

# Swaythling Parish

## Sunday 23 August 2020

### Eleventh 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 morning's service. In society at present, people find themselves in so many different positions, some hardly able, or confident to go out and some living life close to what they did before. The same is true of us as a church family. Some of us are reading these words, or hearing them on the you tube channel, and for others I will be saying them in church. The service today explores this dynamic, the reality that all of our roles and place in society may be different from what it once was, and the challenges that this evokes. Wherever you are joining us from today you are very welcome, and I hope you know your place and value within our church family.

#### Greeting

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

**And also with you.**

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

#### Prayer of Thanks

Let us take a moment. A moment to recognise the good things, the things to be thankful for.

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**

You know those times you are sure you have done something and then realise you didn't. Sometimes identity can be tied up with things we think happened that were never quite as we remember them.

That happened to me in a trivial way with this next hymn. I was absolutely certain that I must have chosen it before now in one of our previous week's services, but checking back I haven't, so we will sing it now.

#### Hymn: Be thou my vision

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art--  
thou my best thought by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou my great Father, I thy true son;  
thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

3 Be thou my battle shield, sword for my fight;  
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,  
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tow'r:  
raise thou me heav'n-ward, O Pow'r of my  
pow'r.

4 Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always:  
thou and thou only, first in my heart,  
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

5 High King of heaven, my victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

1905 trans by M E Byrne & E H Hull  
Old Irish Hymn, "Bí Thusa 'mo Shúile,"

#### Confession

So often the things that hold us back the most are the things we least recognise rather than the ones we feel most guilty about. Last week we used the following prayer of confession as it offers a list of things which may hold us back,

things which we can ask God to release us from, that we may not think to.

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.**

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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.**

**The Collect**

God of glory,  
the end of our searching,  
help us to lay aside  
all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom,  
and to give all that we have  
to gain the pearl beyond all price,  
through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

**Readings:**

*Our first reading explores our gifts and the value of what we and others have to give.*

**Romans 12: 1-8**

*Read by the Karen in the video*

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as

in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Our second reading culminates in Jesus's affirmation of Peter, despite his many failings.*

**Matthew 16: 13-20**

*Read by Sue in the video*

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will

be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

### **A Reflection from Peter**

In the last few months identity and role has taken a big hit for many. Many people who had clearly defined roles in places like the church, workplaces, community groups, family networks suddenly found themselves temporarily unable to do many of the things they normally do. That may have been you in this time, in many ways it most of us as what we did changed. For those of us who continued to work, what we did and have we did it changed overnight, for those suddenly bound to their homes, roles and responsibilities changed overnight. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity. A challenge, in that for most of us our identity is at least partly bound up in what we do. An opportunity, to rethink our role and where we place our value.

In our two readings today this dynamic is explored and then played out. Explored in our first reading where the existence and value of a range of roles and gifts in the church is affirmed. I once heard a talk entitled cleaning the bog and other spiritual gifts, and I find myself wishing that Paul had gone on to list more than the things he did, although the things he does list covers a lot of ground if we

allow it to. I want to say we all have something valuable to give. The trouble with the last few months is that many of us may have been already happy with that, happy that we didn't play an upfront role in church or our family community, but content in what we did do, and suddenly we couldn't enter the building for many weeks, or couldn't care for the grandchildren. And that is where the essence of Paul's message takes hold, Paul is encouraging us to recognise that we all have a role to play, and that means that when the role we thought we were meant to play falls away we look afresh. But playing a role is not always about measurable activity, Paul lists things like generosity, compassion, and exhortation, things that we may not feel deep inside are enough, but may be, indeed are more valuable than we can ever know. It was the nudges and exhortation of many of you in lockdown that led to some of the things that happened, never let that be forgotten. It was the generous giving that enabled us to keep going when we faced a dire crisis. It was the compassion and care for each other, in church and in society, the rainbows on windows, the phone calls to each other, that energised all of us. Sometimes messages like this risk sounding platitudinal, and perhaps that is because deep down we don't believe those things are as valuable, not because they aren't. And then we have our gospel reading. Simon is the most unlikely character on which Jesus would want to build his church, but he names him Peter (the rock) and affirms his role. Many of us may have faced a crisis of identity in these last few months, but know this, despite all the

things that may hold us back we have a central, key, and unique role in God's kingdom, if we but let ourselves believe that we do.

### **Prayers**

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

Generous God, you have given us many kinds of gifts: help us to identify and rejoice in our own gifts, and use them for the benefit of others as well as ourselves, and always to your glory.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all who use their gifts to help others to flourish, in obvious ways or by little acts of kindness. Bless us all in our friendships and in our neighbourhood groups, and help us to be specially mindful of people who feel, or are, unloved.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who feel that their life and gifts are not valued: for people who have lost their jobs, or have never been employed; for all who fear for their families and their livelihoods; for families who go hungry, and young people whose education has been disrupted. We thank you for all who bring help and relief to people in need, especially all who work in or alongside the National Health Service, and pray that they will not lose heart when faced with great problems.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have to make difficult decisions about managing life with this virus: may we all act responsibly as restrictions ease. We pray for world leaders and politicians with many difficult situations to resolve; we pray for honesty and integrity and a growth in desire for the good of all.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring to you, Lord, the people we carry on our hearts; people who are ill, and those whose treatment has been cancelled or delayed; people who haven't the confidence to go out, or who are staying in to shield others; all who are grieving many kinds of loss. In a moment of quiet, we name them before you:

Lord give us all the healing, strength and courage that we need, and help us to keep hope alive, for ourselves and others.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**Lord God, transform us with your love, that we may know and do your will, and live and work to your praise and glory. Amen**

### **Prayer of thanks for Gifts**

Let's have a moment to acknowledge the gifts and care of others in this time, financial, emotional, advice, support and so many other things to us as individuals, as community and as church. 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 :  
[www.give.net/SwaythlingParish](http://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

The final hymn sums up much of what we have exploring today, a hymn in which we ask God to use us all, to create the place where God's love is found.

### **Hymn: Take this moment**

Take this moment, sign and space;  
Take my friends around;  
Here among us make the place  
Where your love is found.

Take the time to call my name,  
Take the time to mend  
Who I am and what I've been,  
All I've failed to tend.

Take the tiredness of my days,  
Take my past regret,  
Letting your forgiveness touch  
All I can't forget

Take the little child in me  
Scared of growing old;  
Help me here to find my worth  
Made in God's own mould.

Take my talents, take my skills,  
Take what's yet to be;  
Let my life be yours, and yet  
Let it still be me.

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### **Closing Blessing**

Thank you to everyone for joining us today.  
May God's Kingdom grow in you and bring you freshly to the week ahead.

### **A Closing :**

Notice where your hearts burn,  
Dare to walk to the new place,  
For the Christ steps with us,  
And will greet us there,  
With bread, and wine,  
Laughter and song,  
And we will never wish to return  
To how things were before we knew.

Andy Campbell @ Liturgy in a dangerous time.

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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