

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 6 September 2020

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

St Mary's Patronal

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 our service today. It is true that some of us are now meeting in person, but many are still for a whole range of reasons not in a position to do so and if that is you and you are watching or reading these words, then I hope you can feel truly connected with the whole of the family of God here in Swaythling Parish. The questionnaire that many of you completed before we came back to meet in person has been a vital guide to help us plan, but please so keep letting us know how you feel now and what you are appreciate the most (and the least!).

This morning is our annual St Mary's Patronal Festival (the day when we give reflect together on the name sake of the church, Mary and give thanks for God's gift of having places and spaces to be church family together.

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

*"I feel overlooked",
"I feel undervalued",
"I feel taken for granted"*

Those are words that can be felt in almost every family, community, organisation, or indeed church. Recognising and valuing others can be an easy thing to forget to do, and the same can be true of God, I know it can for me. So we are going to intentionally give thanks now. Recognise for a moment those who we value but perhaps forget to tell, lets pledge to tell them today. Recognise the roles that people play in all the groups we are in including church, the upfront ones and the behind the scenes ones, lets pledge to let them know. Finalise lets recognise God's role in our lives, God's role in this parish and specifically this morning in St Marys church over the centuries.

Amen

When thinking about a hymn to sing when reflecting on Mary the first one that often comes to mind is the one we will begin with today, tell out my Soul, based on the prayer that Mary prayed, the Magnificat.

Hymn: Tell out my Soul

- 1 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice
- 2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age to same;
His holy Name--the Lord, the Mighty One
- 3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high
- 4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore!

T Dudley-Smith © 1962,
renewal 1990 Hope Publishing Co.

Confession

Later we will hear Mary's Magnificat read, and it is one of the most radical prayers, a prayer of hope for a whole different world. In affirming our desire for such a world, where the hungry are filled with good things and the humble are lifted high, we all are invited to recognise the ways in which our own lives sometimes fail to promote this ideal, in the knowledge of God's forgiveness and love.

For the moments when we fail to love as we are called to love, failed to treat others with respect and dignity and manage to perpetuate division.

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

For the times when we listen to the voices of negativity and ignore the voices of grace.

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

For the times when we are beaten by inertia, and cynicism and fail to do what we can and should.

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

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

Almighty God,
you search us and know us:
may we rely on you in strength
and rest on you in weakness,
now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Readings:

However noble or not we may feel today this next reading is a reminder that we are all children of God, and loved as such.

Galatians 4: 4-7

Read by the Julie in the video

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Our second reading has already been mentioned this morning, the transformative prayer that Mary prayed.

Luke 1: 46-55

Read by Jenny in the video

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness
of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call
me blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for
me,

and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts
of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their
thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our
ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants for
ever.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

A Reflection from Rev Canon Bruce Hartnell

Last weekend I drove on the A27 around this side of Arundel Castle in the morning and the other way in the afternoon admiring its proud outline but not envying the Duke of Norfolk the stately pile as a home to live in.

I have been thinking about home because this is a feast of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, who shaped and maintained his family home. It is hard to overstate the importance of our early days and the warmth (or lack of it) in our experience of home.

What a wonderful job Mary must have made in Nazareth with the result that Jesus was so solidly based he could reach out daringly in love toward the unlovable and absorb the bile of those who were full of hate.

We easily forget the foundation that Mary and Joseph must have laid. Because in the New Testament we hear only of a visit to Jerusalem between his earliest years and his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus may seem to arrive fully-formed before the Baptist. But it can't be true. He will have learnt from the children round him, from his parents, from his teachers and synagogue leaders, as well as from his prayer and his reflection on scripture. Like us, he will have soaked up sunshine, skipped in rain, watched the birds and crops, animals and their minders, known what it was to get dirty and be washed clean. We damage our understanding of his truly human life, if we ignore the fact that

he grew in understanding as he did in height. At the centre of that growing stands Mary, mothers generally being the hub and human warmth at the heart of stable and happy homes. How grateful he will have been for it; how thankful to her should we be!

Ironically, Jesus' role of travelling preacher meant that in the last three years of his life, that ministry about which we know some detail deprived him of anywhere he could call home. Famously, he counts birds with nests and foxes with foxholes fortunate compared with him. He seems to have turned his back on family and home for a higher purpose. The house at Bethany is seemingly the one place he and his close circle could relax and make themselves at home. But this is short-lived and only emphasizes the usual situation which was very different.

In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus mentions home in a promise that might feel more like a threat. 'Those who love me,' he says, 'will keep my word and my Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them.'

Anthea Dove admits that she feels somehow stunned when she reads this. She feels completely unworthy to be a home where God may dwell. It has to do with the house which is her actual home. She knows she ought to dust and vacuum it more often (don't we all?) If someone is coming to stay she makes a panicky stab at it, usually a lick and a promise. She had a very different experience when invited to visit Hungary and the homes of two Hungarian

women she had come to know in the 1980s when the Iron Curtain turned into little more than window netting.

First, Mr and Mrs Dove went to Ildiko's house. Her father, a lawyer, had been considered useful to the Communist government. He was therefore allowed to retain his beautiful, spacious house with its lovely gardens overlooking Budapest. The Doves were very happy with this generous, cultivated and interesting family and admired their belongings.

After a few days, they went across by train to Debrecen to stay with Tunde and her family. This was a shock. Tunde's parents were university teachers who had been demoted under the communist regime. Their salaries were less than an average child's pocket money in England. Tunde met them at the railway station and they walked towards her home. Anthea's heart sank when she realised where they were going, high in a concrete block of flats which all appeared identical. Trees, flowers and open spaces were all missing.

The creaky lift delivered them to the appropriate floor and Tunde's parents were waiting, all smiles, to welcome them. The flat was tiny but bright with colour, full of books and interesting pictures. The contrast between this warm, friendly and imaginative space and the grim external surroundings was astonishing.

On reflection, the English visitor thinks these two homes from the outside could not be

more different. Yet within each of them, she believes, is somewhere Jesus would happily make his home, for where is love and loving kindness, there God is glad to dwell.

Archbishop Stephen Langton died as long ago as 1228 but we still sing his hymn. Let it be our prayer.

*Come thou Holy Spirit come,
And from thy celestial home
Shed a ray of light divine;
Come thou Father of the poor,
Come thou source of all our store.
Come within our bosoms shine.*

Anthea Dove
Jesus Christ the Apple Tree SPCK pp 24-26

Prayers

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

Loving God, as we give thanks today for Mary's ready response to your call, we pray that we too will be ready to do your will, and carry Christ with us into the world.

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

As we give thanks for the people who have worshipped faithfully through the centuries at St Mary's church in this parish, we pray for your church throughout the world, especially where Christians are persecuted for their faith. When we meet opposition or indifference, help us to be faithful in our witness.

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

Compassionate God, we pray for all who live in fear of powerful people: for those whose lives have been torn apart by war or civil unrest – especially in Syria and the rest of the Middle East, and the many places which have slipped from our attention. Stir the hearts of all who have power over others to act with justice, so that people may live in peace, seeking the good of those around. Help all of us to use whatever influence we have for the benefit of all.

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

We pray for all who live on the margins of our own society, anxious about finance, housing, work or feeding their families. We thank you for all who provide help in many different ways. Help us all to challenge the systems which prevent human flourishing, to be alert to the needs of those who live on the edge, and to work for improvement in provision for all in need.

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

Loving God, your son and his mother knew the joys and difficulties of family life. We thank you for our families and friends, and pray for people who do not experience love and support in their relationships. Help us to show by the way that we live, that your love and forgiveness can transform lives and bring hope.

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

God of wholeness, we pray for all in need of your healing, and give thanks for all who work for the health of others, in and alongside the

NHS. We pray for all who suffer as a result of natural disasters or tragic accidents, as well as those affected by the corona virus....

In a moment of quiet we bring before you the people we know.....

Lord give us all the healing that we need, and help us to be a blessing for others as we care for them.

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

Eternal God, we thank you for the faithful witness of your servants through the ages. We thank you for the people who have been part of our own lives, remembering especially from our church family, Barbara Jackson, Joan Sadler and Eric Card.

May we, following the example of Mary, Alban and all your saints, come to share in the life and joy of your eternal kingdom.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of our saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.

Prayer of thanks for Gifts

Let us 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

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

Our final hymn is all about God's faithful love in our lives.

Hymn: God is love, his the care.

1 God is love: his the care,
tending each, ev'rywhere,
God is love, all is there!
Jesus came to show him,
that we all might know him!

Refrain:

Sing aloud, loud, loud!
sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise him!

2 None can see God above;
we can share life and love;
thus may we Godward move,
finding him in creation,
holding ev'ry nation. [Refrain]

3 Jesus lived on the earth,
hope and life brought to birth
and affirmed human worth,
for he came to save us
by the truth he gave us. [Refrain]

4 To our Lord praise we sing,
light and life, friend and King,
coming down, love to bring,
pattern for our duty,
showing God in beauty.

Percy Dearmer (1925)

Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for joining us today.
May we go about our lives knowing as Jesus did
that we are loved and held.

May we go from this moment as radicals, as
travellers, as change makers, as those who
maintain the spaces of love, as people of
prayer, sometimes as people called to be,
sometimes as people called to do but always as
people called to love.

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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Feedback from the Questionnaire about Online Services

Thank you to all those who filled in the questionnaire about services at this time, which has helped us as we look at plans going forward, both for the services in the church, and the possibility of continuing something online, especially for those who may not choose or be able to return to the church building at this time (due to shielding or for other reasons).

We thought we would just share with you a few key points from the 26 responses we received:

- 80% of those who responded have been watching the online service every week (or most weeks), whilst 20% have been watching less frequently or not at all. The majority (63%) have been watching the service at the time of broadcast, at 10am on a Sunday morning, with others choosing to watch later in the day or in the week.
- Different people have appreciated different parts of the online service (the sermon, the songs and prayers, or enjoying the whole service) - but many people (54%) mentioned they appreciated seeing others from the

church and the sense of community and connection that it gives.

- 46% of those who replied said they would attend in person when services restarted, whilst 33% were unsure if they would attend in person, and 21% thought they would be unlikely/unable to attend in person at this time.
- One response mentioned being unsure about attending, but maybe feeling obliged to be on rotas, and we thus wanted to emphasize that we don't want anyone to feel under pressure to take up previous roles or to be on rotas.
- As you will be aware, services started again on Sunday 16 August at St Alban's and St Mary's, and we will be continuing each Sunday, taking into account government and Church of England advice. We are aware that not everyone will be able to return to the church building at this time for Sunday services, and are planning to continue with some kind of online option, though this may change slightly in format.

We very much hope that whether you feel ready to join us in person or whether you continue to share in worship through our

online services or printed materials, that you will feel supported and included as part of our church family at this time.

If there are any specific ways we can support you, please do get in touch: peter.dockree@outlook.com or 023 8055 4231.