

7th Week after Trinity: 31th July - 6th August 2022

Greetings from Eileen

Dear friends,

As I write I know that some have started their summer holidays perhaps away with the family and others are preparing to enjoy time away soon. Making time to be refreshed is following Jesus!

We have several August get togethers and events. Some are by invitation only, but I'd like to share them here so that everyone in our church family, friends and supporters of our parishes, are aware of them.

1. **Wonderful World Holiday Club:** On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 3rd, 4th, and 5th August, 2 to 5pm, all children from ages 5 to 11 years are welcome to enjoy a time together in Gainford. As always they can look forward to adventure, crafts, in and out doors activities, and plenty of refreshments. Claire Mead and Sheila Jones have planned an exciting programme – all risk assessed. Contact them for more information or sign up on: info@gainfordwinston.church
2. **Welcome to Ukrainian Families:** We are delighted that our prayers and plans to host Ukrainian families have been fruitful. 2 Ukrainian families joined Anna and Cosmo (whose Mum Sue Gowling is a member of St Mary's, Gainford) and their family this month in response to offers of sponsored help to leave their embattled homes in Ukraine. We are pleased that they have accepted our invitation to a **Welcome Party at The Vicarage, Gainford, on Friday 5th August 2022 from 5-7pm**. So that they are not overwhelmed, the event is by invitation only where we are making room especially for children from our Youth Club and Holiday Club and their families will have an opportunity to meet the Ukrainian families.
3. **A TENT IS PITCHED AMONG US!** In Exodus 33, God's people were on the move and wanted a place to meet God together. Moses was directed to pitch a tent, which was then referred to as 'A Tent of Meeting'. On **Thursday 25th August 2022 6 – 8.30pm you are invited to a time of Bible Study and Fellowship in Little Newsham Chapel with a BBQ in the grounds of Little Newsham Hall**. So that we have an idea of numbers for catering, please contact me 01325 733154 or Tom by email: info@gainfordwinston.church See attached poster too.

Last week, I mentioned the delightful offer of a **recital in St Mary's, Gainford by Visiting Organist Paul Raab**. Unfortunately, the organ developed a fault that has not been able to be fixed this week and, although we hope the organ will be attended to next week, Paul would not have sufficient opportunity to practice. With regret, **we have cancelled the recital scheduled for Wednesday 3rd August** also. We thank Paul for his generosity and wish him and wife Yvonne a happy holiday here.

This Sunday 24th July 2022, everyone is welcome to join me at
 9.30am, St Andrew's, Winston, Holy Communion
 10.45am St Mary's, Gainford, Holy Communion

God, the most holy and glorious Trinity is with us, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

NOTICES

- † **Wedding of Robert Ellwood and Ellie Chapman:** We join in prayer for the Blessing of Holy Matrimony when Robbie and Ellie were married on Saturday 30th July 2022 at St Mary's Church, Gainford.
- † **Baptism of Ellis Tomlinson:** We are delighted that Ellis Tomlinson will be baptised at St Mary's, Gainford this Sunday. Please pray for him as we also pray for parents Anthony and Lauren, sister Faith, and Godparents Sian, Samantha, Thomas, Craig, Maureen and Emma, as we welcome them into our church family.

Additional HOLIDAY CLUB! If those dates don't suit your child(ren) we are pleased to recommend the **Scripture Union Summer Residential for 8-11s Launchpad, 16th-19th August** as Claire our youth leader is on the team. It's a great opportunity for our children to experience other Christian groups, have fun and grow in faith. It is based at an activity centre near Durham, and cost £ £138 per child (bursaries available). Contact Claire on: holidays@scriptureunion.org.uk

Prayer requests:

Those in need: Please pray for those who are troubled or needing healing in body, mind, or spirit at this time. In our parishes please hold in prayer Pat (Winston), Jean and Hilary (Gainford), and any others known to us and known only to God for whom prayer for healing, for peace, and for practical help is needed.

Lambeth Conference: This is the gathering every 10 years of Bishops in the worldwide Anglican Communion of which the Church of England is the 'mother church'. Over 600 bishops and their spouses have gathered in Canterbury, representing 165 countries. The conference discusses church and world affairs and the global mission of the Anglican Communion for the decade ahead. The conference theme is 'God's Church for God's World - walking, listening and witnessing together.' Together they will explore what it means for the Anglican Communion to be responsive to the needs of a 21st Century world. Here is a spiritual comment and prayer with the the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York

Good morning.

'Have a unity of spirit,' says the first letter of Peter. What unites us may be much more than what divides us, but we can't pretend that the church in this age - like the church in every age - finds it hard to agree on some issues.

But our unity is not for our own preservation. Jesus prays that his church is one so the world may believe. All denominations probably underestimate how damaging our disunity is for our proclamation of the gospel. Put simply, I think the world looks and says, 'Well, if they can't even agree amongst themselves, how can we possibly take them seriously' And what the world urgently needs to hear is that it's possible for those who disagree to still love one another and to live together in respectful unity.

But unity is not uniformity. And God has created us with a wonderful and glorious diversity.

In the Anglican church in New Zealand we see this lived out in a particular way. The Church is made up of three streams who order their affairs within their three contexts, that is Maori, those of white European origin, and Polynesian. It can sometimes appear that one diocese has three bishops. But it is a model of unity in diversity that is creative and relational – something like the Trinity, perhaps? This challenges us to look at diversity differently, seeing it not as a problem to be solved, but a gift to be celebrated.

And so we pray –

Transforming God, help us to see unity differently. Help us to disagree well. Teach us that we belong to one another, and that your love for us draws us into community through your Son Jesus Christ who prayed his church be one.

Amen.

Collect for 7th Sunday after TRINITY

Lord of all power and might,
 the author and giver of all good things:
 graft in our hearts the love of your name,
 increase in us true religion,
 nourish us with all goodness,
 and of your great mercy keep us in the same;
 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

Post-Communion Prayer

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the
 source of life,
 ever giving himself that the world may live:
 may we so receive within ourselves
 the power of his death and passion
 that, in his saving cup,
 we may share his glory and be made perfect in his
 love;
 for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
 Amen

The First Reading: Colossians 3:1-11

¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth, ³ for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. ⁷ These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. ⁸ But now you must get rid of all such things: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. ¹¹ In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, enslaved and free, but Christ is all and in all!

The Gospel: Luke 12:13-21

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵ And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” ¹⁶ Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷ And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”

Sermon, 6th Sunday after TRINITY: Rev’d Canon Eileen Harrop, 24th July 2022 (Colossians 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37)

Do you get tired of sermons telling you about how Christians are called to live? I remember my mum being disappointed about church services because she found preachers repeating the same things.

Paul repeatedly wrote about how Christians should live and today's first Bible reading offers one such example:

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving".

I beg to disagree with those who feel that it is unnecessary repeating what it means to live as Christians. Perhaps you have heard mutterings that those known to attend church behave 'worse than' others who have no faith or don't attend church. Those making such remarks may or may not be justified but only we have the opportunity and responsibility to live as people who know Jesus Christ as our saviour and Lord.

Living our lives in Christ is not the same as living our lives to the approval of the world. In my experience living right and living well comes from inside out. If I try to live according to the world's check list of dos and don'ts I will surely fail and be an increasingly unhappy person.

Paul says: *"...live your lives in (Jesus Christ), rooted and built up in him and established in the faith..."*

One person and a couple whose lives are separated by more than 1,300 years are examples of living their lives rooted and built up in Jesus Christ and established in the faith.

St Cuthbert who came to the north east attracted a great many people to the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. More than a thousand years later, people are still blessed by his testimony today. When religious leaders squabbled about church government and rules, he took himself away to pray for the world. He had to be persuaded to return as Bishop. In our time, I am humbled by the example of Revd Nicky Gumbel, the parish priest of Holy Trinity, Brompton, London. He and his wife Pippa are known the world over for the Alpha Course.

Together, Nicky and Pippa have been faithful and fruitful in Christ. Nicky came to faith when he was a university student in Cambridge. When he responded to God's call to be ordained, he spent 36 years ministering at one single church. The newly ordained usually serve as Curates for 3 or 4 years before they are appointed to lead a church. Nicky served 19 years as curate in Holy Trinity Brompton before serving as its vicar since 2005. Many people deride HTB, as it is now known, and find fault with his uncompromising message of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ.

Those who know Nicky and Pippa personally will tell you about their humility, their modest lives, and their great love for their family. They will tell of Nicky's kindness, compassion, generosity of spirit; of his genuine listening and interest in others; his prayerfulness, and staying true to God's Word in the Bible. I am amazed by the fruit from Nicky's singular endeavour of The Alpha Course. Its power throughout the world even in many non-English speaking and non-Western countries cannot be explained except by believing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nicky and Pippa's faith is so believable because they live truly as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Many Christians lose their way when they believe it is fine, even the right thing, to mix the ideas of the world with living in relationship with Jesus and the counsel and power of the Holy Spirit. I hear it said often: *"All roads lead to God"*, then some follow with the question: *"...don't they?"* We all have friends or know of people whose lives are exemplary according to moral and social measures. And because many of them do not have faith in Christ, some of us may have drawn the conclusion that whatever and whoever they believe in is 'the way to God' too. But this is not so, according our Bible reading. Paul says:

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.”

Being alive in Christ is more than living perfectly according to the morality and social standards of the world.

I have shared a sermon in my newsletter this week that was preached at the Consecration of Bishops recently. Quoting Jesus' words *‘be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect’*, the preacher asked us: “How about that for advice to new bishops? *‘Be perfect and you’ll be fine.’*”

How about us: perhaps that should also be said about all Christians: *‘Be perfect and you’ll be fine.’*

But friends, the world's idea of ‘perfect’ is not that of ‘perfect’ according to God's Word. We are being made perfect not by conforming or striving to the ideals of the world, but through living with and in Christ. In our Gospel reading, Jesus says:

“Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”

We are to live in relationship with Jesus, to ask and search with Jesus. That is what it means by being *‘alive together with Christ’*. We are *‘raised with Christ’*, who puts to death our thoughts, words and deeds that are not in the nature and love of God. We are able to live this way *‘through faith in the power of God’*. Our outwardly visible lives are the product of our inward lives. Let us choose not the world as our moral compass. Let us seek to learn from the whole Word of God, that, with Jesus, we will know what to think, and say, and do.

I invite you to pray this prayer with me:

Lord and Heavenly Father, help me to live my life knowing that I am always in Your presence. Stir in me your Spirit to prompt me and guide me by Your Living Word; that I may live more and more in the likeness of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen