

NEWSLETTER

For the week beginning 7th March 2021
Third Sunday of Lent



FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Friends,

Another week has gone by and we are now on the cusp of seeing schools return following the latest lockdown. The amount of work that has gone in on home schooling by parents, who are not qualified as teachers, can only be described as amazing. It made me wonder how it feels to be part of a worshipping community and how qualified we all feel to proclaim the Gospel of hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Traditionally, the vicar is seen as the expert on faith and most people's response is, "I will leave it to them to talk about God and Jesus". For most members of the church the response is usually, "I am happy to come to church, when I am allowed, to worship on a Sunday and go back home". Are you one of those "Sunday Christians"? And why should it matter to me? Well, it's very simple maths really. In normal times I probably can see 20 people a week, but work out how many people you have contact with in normal times and if you were confident enough to talk about your faith then significantly more people would hear the Good News we have to offer.

An interesting talk recently at Deanery Synod was on being an everyday church and the difference that make to our lives. The question I pose to you is would anyone know that you go to Church on Sundays and are involved in the Church in other parts of your life? Does what you believe play out in the way that you act in transforming our community? Have you

asked yourself what you could do in the future to help others experience the love of God or do you hide your light under a bushel?

True transformation can and should be seen in the ways that we act in all parts of our lives and not just what we do on a Sunday morning at Church. If the pandemic has taught us anything it is that the Church is bigger than the buildings and we need to remember that as we are allowed to return to those buildings. I believe we need to focus in future on what we can do for our community rather than what the community can do for us. It is going to be a partnership in which I hope we will play a pivotal role and in the process we are able to show those communities what it means to be an everyday Christian and in doing so transform our communities with the love of Jesus Christ.

With my Love and Prayers

Noel

Our service this Sunday is online at 11.00am. The Rector will be leading the service, with Mr Andrew Farrow preaching.

Please join us via the link below. We would love to see you.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84233355603?pwd=bmxQMHPCT3RIM28ybFBHRzBSeG9Gdz09> Meeting ID: 842 3335 5603 Passcode: 746923

You can join us on the phone by dialling 0203 481 5237

Then Entering: 842 3335 5603##

Then: 746923#

Next Sunday is 14th March, **the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Mothering Sunday.**

The service will be online at 11.00am. Link as above.

DIARY

Date	Time	Event	Notes
Sunday 7 th March	11.00am	Service of the Word	Link and phone number as above
Monday 8th	9.15am 7.45pm	Morning Prayer Ministry Team Meeting	Link and phone number as above

Tuesday 9th	9.15am 7.45pm	Morning Prayer Evening Prayer	Link as above
Thursday 11th	9.15am 7.45pm	Morning Prayer Compline, followed by Lent Discussion	Link as above
Friday 12 th	9.15am	Morning Prayer	Link as above
Mothering Sunday 14th	11.00am	Service of the Word	Link and phone number as above
Monday 15th	9.15am 7.45pm	Morning Prayer Ministry Team Meeting	Link as above
Tuesday 16th	9.15am 10.00am 7.45pm	Morning Prayer Wardens' Meeting Evening Prayer	Link as above
Thursday 18th	9.15am 7.45pm	Morning Prayer Compline, followed by Lent Discussion	Link as above

LENT REFLECTIONS: Don't forget the daily Lent Reflections which you can download from the email Noel sent out on 11th February. They are also on our Facebook page.

LENT DISCUSSIONS: The third Lent discussion this week is on Thursday following on from Compline, on the theme of the soul.



The results of the Auction were published in last week's Newsletter, when the total stood at £1,436.75. Following more donations, the latest total is: **£1,556.75.** Many thanks to everyone for this magnificent result. It's **still** not too late to add to that.....!!

#LIVE LENT: God's Story, Our Story is available as a booklet (churchofengland.org/livelent) or you can download the app #LiveLent to your phone or tablet. It is produced by the

Church of England. For each of the 40 days of Lent, it includes a short Bible passage, a reflection and a prayer. The daily reflections follow weekly themes – each with an accompanying action – drawn from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2021, '*Living His Story: Sharing the extraordinary love of God in ordinary way*' by Hannah Steele.



IT WILL BE EASTER DAY on Sunday, 4th April. That gives a little time to think about some Easter traditions, such as Easter bonnets and Easter egg hunts. In the current circumstances, these may be a little tricky, but we could still take on the challenge to make (and wear) an Easter bonnet or decorate an egg. Just saying.....

A PICTURE TO ENLARGE AND COLOUR – JESUS CLEANSING THE TEMPLE – see today's Gospel reading.



Name: _____ Date: _____

ANAGRAMS FOR LENT 3

1. PETLEM _____
2. ESJUS _____
3. RNNYOSEDLE-ME _____
4. OEDVS _____
5. ICONS _____
6. ESLATB _____
7. KARTME PCEAL _____
8. ETN _____
9. TSMCAOEDNNMM _____
10. IDOL _____
11. SABABTH _____
12. RHOOUN _____
13. HTERMO _____
14. FHTRAE _____
15. GOD _____
16. LOHY _____

How many of the words can you ‘un-jumble’? They are all related to the First reading from Exodus chapter 20 or from the Gospel of John chapter 2 – printed at the end of this Newsletter.

Finance – Please consider if you can support our churches by setting up a regular standing order, increasing the amount you already give or by sending a donation, and if you pay income tax, your gifts can be worth even more to the churches if they are ‘gift-aided’. Regular, planned giving is essential for budgeting and, therefore, the fall in income over the last 11 months has put us in a very uncertain position.

Here are the bank details for each church for your reference:

St Nicholas': 30-92-75 00610273

St John's: 05-09-42 57896460

St Chad's: 30-98-37 00152981

The Newsletter – if you would like anything added to the Newsletter, here are the details you need:

margaret.allen69@yahoo.co.uk 07778 458 789 or n.w.phillips@live.com 07498 202262

PRAYERS

In your prayers this week, please pray for those who are sick, including:

Alison	Pat Bird	Shirley Bolton	George Bullivant
Joe Cartnell	Ivy Cheshire	Diane Craven	Lesley Cox
Claire Eldridge	Jean Eldridge	Pat Harris	Paul Hollis
Peggy Keeling	Patricia Leyland	Olwen Miles	Isabella Murphy
Philip O'Halloran	Brian Pearson	Lucinda Shelley	Sue Shelley
Cathy Smith	Tim and Imogen Swingler		Marie Sylvester
Barbara Thomas	Rhoda Thornicroft	Jenny Tillson	Pat Turner
Paul Wilson	Gordon Yates		

(If you would like anyone added to this list, please let us know. Also if anyone can be taken off the list because they are feeling better.)

Remember those who have died and those who mourn them, remembering especially

Esther Dorothy Cox Freda Guest Cynthia Jones-Flynn

We will be praying for everyone on this list at the weekday services. Although the names may not be read at the Sunday services, we will still be remembering them all in the prayers.

Collect and Readings for Sunday 7th March 2021

The Collect

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
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.

The First Reading

is from Exodus, chapter 20

¹Then God spoke all these words: ²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹²Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³You shall not murder.

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵You shall not steal.

¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading

is from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 1

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel

Here is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John chapter 2

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' ¹⁹Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' ²⁰They then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ.



A perspective on The Ten Commandments.

By Craig Kocher

At times the journey of Lent can be a drag. The mood is more sombre, the music in a minor key. Churches have long ago left behind the lights of the Christmas and Epiphany season in exchange for repentance purple. On week three we read the Exodus version of the Ten Commandments, and the first response might well be, “Yes, Lord, we’ve been in the midst of Lent for three weeks now. We’re well aware that we have broken your laws and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. Can you not cut us some slack?”

Reading the Ten Commandments this week may seem like kicking the poor church of Jesus when it is down. After all, if two people as well respected as Jimmy Carter and Billy Graham have coveted another’s wife, how do the rest of us stand a chance? Take heart. From a pastoral perspective, this week’s Exodus reading should be received not as a burden but a gift, an opportunity to grow deeper in relationship with God in Christ. Particularly during Lent, when we as Christians are called to reflect on all the ways our lives do not embody the kingdom and fall short of Christ-likeness, this lesson provides a roadmap of faith on the journey toward Jerusalem.

Appropriately, we read the story of the Ten Commandments the week after the story of God’s creating a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17. The Torah, or law given to Moses in the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, describes a vision of how the covenant between God and Israel is to be ordered. Furthermore, it comes after God has led the people through the Red Sea out of slavery in Egypt, sustained them with manna in the wilderness, and brought them to Mount Sinai. YHWH (Pronounced YAHWEH because Hebrew does not have vowels) has displayed a passionate love for his people and shown that love through liberating them from bondage and feeding them with bread from heaven.

The Commandments come as gift from God to the people of Israel to structure their common life, and to shape individual lives that are worthy of the God who has rescued them and with whom they are in covenant. They should not be read as divine finger-wagging or moral hand-slapping. To be bound in covenant with God is to be set free to live as God’s people. God’s gift of the law to Israel is a means of protecting the community, now that they are no longer slaves, and opening a path to the flourishing of life, both communal and individual.

The Ten Commandments are separated into two tablets or sections. The first tablet is God-centered, a set of injunctions against making false idols and taking the Lord’s name in vain, and commandments to keep the Sabbath, and honour father and mother. These are

commandments directed toward the individual in relationship with God (vv. 3–12). The second tablet is neighbour-centered, forbidding murder, adultery, stealing, lying, and coveting (vv. 13–17). Like boundary lines on a football field or basketball court, the commandments outline the basic expectations of human behaviour and protect the human community from running out of bounds and falling into patterns of living that will destroy it and lead the people into self-inflicted chaos. At the same time, the commandments provide encouragement for a healthy and proper love of God and neighbour.

There is an internal logic to the commandments that is both compelling and beautiful: The way we attend to God (tablet one) shapes the way we attend to our neighbour (tablet two). In other words, faithful worship of God leads to proper love of neighbour. Proper praise of God shapes our social responsibility; good theology is good ethics. For example, having “no other gods before me” means that money, sex, and power will not wiggle their way onto the altars of our lives, and thus will not be used to exploit others. Keeping the Sabbath is a reminder that all of creation is a gift and we have a responsibility to be wise stewards of it (v. 8). Honouring father and mother reminds us that we are not self-made, that we stand on the shoulders of others (v. 12). Not bearing false witness suggests that we should build up the community by speaking truthfully of our neighbours (v. 16). “You shall not murder” suggests that others are gifts who bear the image of God for us (v. 13). And not taking the Lord’s name in vain invites an attitude of praise and thanksgiving toward God, rather than anger and cynicism (v. 7). When asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus unites the two tablets, summarizing the whole of the law and gospel: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love your neighbour as yourself. As we read Exodus 17 through the lens of the Christian faith, the Ten Commandments are brought to their fullness in the life of Jesus and the faithful witness of the church.

When we speak of repenting of our sin during Lent and becoming right with God, we are not simply saying that eight of the big ten have been checked off, and now, if we can just get that bit about Sabbath and coveting down, all will be fine. Rather, when we fail to rest from our labour, or covet a friend’s job, or tell a little lie (let alone some of the more dramatic offenses like stealing, murder, and adultery), the whole fabric of our relationship with God and one another is torn apart. As the Ten Commandments were given to the people of Israel as a gift to shape their love of God and one another, the journey of Lent comes as a gift to mould the witness of the church. It is an opportunity to confess the ways we have squandered God’s gifts, to renew the vibrancy and faithfulness of our worship, and to increase our love of neighbours near and far. Like the Commandments, Lent is not about religious moralism. Rather, Lent is a journey of deepening holiness shaping lives in the image of Christ to praise God and live in friendship with one another.