, Peter takes an ice cube in his hand, and holds it saying;

“As you look at it imagine those mistakes being represented in that block of ice and as we drop it in the water, we imagine those failings being melted into the love of God”.

From a need for order and control,
From the need to insulate ourselves from doubt,
From the need to appear invulnerable,
From that need for security which closes our minds:

Good Lord, release us.

From intolerance of others’ views,
From fear of others’ beliefs,
From fear and rejection of those who are not like us,
From letting our faith hinder our expression of humanity:
Good Lord, release us.

From scepticism of reason and argument,
From disregard of scientific exploration,
From fear of questions and discoveries,
From fear of research and experiment:
Good Lord, release us.

From fear of freedom,
From fear of the responsibility of free will,
From false humility which dishonours your creation,
From hypocrisy and any exaggerated sense of self worth:
Good Lord, release us.

From fear of any challenge to our faith,
From the certainty which blinds us to other possibilities,
From any attempt to claim all truth,
From fear of using all our gifts in worship:
Good Lord, release us.

Dorrie Johnson

May the God of love
Bring us back to himself,
Forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Reading:

Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30

People find it difficult to discern God at work, but God reveals his truth to those who trust him in simplicity.

Read by Jean in the video

'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn."

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.'

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

A Reflection from Peter Dockree

In the video there will be a heavy bag on Peter's back as he begins.

We just heard the words, come to me all you that are carrying heavy burdens. Sometimes burdens can be visible as the one on my back is now. Sometimes we can see and know the struggles that others carry. Sometimes people may wish we didn't know, wish their burdens were not so public but they are. We want to help carry those burdens, we want to take them off people, but we don't know how or where to start, we are worried they might not want us to, or we might end up just adding to the burdens and not taking them away, so we don't help. Sometimes our own burdens are visible, people may know what they are, and see them in plain sight. People know that we have had a bereavement, lost our job, or suffered a breakdown in our marriage. But people knowing doesn't always mean they know how to help. When God says come to me all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, it isn't a neat quick fix, it won't take all we carry away, but it does allow us to lay it down for a time, to share the burden, to know that we are not carrying it alone. Even if they remain our burdens, they are shared burdens.

Sometimes burdens can be hidden. *(on the video Peter brings out some coins from his pocket)*. Perhaps they can come into view easily, or perhaps we have covered them so well that they will never be seen. Things that we worry may happen and feel foolish for worrying about. Responsibilities or expectations on us we fear we can never meet. Burdens that make us feel like we never fit in. When God says come to me all you are weary and carry heavy burdens, there is an offer of a space where we can bring our inner hurts, our inner fears, the things that weigh us down, and that few

people if anyone knows about. Laying the burdens on God, doesn't wipe them out. It isn't an eraser pen, or even like the melting of the ice earlier, they may be taken off us, but they may remain, but we may see the way to face them, we may understand the limits of the threat they pose to us, we may feel more in control.

I pray that whatever the burdens you carry today you may ask God to carry them too. For God's yoke is easy and burden light.

Prayer

God of eternal life,
God of letting go:
throughout this long season
and over a century of days,
you have remained constant
as we've rediscovered ourselves.
There is more change ahead.
This pandemic is not finished.
Nor are we.
As we continue to be transformed,
may we cling to kindness and mercy;
to courage and trust;
to faith and hope;
to undying selflessness.
May divine love be made flesh
and given breath
in the life that changes with you.

Amen.

© Prayer from the Corrymeela Community, part of their series of prayers offered daily through this time of lockdown, published on the 100th day of lockdown this last week.
www.corrymeela.org

In the video, Gwilym leads us in prayers for our world and our community.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer of thanks for Gifts

Just as we can forget to say thank you to God we in the church can forget to say thank you to the many people who serve and support us in so many varied ways. Now, as always, there are many people working, some visibly and others not so, to ensure the church remains active and relevant during these challenging times.

If you would like to give to the life and work of this church then you can send a cheque made payable to Swaythling Parish, or give online at:
www.give.net/SwaythlingParish

Let us take a moment now to give thanks to God:
We thank you Lord for all the gifts we have received, financial and in so many other ways.
Help us to use them wisely to share your love in this place. **Amen**

Hymn: O love that wilt not let me go

- 1 O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be,
- 2 O Light that follow'st all my way,
I yield my flick'ring torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be,
- 3 O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through' the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be,
- 4 O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be,

G Matheson (1842-1906)

Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for joining us today, as we miss a physical connection, I am reminded that we remain connected in so many other ways.

A Closing :

Enjoy beauty
Forgive recklessly
Accept forgiveness
Stand up
Tear down
Be heard
Don't be afraid.

Be a sister
Be a brother
Cry
Pay attention
Listen
Be released
Be reborn
Welcome
Be known
Be loved
Love
Remember.

We are dust and shadow
And God's ok with that

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And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. **Amen.**

*Thank you for joining in with us. If we can support you in any way, please get in touch. 023 8055 4231
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