Sunday 7th June - Trinity Sunday

From Simon

Many of you will know that Nicola has been appointed Rector of Cottingham in the diocese of York. Her time with us has come to an end and sadly this will be her last Sunday. She and the family will be moving to Cottingham over the summer, as soon as the house there is ready. Because of current circumstances, we won’t be able to say ‘farewell and thanks’ in person this weekend, but we’ll do our best to offer sincere thanks and appreciation for all that Nicola has contributed during her time with us.

This week has seen the gradual lifting of some of the lockdown provisions and the introduction of a 'track & trace' system. Discussions about accessing our churches are continuing at the national level between the various faith groups and government. Early indications suggest that we may be able to 'open our doors' for individual visits during this month, with the restarting of services possibly in July.

Our school opens again on Mon. for a limited number of children. Mr. Grey and his staff colleagues have been working so hard to get things ready that they deserve our thanks and appreciation. Well done all!

Hymn: Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

1 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
   Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
   Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!
   God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

2 Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore thee,
   Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
   Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
   Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

3 Holy, Holy, Holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
   Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
   Only thou art holy, there is none beside thee
   Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

4 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
   All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky and sea,
   Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!
   God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suEmKJtKv8k&list=RDsuEmKJtKv8k&start_radio=1

Hymn: How shall I sing that majesty

1 How shall I sing that majesty
   Which angels do admire?
   Let dust in dust and silence lie;
   Sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.
   Thousands of thousands stand around
   Thy throne, O God most high;
   Ten thousand times ten thousand sound
   Thy praise; but who am I?
Thy brightness unto them appears,
Whilst I thy footsteps trace;
A sound of God comes to my ears,
But they behold thy face.
They sing because thou art their Sun;
Lord, send a beam on me;
For where heaven is but once begun
There alleluias be.

Enlighten with faith’s light my heart,
Inflame it with love’s fire;
Then shall I sing and bear a part
With that celestial choir.
I shall, I fear, be dark and cold,
With all my fire and light;
Yet when thou dost accept their gold,
Lord, treasure up my mite.

How great a being, Lord, is thine,
Which doth all beings keep!
Thy knowledge is the only line
To sound so vast a deep.
Thou art a sea without a shore,
A sun without a sphere;
Thy time is now and evermore,
Thy place is everywhere.

Collect:
Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

First Reading: Isaiah 40. 12 - 17, 27 - 31
Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the spirit of the L ORD, or as his counsellor has instructed him? Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice? Who taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, he takes up the isles like fine dust. Lebanon would not provide fuel enough, nor are its animals enough for a burnt-offering. All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the L ORD, and my right is disregarded by my God’? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The L ORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the L ORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13. 11 - 13
Brothers and sisters, put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Gospel: Matthew 28. 16 - 20
The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on
earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Reflection on this Sunday's readings:

The people were tired. They'd seen their city invaded by foreigners, the Temple razed to the ground, and they'd suffered a comprehensive defeat. They'd been taken prisoner, and forced to walk for hundreds of miles to Babylon. They were living as exiles, far from home, far from everything they knew, in a place that felt strange and inhospitable. They'd been beaten and uprooted. They'd suffered the loss of everything they knew. They had no idea what the future might hold. They'd survived terrible traumas and loss, and now they were tired. They were angry and resentful. They were depressed and lacking in energy. They were hopeless.

We haven't been taken into exile as the Israelites were, but we have suffered - are suffering - a terrible trauma, one that feels comparable for our time. At the beginning of the lockdown the shock brought out the best in us: there was an outpouring of kindness, generosity and selflessness as people volunteered to help neighbours, sew scrubs, keep in touch with those who were isolated. But eleven weeks on, that energy can't be sustained, and many of us are tired. The effort needed to live under these difficult conditions is exhausting. We are growing irritable and anxious. Some of us want to come out of lockdown now, and some are fearful of it. Many are angry at those in charge, but others are disillusioned and apathetic. People are grieving at all they have lost, and anxious about what the future holds. We want to get back to normal; we fear that we may never be normal again.

Just as exiles asked where God was in this strange land as they tried to make sense of what had happened to them, so we too might ask, 'where is God in the pandemic?'. Just as the exiles did, we might well ask, why has God let this terrible thing happen to us? Chapter 40 of Isaiah, from which our reading is taken, begins, 'Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.' What comfort has God for us, when we are at such a low ebb?

God’s response, in this passage from Isaiah, is to tell us something of who and what he is, in a series of rhetorical questions. Who else, he asks, has weighed and measured the earth and all that is within it? Who has advised God, who knows more than God? God made the world, without guidance from anyone else, with such care and attention to detail that it's beyond anything we can imagine. We may not be able to measure every drop of water in the world or weigh a mountain, but God can. There’s nothing we can teach God about how to be God, and nothing that we can give him that would be big enough or good enough. Next to him, we are about as small as we can be.

At this point you might be thinking, ‘that’s not very comforting!’. It’s not very comforting to be told how utterly insignificant you are!

But God then goes on to say just how much he cares for his people. ‘Why do you say that I have forgotten you?’, he asks. ‘Haven’t you heard? Haven’t you seen?’ We may be exhausted, but God is tireless. We may be powerless in the face of tragedy, but God is the everlasting creator of all that is. We may not know what to do for the best or even how to comprehend what is happening to us, but God’s understanding is unsearchable and infinite. And, crucially, when we feel abandoned and unloved, God continues in his endless care for us. The strongest and most energetic among us may faint and grow weary, but if we wait on God, he will renew our strength. We may feel that we are stumbling exhaustedly along, growing more and more depressed and hopeless, but if we wait on God, we will be renewed and not faint. In a wonderful image, he promises that he will lift us up, like the invisible currents of warm air that birds use, and that we shall mount up into the air with wings like an eagle. All we have to do is to wait, and God’s promises will be made good, because that is who he is. One day, we will be able to look back on this time, and see that we have gained new wisdom and found new ways of living.

In the meantime, we are left with hard waiting: the wearying, boring, persistence of keeping going in this hard time, with harder times perhaps to come. How can we wait upon God and keep faith with his promises?

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus appears to the eleven remaining disciples. In the face of loss and trauma - Jesus's terrible death, his incomprehensible return to life, the knowledge that one of them was his betrayer - in the face of uncertainty, fear and confusion, they arrive on the mountain. When he comes, some of them believe, some of them doubt. Like us, they find it hard to hold onto their faith when their world is
collapsing and changing. He gives them a task to do - just a small one! - to go and transform the world, making it ready for the coming of the kingdom. And he gives them comfort, something to hold on to, in the days and weeks and months and years ahead. ‘Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

The God who is the creator of the cosmos, and the God who came as a helpless child to die on the Cross, join together with God the inspirer and comforter to say, ‘I will be with you always’. As we wait upon God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he gives us his assurance that he will never leave us, never abandon us, never forget us. As we journey through our time of exile, stretching out into an as yet un-knowable future, we can trust that, wherever we go, God is with us.

Hello Children  Mary Mouse has gone to ground until we can all meet together again, but she will be sending regular letters.

Sunday Club will not meet until further notice. We will be offering a regular Mary Mouse letter. For details contact Gillian, gillian.pett29@gmail.com

INTERCESSIONS
Please refer any pastoral concerns for members of the congregation or members of the local community to any member of the Ministry team including our Co-ordinator for Pastoral Services, Mrs Frances Simms. Please pray for the sick, frail, housebound and those in care. Please let the Vicar know about all cases of sickness and others for whom we should pray.

PLANNED GIVING:  If you would like to give by direct debit through the Parish Giving Scheme (our preferred option) please contact Pat Brown on - Mobile: 07811 563597  Email: patbrown2591@yahoo.co.uk. To give by other means please contact Mrs. Ann Seaman, mobile no. 07710 452647; email juliet.a.seaman@outlook.com. We are shortly going to provide a Giving Page on the parish website, which will enable you to donate directly.

Giving during the 'Lock-down': We all deeply miss the opportunity to gather together for Sunday worship and the fellowship that this provides. One of the elements of our weekly coming together is the chance to making our regular offerings of money to support the work of the parish church. For some, donations will be continuing by arrangements with our banks, but a number of you give regularly by weekly envelope or open cash donation and no longer have this opportunity. We still have all our weekly costs to meet and your valuable and regular help is essential in seeing that this is funded. Please consider if you could continue to forward your envelopes and cash by asking a friend or neighbour to put them through the Vicarage letter box. Thank you in anticipation.

ST. MARY’S GREAT SHELFORD - WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Praying together as a community

At a time when we are all missing meeting to worship together perhaps there are things that we can do to help us feel that we are still a worshipping community, and that we are all thinking of one another. Here are three simple things that we could all do to pray together for each other and our community.

1. At noon each day we could say the Lord’s Prayer. You might like to go to the front door and stand in the doorway because we are praying not just for ourselves but for the whole community.

2. If you have a candle, light it at 7pm on Sunday evenings and put it in your front window. Pray for all those who are ill, all those who are alone, and all those who are caring for others. This looks beautiful and is a sign to other people that we are keeping the light of hope for them.

3. In the evenings before bed we could pray for each other, perhaps by saying the wonderful collect for aid against all perils from the Book of Common Prayer.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord, and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of thy only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Services on video:

Simon and Nicola are continuing to celebrate Holy Communion and other services for the whole community. We hope to produce recordings or videos of the Parish Communion and Evensong each Sunday, and a midweek BCP Communion on Wednesdays. The videos and recordings will be on our website. In addition you can see them on our Youtube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTxJ8yVmoDeV0r4K6y5UYw) or on our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/Stmarysgreatshelford/) - you don’t need to use facebook to see our posts).

As you watch you can make a Spiritual Communion. The term ‘Spiritual Communion’ has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ. The form of prayer below offers Christians an opportunity to give thanks for their communion with him, particularly at times when they would ordinarily be present at the Eucharist.

The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly ‘eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ’, although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves. Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion ‘regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost’ (Canon B 15).

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, ‘I am the Bread of Life’.

Recorded Services: At the present moment only one designated person is allowed to access a church building, accompanied by someone from their own household if necessary. Simon is the designated person for St Mary's, so he is able to record (with Mary's assistance) services from there. Nicola is recording services from her home.

Daily HOPE: This is a excellent new national Church of England initiative for those who are especially isolated and do not have access to the internet. Launched last Sunday, Daily HOPE is freephone line, available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044. Callers will hear a special greeting from the Archbishop of Canterbury before being able to choose from a range of options, including Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England’s weekly national online service. A section called Hymn Line will also offer callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled ‘Hymns We Love’, provides a hymn and reflection.

Cambridge City Foodbank: The Foodbank still very much needs our support at this difficult time. As St Mary's is closed until further notice, and Great Shelford Free Church are offering a collection point outside their front door, please can food donations be left there for the time being. You can also donate money directly to the Foodbank; the details of how to do so are on the Cambridge City Foodbank website. https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/

Kneelers: Our industrious embroiderers have now completed 26 kneelers, and are hoping that sponsors for another three (at £54 each) can be found; please contact Margaret Stamper on 845134 if you would like to dedicate a kneeler. Nearly the last chance...

The completed kneelers are being stored at the Vicarage until we are able to dedicate them during public worship. Well done to all those who have been hard at work.

Please note that the church is closed at present, so regretfully visits will not be possible.

Vicar: simon@thetalbotts.co.uk
The Rev’d Simon Talbott 01223 847068

Assistant curate: curate@stmarysgreatshelford.org
The Rev’d Dr Nicola Bown 07414 595160
Applications for baptisms, marriages and the calling of Banns of marriage should be made please to the Parish Administrator. Please note that at the moment we are unable to hold public services in church, so weddings and Baptisms are not permitted (unless in very specific emergency situations and probably only in a hospital or hospice setting). It is unclear at present when we can open the church again, so any forward dates agreed may have to be changed. 07/06/20