

## 14<sup>th</sup> Week after Trinity: 18<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### Greetings from Eileen

Dear Friends,

Our late Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth II's death had come upon us suddenly. On Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> September, the world will pause together for her funeral service. I am felled by a maelstrom of contrary thoughts and feelings: enormous gratitude and admiration; thankful relief for her peaceful and un-lingering passing; profound sadness and sorrow; random assault of questions concerning the nation, countries, and agencies that had been bound together by her gracious, loving, and wise leadership; a sense of inadequacy for the



pastoral implications across the varied groups of parishioners; and the need to attend suitably to the disarranged and additional tasks at hand. Never have I exercised more continuous conversation with God in prayer at every waking moment for our new monarch King Charles III, our late Majesty The Queen's children and family; for the United Kingdom, realms, and the Commonwealth; and also for people who, even at this time, berate and deride our late Queen and all her family. For these angry people in whom there is no compassion to restrain their ire, I am mindful that our Lord Jesus Christ bore even more hatred and gave His life as a perfect sacrifice and oblation for the sins of the whole world.

Like you, I have read many tributes and reflections about our late Majesty in recent days – most affirming everything dear and blessed about her, acknowledging her unstinting devotion to duty carried out outstandingly well and achieving much more beyond the tasks delivered. There was no hiding nor shielding her faith in God through Jesus Christ – this was, she said the rock on which all her values stood firm and shaped the way she lived her life. She told the world over and over again at every Christmas broadcast that Jesus set the example of love by which she could live and serve her subjects. But she did much more than 'serve her subjects', she drew whole nations and peoples to her because she believed in, and exemplified, the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Headteacher Chris Riley of Gainford Primary School wrote to me about our youngest children in school having never experienced bereavement or funerals. She said how they sense and appreciate the profound loss at this time, eager with quiet hearts to hear about our late Sovereign Queen. Indeed, Her Majesty's smile that shone from her heart was brightest when she met countless numbers of children all around the world. Her legacy is assured by this generation of children who will themselves be the grandparents, leaders, and governments of tomorrow.

### Sunday Principal Services and Additional Services during our period of national mourning

**18<sup>th</sup> September:** **Holy Communion with Prayers for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**

Sunday 9.30am St Andrew's, Winston; 10.45am St Mary's, Gainford

**3.30pm Messy Harvest St Mary's, Gainford**

**Service of Prayer and Reflection for Her Majesty**

6pm St Andrew's, Winston

**21<sup>st</sup> September:** **Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving for Her Majesty**

**With Deputy Lord-Lieutenant Prof. Ian Neal in attendance**

Wednesday 7pm St Mary's, Gainford

**Throughout the day at St Andrew's, Winston and from 9am to 7pm in St Mary's, Gainford** everyone is welcome to write in the **Book of Condolence**, to **light a candle for Her Majesty**, and to spend **time in quiet prayer** in our pilgrim churches.

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

*Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop*



Our **Deanery Teesdale Riverside Pilgrimage last weekend** was a time of great blessing. At its heart, Pilgrimage is time we set aside to pray, contemplate and reflect as we journey either on our own or with others physically or virtually. There was a lot of fellowship in our particular pilgrimage, meeting of new people, and having fresh conversations with those we know. Some may have wished for more space for quiet and rather less sharing. Being the one that brought up the rear despite hastening, I would have liked to be stilled by the rushing Tees, but perhaps I might not have completed the pilgrimage!

I wish to thank Tom Deakin (pilgrim initiator, leader, and organiser), Geoff Taylor (chair of the planning group), Paula Kirkup (leader of the schools' engagement and the Burning Bush Prayer Trees), Mark Samuelson (history guide and for

arranging the virtual pilgrimage voice-overs), Kevin Robertson (Virtual Pilgrimage photographer, film editor, and service projection), Chrissie Barnett (hospitality at St Andrew's, Winston), Brian Harrop (musician for the Pilgrimage Service), Sue Taylor, Christine Graham and the refreshment team on Sunday evening, and our Area Dean Alec Harding and his teams at Barnard Castle and Whorlton. We are delighted that 9 of 12 parishes, and 4 clergy, participated in our first deanery pilgrimage. Glory be to God.

Pilgrims setting off the next day on the **Lindisfarne Gospels Pilgrimage** joined us on Sunday evening to receive our good wishes and blessings too. A big thank you to hosts who provided accommodation and hospitality to pilgrims. More of that, and more on our Pilgrimage weekend will be published in October's Parish News magazine.

## NOTICES

**Funeral of Colin Davison** (of Neville's Close, Gainford): Please pray for Mrs Davison and the family. There will be a funeral service at St Mary's Church, Gainford, 2pm, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 followed by a private Committal at Darlington Crematorium.

**PAKISTAN DISASTER APPEAL:** We are collecting donations towards an emergency fund for the Pakistan floods disaster appeal. Please contact Chrissie 01325 730112 if you

### Collect for Remembrance of our late Sovereign

O Lord our Heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice: We remember before thee our late Sovereign Lady **QUEEN ELIZABETH**, in thankfulness for the blessings which thou hast bestowed upon us by her reign; for the example she set of unwearied devotion to duty; for her steadfast courage; and for the love and loyalty borne to her by a great family of peoples in all parts of the world. And we beseech thee to give us grace that, having these thy mercies in remembrance, we may with one heart and one mind set forward the welfare of this land, and hasten the coming of thy kingdom of peace and goodwill among men; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

### Collect for our late Servant Queen

O God, the maker and redeemer of all mankind, grant us, with thy servant **QUEEN ELIZABETH** and all the faithful departed, the sure benefits of thy Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection; that in the last day, when all things are gathered up in Christ, we may with them enjoy the fullness of thy promises; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.  
Amen

### **First Reading: The second letter of Paul to the Corinthians. (4.16-5.4)**

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

### **The Gospel: John 6:35-40**

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

### **Sermon, 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after TRINITY – special service on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II: Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (Lamentations 3; John 6:35-40)**

Jesus said: *"Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me."*

Our late sovereign Queen spoke openly about her confidence in Jesus and how knowing Jesus and following him shaped the way she lived her life. Yet, we also know that in keeping company with people, everyone she was required to meet as well as those she chose to be with, she is observed to have 'worn her faith lightly'.

Our Queen led a most public life but not of her own devising or desiring. At 21, she made a declaration quite like the declaration we have just heard from Jesus, God the Son. She declared that her whole life was not to do her own will but the will of her anointing and her subjects with the help of God.

In my native culture, one's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday marks the coming of age, not 18. At 21, our late sovereign, then Princess Elizabeth, said: *"my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service"*. And this is what all the world's eyes and ears watching and listening had seen and heard, because her whole life since that courageous and sincere declaration, had been unwavering in delivering her vow to us all.

From that moment countless people came of age with her. They were affected and, in heart and mind had grown up, enlightened and changed. Some came of age straightaway while most a little at a time by each exemplary action, word, look, and presence of Her Majesty since then. On Thursday evening, when the announcement came that this whole life had passed from earth, countless more would have come of age because of her.

Here is an account of how the Queen's public life of following Jesus was lived deeply yet lightly. This is the account of a moment when the humanitarian and trauma surgeon David Nott met the Queen,

shortly after his return from war-devastated Aleppo. This is what he shared:

'I don't know why it happened then, or why it should have been the Queen who breached the dam. Perhaps it was because she is the mother of the nation, and I had lost my own mother. My bottom lip started to go and all I wanted to do was to burst into tears; but I held myself together as best I could. I hoped she wouldn't ask me another question about Aleppo. I knew if she did, I would completely lose control.

She looked at me quizzically and touched my hand. She then had a quiet word with one of her courtiers, who pointed to a silver box in front of her. I watched as she opened the box, which was full of biscuits. "These are for the dogs", she said, breaking one of the biscuits in two and giving me half. We fed the biscuits to her corgis under the table, and for the rest of the lunch she took the lead and chatted about her dogs, how many she had, what their names were, how old they were. All the while we were stroking and patting them, and my anxiety and distress drained away. "There", the Queen said. "That so much better than talking, isn't it?"

When Jesus met Zacchaeus, that is what Jesus did too. Here was an infamous man, known by many of the people gathered to meet Jesus and there Zacchaeus was up in a tree. The man, important by the power he had of collecting tax from those people, must have looked rather ridiculous in the tree. But Jesus said, "*Hello Zacchaeus*", as he looked at him in the tree, and said, "*may I come to your house for tea?*" For Zacchaeus, that moment of embarrassment passed with Jesus' request. And as trauma surgeon David Nott recalls, the Queen said to him, "There", "That so much better than talking, isn't it?"

The Book of Lamentations from which we heard our first reading is just that: a book of lament. Earthly life is characterised by low times and we know this also from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm: "*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...*" And how does one live with our low times? From our reading in Lamentations we have the answer: '*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him.*'

Not only did our late Queen believe in God's Word, she embraced and embodied the nature of her faith. '*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end*'. Listen to what the William, our new Prince of Wales, said of his grandmother: "She was by my side at my happiest moments. And she was by my side during the saddest days of my life". And lament is lifted when there is hope in the Lord: '*The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him.*' This is what The Queen's grandson said: "I thank her on behalf of my generation for providing an example of service and dignity in public life that was from a different age, but always relevant to us all".

Our late Queen showed us how the transforming power of faith in Jesus is lived in one's whole life, mostly in the ordinary and in relationships with anyone and everyone. In my newsletter I had written: 'And as we struggle to compose ourselves, bearing in memory her discipline and selflessness in the face of personal loss and troubles, we ask ourselves how we could honour her in this life even as she has moved on to the next?' Perhaps during these days of national mourning, we could give ourselves a little space to reflect on that question. And in the meantime, we join His Majesty King Charles III in saying of his mother: "May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest".

We thank God so very, very, much for our departed servant Queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. And in accordance with her wishes, we pray and declare: "God save the King". Amen