

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 20 September 2020

Fifteenth 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 our service today, whether joining online, reading from the sheet, or worshipping in person.

So often we fail to do things because we compare ourselves with others or spend time thinking about how if only things could be different. This morning we will be exploring the challenge to the life we have in front of us.

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

One of the challenges of living the life we have in front of us is not always looking for things to be different. Just as a caveat, there are many things in the world and in our lives that we need and long to be different and that is not to be minimised, but sometimes we can embrace the life we have, the wonderful, things and people in our lives, the places we get to go to and see, the homes that most of us have to live in. Let us take a moment to recognise some of these things now and to give thanks to God.

We will now sing our first hymn, a hymn which sings of joy being in our hearts, at all times.

Hymn: Give me joy in my heart

1 Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising
Give me joy in my heart, I pray
Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising
Keep me praising till the break of day

*Sing hosanna, sing hosanna
Sing hosanna to the Servant King
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna
Sing hosanna, let us sing*

2 Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving...

3 Give me love in my heart, keep me serving...

4 Give me light in my heart, keep me shining...

Traditional

Confession

One of the things that can hold us back from living in the moment we have before us, is when we feel hamstrung by our guilt and frustration at the mistakes we have made and continue to make. So let us take time now to recognise that those things do not have to hold us so tightly and that we can be forgiven for any mistakes we have made.

For the people we have hurt and those we have let down

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

For times when bitterness and anger have been our watchword and not love

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

Lord God,
defend your Church from all false teaching
and give to your people knowledge of your
truth,
that we may enjoy eternal life
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings:

*Our first reading is a challenge to live a noble life
whether seen or not.*

Philippians 1:21-end

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And

this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Our second reading is a well-known story about the labourers in the vineyard.

Matthew 20:1-16

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

“About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

“‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. “He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

“The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

“But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

A Reflection from Peter Dockree

Last year some of you may remember seeing my hobble around on crutches. In the grand scheme of things it was a pretty minor ailment. Yes it hurt, it hurt a lot, and it made it difficult to do my job, but so many people deal with so much more all the time. But it got me down, it got me down perhaps coupled with a time of being overwhelmed. I became very, very focused on what I couldn't do, I love running and I felt bereft when I was told that I need to be very, very cautious before training on hard surfaces again. I suffered a loss of perspective. I remember too a time as a young man when I was struggling with lots of things and had become totally introspective, I could not see anything positive at all. In truth I may not be able to run in the way I had before but there was so much I would be able to do, and years ago it took some blunt words from a friend to pull me up, but these times happen to most of us. Human nature can lead us down alleyways of negativity that it is hard to get out of.

In our gospel reading this morning we have that famous story when the workers in the vineyard had been perfectly happy with their lot until they realised what others were being paid. They were very very happy to have work until they realised that others were doing better. They had lost perspective.

Now I want to say what I am saying very very carefully, because there will be some people reading or listening to this that are facing things that a simple change of perspective will be very

very hard to find, if not impossible. Our minds are one of the most complex things there is and there is a very good reason why many of us need professional help and, support or medication in these struggles with our mental health, and many things cannot simply be "snapped out of", but there are also times for many of us when we can find a fresh perspective, and it those times I am speaking into today. When Paul writes from prison and wants to escape his present reality, he knows he can't, he knows the challenge is to live for God now. I may have wanted to compare with others who were running marathons still, but I needed to live the life I had in front of me. I needed to embrace what I could do.

So let's embrace what we have and not compare and think about what we could have. Let's embrace who we are and not think about who we could be. Let's be the best we can be, and not strive to be better than someone else.

Prayers

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

Lord, give us a heavenly perspective on this life.

Help us not to be distracted by the things of this world but to constantly turn our gaze toward you.

Help us to have perspective and to see with clear eyes both the hardships and blessings of our lives. Lord, as we are tempted to despair

over hardships, remind us that you never let us go through trouble without gifting us a measure of your goodness, grace, peace and love.

As we reflect on our blessings, help us bless others. Lord, give us all right perspective on the life we have, a gift from you.

Amen.

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 again all that we have as individuals and as a church community, not what would be but what is. 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**

We end the service with the hymn take my life and let it be.

Hymn: Take my life and let it be.

- 1 Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,
- 2 Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,
- 3 Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,
- 4 Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose,
- 5 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
- 6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

F R Havergal (1836-1879)

A closing Prayer,

God of our pilgrimage,
you have fed us with the bread of heaven.
Refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
to live and work to your praise and
glory. **Amen**

Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for joining us today.
May we go out and live the lives we have been
given and not the ones we may wish to be
given.

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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