

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 15 November 2020

Second Sunday before Advent

Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use at home. You can also find our Sunday morning reflection on YouTube channel, available at 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.

Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to our service today, however you are joining us.

In a few weeks' time we will be celebrating Christmas, probably differently to normal, but celebrating all the same, respecting the rules to keep us all safe, but being creative in how we continue to bring Christmas alive, not focusing on what we can't do but what we can. Sometimes, as individuals too, it is so easy to focus on what limits us, and that can stop us reaching our potential, and this morning we will be exploring this together, mindful of the God given potential in us all.

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

We take a moment to recognise all the good things that we have in our lives. The gifts and talents we have been blessed with. To give thanks for the people that love us and who we love.

Following on from this our first hymn is :

Hymn: Make me a channel of your peace.

1. Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred let me bring your love;
Where there is injury your pardon, Lord;
And where there's doubt true faith in you.

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love with all my soul.*

2. Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, only light;
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

3. Make me a channel of your peace.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
In giving to all men that we receive;
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

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Confession

We now take a moment to say sorry, a moment to recognise the time we have caused pain to others, the times we have failed to act in humility and love, the moments we have let ourselves down, in the knowledge that we are held in God's forgiving love.

For the times we have allowed ourselves to limit our potential.

Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy**

For times when by judging others we have limited there potential.

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

Heavenly Lord,

you long for the world's salvation:

stir us from apathy,

restrain us from excess

and revive in us new hope

that all creation will one day be healed

in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings:

Matthew 25: 14-30

The second of Jesus' parables about judgment, this one encouraging people to use the gifts they have been given.

'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came

forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

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

A Reflection from Peter

In the early 1990's there was a song that was in the charts for a while, which had the lyrics –
*No, no limits we'll reach for the sky!
No valley too deep, no mountain too high!*
It was one of those annoyingly catchy songs that gets in your head whether you like it or not.

If only it was as easy for the message behind the song to get in our heads. The truth is that

many of us live our lives bound by many limits, some that need to be there for our health and protection, but some that are there simply because they always have been, or because we have come to believe things about ourselves that are not true.

When I hear the passage that we had this morning I always start by feeling sorry for the third man. The reaction to him feels very harsh, perhaps because I all too often see myself in him, choosing what feels like the cautious option and then losing out on so much. If we move beyond the harsh reaction of the master to the worker, then we find a passage which urges us to stop limiting potential. Urges us to risk being foolish, to risk making mistakes, to risk losing in order to reach our God given potential.

The song I spoke of at the beginning may be easy to sing, but it is hard to do. A lifetime of disappointments and put-downs and mistakes has often taught us to avoid things, and yet sometimes it is only through those disappointments and mistakes that we truly become who we are called to be.

Let us just gather our thoughts. Perhaps identify things that may hold us back, words that may have been said to us recently or years ago that still impact us profoundly. Perhaps it is the way we view ourselves which has become skewed. Give all of this to God now and spend a moment seeking to reembrace our God given potential.

Prayers

Let us pray for our world, our community and those in need around us.

God of hope-filled trials, God of a cautious release: as we begin to imagine good news arising from the measured process of labs and computers, of heroes and scientists, of incomplete successes and instructive failures, may we allow ourselves a sigh of relief, but one that draws in more strengths so that a winter of waiting may bring a spring of renewal.

Amen.

God of those who agree with us, God of those who don't: keep us from dividing the world into us and them, for or against, good and bad. Remind us that humans and human systems are always more complex than the binary choice of on/off, up/down. As you have met us in the reality of a living, breathing human life, may we meet each other again as three-dimensional people and not as another yes or no.

Amen.

We pray for all those in need at this time, for the vulnerable, the isolated, the hurting and the grieving. For the lost, those who feel beyond hope, those who have lost their own sense of purpose and potential. For all in need in our communities in our nation and in our world.

Amen

Some of the above prayers are taken from the Corymeela Community.

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**

This next hymn is a moment of rededication, a moment to recommit ourselves to seeking to be who God calls us and makes us to be.

Hymn: Take this moment

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

2 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.

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

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

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

J Bell, G Maule ©1988 WGRG, Iona Community

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.

Make we go today believing that God loves us so much that we need not be limited by our own possibilities, but released into God's possibilities.

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. peter.dockree@outlook.com 023 8055 4231 Songs reproduced under CCLI Licence No 159376. Streaming Licence No 101226. Scripture quotations from NRSVA version of the Bible, © 1989, 1995.