

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 14 June 2020

First 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. 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 Peter

In a week where some have voiced their sense of exclusion from society, it is more important than ever that we in the church truly mean it when we say all are welcome to join us. Whatever your week has been like, whether you normally worship with us, or with another church, or whether you never have and you are just checking out the YouTube channel for the very first time. Whether you feel like you have a good understanding of faith or feel overwhelmed by concepts and ideas that you have never heard before we hope that you will feel truly welcome and part of this service today. Whether you feel like people and society understands and includes you or you feel like you never really fit in, we hope that you can feel connected with us today and connected with a God whose love is so wide that nothing is beyond its reach.

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

We may be joining in worship today with a sense of joy, it's been a good week and we know that life is good. If that is you, or you relate to some of those feelings then I invite you to spend a moment saying thank you; thank you for the blessings and the joys that have had this good week.

We may be joining in worship today with a sense of frustration and some heavy burdens being carried. If that is you, then I invite you for a moment to look beyond the struggles and frustrations and recognise something good, something positive, something for which to give thanks, because it is in that thank you that we can sometimes find the wisdom to carry on.

Lord God in the joys and the sorrows we seek to find causes to be thankful.

Amen

Hymn: Thy Hand, O God, has guided

- 1 Thy hand, O God, has guided thy flock, from age to age; the wondrous tale is written, full clear on every page; our fathers owned thy goodness, and we their deeds record; and both of this bear witness: one Church, one Faith, one Lord.
- 2 Thy heralds brought glad tidings to greatest as to least; they bade men rise and hasten to share the great King's feast; and this was all their teaching in every deed and word; to all alike proclaiming: one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

- 3 Through many a day of darkness, through many a scene of strife, the faithful few fought bravely to guard the nation's life. Their gospel of redemption, sin pardoned, man restored, was all in this enfolding: one Church, one Faith, one Lord.
- 4 Thy mercy will not fail us, nor leave thy work undone; with thy right hand to help us, the victory shall be won; and then, by men and angels, thy name shall be adored, and this shall be their anthem: one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

E H Pumptre (821-1891)

The Confession

Sometimes we can create defences around ourselves that are like a stone (*in the service Peter will hold what appears to be a stone*). Hard and impenetrable. Defences that leave us too frightened to admit our mistakes even although we are all too aware of them ourselves. Defences that assume that others will judge us if they knew what we were really like. But sometimes when we allow ourselves to break those defences (*in the service Peter will break the stone, revealing it is an egg*), we can find a way to being loved and forgiven. I believe in a God who sees through any barrier we put up and loves us anyway. So let us break our defences now and say sorry to God, in the promise that love and grace awaits us.

For the people we have hurt and those we have failed to love.

Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.

For the times we have let ourselves and others

down.
Christ have mercy
Christ, have mercy

For the choices we have made and the things we have done that we regret.
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

God of truth,
help us to keep your law of love
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son.
Amen

Readings

Genesis 18: 1-15

Abraham and Sarah are told that they are to have a son in their old age

Read by the Harveys in the video

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves

under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.' So they said, 'Do as you have said.' And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.' Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

They said to him, 'Where is your wife Sarah?' And he said, 'There, in the tent.' Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.' And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?' The Lord said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, and say, "Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?" Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.' But Sarah denied, saying, 'I did not laugh'; for she was afraid. He said, 'Oh yes, you did laugh.'

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

Matthew 9: 35-10: 8

The disciples are commissioned to go out and preach.

Read by Ann in the video

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the

good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

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

A Reflection from Peter

It is good and right to remember those whose belief in God drove them to movements for social change: William Wilberforce when he fought to abolish slavery, Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement, Rosa Parks and her brave actions on a bus and many more. But in doing so we must own

the fact that faith and the bible was also used by slave owners to justify their actions, used in South Africa to justify apartheid, has been used to condemn people. Even Hitler said Jesus was an "Aryan fighter" who struggled against "the power and pretensions of the corrupt Pharisees".

Throughout history, faith has frequently been abused and misused and often when the words it says in the bible are used what follows is the thing the person wanted to say in the first place, followed by biblical arguments to back it up. Take our gospel reading this morning. If we read it on its own we might be led to think that Jesus was calling his disciples to ignore people of other races and focus simply on the Jewish people, apart from the fact that Jesus, Paul and others clearly say the opposite at other times. But if we wanted to we could use this to justify that God is only interested in one group of people. There is a specific list of things that the disciples are told to do, if we wanted to we could suggest that that is an exhaustive list, and yet we know things like justice and making sure the poor are fed are spoken about on numerous occasions. If we look at the Old Testament reading from this morning, when Sara is granted her lifelong prayer to have a child, we could say therefore if we just stay true to our prayers and wishes for long enough then God will always come through, and yet things don't always turn out well in the bible, many of the faithful followers of Jesus do not always see everything end well.

I believe the bible is a God given, God breathed book that has so much to say in our troubled world today, but I believe we should always see the limits of any interpretation of it, whether that has come from a biblical scholar, a priest, a wise friend, or anyone else, whatever anyone tells us the bible says will be limited by the understanding and framework that they are in. I believe we need to be open to the challenges that lie within its covers, the things it

has to say to us that are less comfortable. Presidents or politicians holding bibles outside churches may be a very blatant attempt at using our scriptures to advance a specific agenda, but the truth is that we can all do this to some extent, we can all pick the things we want to say and find the passages to help us say it. My prayer for us all today is that we may allow the Good book to surprise us, to unsettle us, to renew us and not simply to reinforce what we thought we knew.

I invite you now if you have one to hand to take a bible (*during this bit "Holy Spirit, Living breath of God" will play and images will be on the screen*), if not to grab a book or something symbolic of a bible. Perhaps this is an unfamiliar book to you, you find it daunting, or difficult to understand. Or perhaps you feel like you know what it says and feel it has nothing new to say. In the Harry Potter books there is a book called the Monster Book of Monsters which when it is opened all manner of things can happen - imagine that the book you have in your hand is like that for a moment, a book that when it is opened, can be life changing, challenging, and lead to incredible things happening. Imagine that when you next open it or engage with its contents.

Prayers of Intercession

Written and read by Olivia and Robin in the video

Dear God, so much seems to be happening in the world at the moment, that it is hard to know where to start with prayers to you. But we know that you are all-seeing, and hold all the problems of humanity in your heart. We lift all the issues of the world to you now.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer

We pray for all those involved in the protests going on around the world - for the protestors, for the police, for those who want to be involved but can't be, for those who wish they weren't involved, and for those watching from the sidelines trying to understand it all. We bring before you all those in pain or grief from the results of police brutality, and those working within police forces to bring about change.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer

Many of us feel that we don't fully understand these issues, as we are not subject to discrimination based on the colour of our skin. Lord, help us to listen and properly hear those who describe their experiences, and use this knowledge to further your work in these areas. As the Taize chant says, "The Kingdom of God is justice and peace" - help us to bring about justice and peace, and to open the gates of your Kingdom in us and our work.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer

We pray for those struggling financially because of the pandemic. Despite all the government help available to employers, people are still being made redundant in their hundreds. We pray for them and their families in this time of uncertainty, that they will have enough to support them through their period of unemployment. For their outlook to be positive and that they will speedily find work.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for those who are having to make decisions about how to respond to coronavirus. We pray for governments and leaders across the world: that they will listen carefully to scientific advice and make decisions that are in the best interest of all of us. We pray too for the scientists conducting

research into coronavirus, that they will work speedily but accurately to advance our knowledge.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for those suffering in mind, body or spirit at this time. We think particularly of those who are ill and unable to have the support of friends or family because of COVID isolation, and their families and friends who feel unable to help. We pray for those in the shielding group, who have had to keep completely isolated for months, and whose stories often don't make the front pages. We also bring before you all those with mental health issues which have been exacerbated by the current situation, that they will know your love and be able to find moments of joy in the darkness.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We now pray specifically for those we know who are struggling at the current time, for whatever reason.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We finish with a prayer written by Martin Luther King, which I felt is very appropriate at this time:

God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and love our neighbours as we love ourselves, even our enemy neighbours. And we ask you, God, in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going out and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and in our moments of sorrow, until the day when there shall be no sunset and no dawn. Amen.

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

Prayer of thanks for Gifts

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.

Thankyou to those who have already given of your money, time or prayers, and 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: You Shall go out with joy

You shall go out with joy
And be led forth with peace,
And the mountains and the hills
Will break forth before you.
There'll be shouts of joy
And the trees of the fields
Shall clap, shall clap their hands.

*And the trees of the fields shall clap their hands,
And the trees of the fields shall clap their hands,
And the trees of the fields shall clap their hands,
And you'll go out with joy.*

S G Rubin, S Dauermann, © 1975 Lillenas Publishing Co

Closing Blessing

This prayer is attributed to Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu adapted from an original prayer by Sir Francis Drake.

Disturb us, O Lord
when we are too well-pleased with ourselves
when our dreams have come true because we
dreamed too little,
because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, O Lord
when with the abundance of things we possess,
we have lost our thirst for the water of life
when, having fallen in love with time,
we have ceased to dream of eternity
and in our efforts to build a new earth,
we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.

Stir us, O Lord
to dare more boldly, to venture into wider seas
where storms show Thy mastery,
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

In the name of Him who pushed back the
horizons of our hopes
and invited the brave to follow.

Amen

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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