

# Swaythling Parish

## Sunday 30 August 2020

### Twelfth 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. This is the first year in my ministry when I have been in the parish on the August bank holiday weekend, as we are normally away at a festival called Greenbelt, but this year we are accessing the content online. Greenbelt has always been a place which reminds me that there is hope amidst the divisiveness so often evident in our world, and it is that theme that we are exploring in our service today.

#### 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

There is so much to celebrate in our world, our communities and are lives. Even when things are tough and so much is wrong there are things that are good.

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**

Our first hymn, reminds us of the two key things that those who seek to follow Jesus are called to do, to love God and to love one another as God has loved us.

#### Hymn: A new Commandment

*A new commandment I give unto you:  
that you love one another as I have loved you,  
that you love one another as I have loved you*

1 By this shall all know  
that you are my disciples:  
if you have love one for another.

2 You are my friends  
if you do what I command you.  
Without my help you can do nothing.

3 I am the true vine,  
my Father is the gardener.  
Abide in me: I will be with you.

4 True love is patient,  
not arrogant nor boastful;  
Love bears all things, love is eternal.

Unknown, based on John 13:34-35  
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#### Confession

So often we all fail to treat people, from those closest to us to those we hardly know as we should, and we sometimes fail to treat ourselves as if we truly love ourselves too, lets take a moment to recognise those failings and then acknowledge God's forgiving love which accept us as we are with all our failings.

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**

God of constant mercy,  
who sent your Son to save us:  
remind us of your goodness,  
increase your grace within us,  
that our thankfulness may grow,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen**

### **Readings:**

*There is a lot of tension present in our world at this time and in this first reading, Paul writes into a situation of tension, persecution in the early church.*

### **Romans 12: 9-end**

*The pattern of Christian discipleship.*  
*Read by the Maureen in the video*

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*In our second reading Jesus pulls no punches in laying the challenges of following him.*

### **Matthew 16: 21-end**

*Read by Chris in the video*

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## A Reflection from Peter

There are moments in life and society, when there can be a sense of unity on a family, community, national and international level. Moments like the 2012 Olympics when it feels like almost everyone is united behind a common thing, like when people stood outside their houses at the beginning of the pandemic or displayed rainbows and it felt like we were together, moments like the end of world war two, when watching the footage and reading the reports from that time it felt like everyone was together. These moments have periodically always happened. It can then feel disheartening, when it all seems to fall apart, when disunity flairs up, when it feels like people are at odds with each other, as if what was just a few weeks before has dissipated and gone. And yet the reality may be that both dynamics, the dynamic that divides and the dynamic that unites are always at play and one merely shows itself more strongly than the other in given moments. Paul in the letter to the Romans that we have just heard read, is very aware of these two narratives. The narratives of hate and division and the narrative that always seeks to find love.

When Paul says “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”, when he reminds us that the act of judgement lies with God not us, he is embedding this idea. However, this is not some simple act, a mindset that pretends everything is fine. This is so much more than a public act of unity which may make us feel together when in truth

we are not, this is a persistent tenacious act of love that is lived out in action, physically giving food and drink to those who may oppose us, not just those who are easy to love or help, blessing those who might seek to curse us. Curses come in many guises, not just a spoken physical curse but an act that subverts, that fails to be grateful, how we respond to that is a deep and profound challenge but one that Paul offers us in this passage. When Jesus in the other passage asks us to take up our cross and follow him, perhaps we can think about what the cross would mean for Jesus, it wasn't a violent act of resistance and war, but a powerful act of passive resistance. The resistance on the cross came in failing to hate, he says of course those often recorded words to those killing him “Father forgive them for they know not what they do, and to the criminal beside him, “today you will be with me in paradise”, no smiting or fighting, but yet an act of ultimate courage. But truly embodying love and hope in this world is not to pretend that the bad things are not there, not to minimise the pain, anger and loss that lead to people's divisions but to seek to meet those emotions head on with love. Not just hidings moments where we forget that those things exist, but showing love in the very face of them.

The truth is that just as crowds lining streets across the country celebrating peace did not take away the reality for many of a tough post war economy, of struggling communities, of challenges and tensions, neither (as lovely as it was) does clapping outside doorways take

away the myriad of challenges and tensions faced by so many in this time, and it is only by demonstrating love in the very face of this, a love that is resilient, sacrificial, determined that any true change can happen.

## Prayers

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

Below, we print a prayer from the Corrymeela Community, written at this time,

God who holds us in our brokenness,  
God whose healing makes us whole:  
the biggest event of our lives  
is still unfolding.  
It is not something to be  
outmanoeuvred or outwitted.  
This story is still incomplete,  
and our recovery has yet to begin.  
That unknowing is part of our pain.  
There is wisdom in accepting  
the things we cannot change.  
But there is strength  
in remembering that nothing,  
not even what we can't control,  
will separate us from your embrace.  
**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](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:** 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 followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering 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.

George Matheson (1842-1906)

### 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.

Do we dare to take the risk, to notice the  
unfamiliar  
in the ordinary, to hear the lark over the field,  
to step out of the boat of our understanding?

When God appears it is in the extraordinary-  
ordinary.  
In flames, in water, in food and drink,  
in the stable, in the street.

Dare to stop, look around,  
there is much to see.

@liturgy in dangerous times

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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