

16th Week after Trinity / HARVEST continued: 2nd – 8th October 2022

Greetings from Eileen

Dear Friends,

HARVEST celebrations continue with our Service of Harvest Thanksgiving in St Andrew's, Winston this Sunday. Such a precious time when year on year we acknowledge the bounty of God's gifts of land and sea by the responsible hard work of everyone in agriculture, fishing, land, sea, and water management.

Without investing time and effort in stewardship of God's gifts, which includes stewardship of the eco-system and environment, there would be no harvest. Without harvest, there will be no life in this world as we know it. Churches around the country have been gearing up with activities in schools and parishes for 'The Great Big Green Week.' But 'showing up for your planet' for one week is hardly meaningful. All our lives as Christians who are called to love God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and to love our neighbour, must surely overflow with love for God's gift of our natural world and our planet Earth.



On Wednesday 28th September, members from St Andrew's



Winston participated in BIO-BLITZ run by Durham Wildlife Trust learning to spot, identify, and chart species on the Millennium Green, and to understand the many issues we face around climate change and bio-diversity.



I am writing this on the Feast of Michael & All Angels, which we celebrated at our morning service in St Andrew's, Winston and at Choral Evensong in St Mary's, Gainford last Sunday. Thanks particularly to our newly re-constituted Choral Group led by John Trevitt and new Choral Evensong organist Joshua Greenwell for enabling us to have a new season of this traditional expression of worship using the Book of Common Prayer. We were encouraged by the strong attendance (running short of service booklets) despite several regular congregants being absent.

SERVICES THIS SUNDAY: Everyone is welcome.

9.30am **St Andrew's, Winston – Harvest Thanksgiving with Refreshments**

10.45am **St Mary's, Gainford – Service of the Word (led by churchwardens)**

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

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

NOTICES: This is a note of encouragement rather than a notice. During this season of national economic concern, please be attentive to neighbours who may be in need and the increased need at foodbanks especially as the colder season has started. Let us share in pastoral care as a church family, and let our churchwardens or lay leaders know if anyone needs prayer or visiting.

Collect for the 16th week after Trinity

Lord of creation,
whose glory is around and within us:
open our eyes to your wonders,
that we may serve you with reverence
and know your peace at our lives' end,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty God,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law:
grant that we may love you with our whole
heart
and our neighbours as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

First Reading (St Mary's): 2 Timothy 1.1-14

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, ² To Timothy, my beloved child:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; ⁷ for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

⁸ Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, ¹² and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. ¹³ Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

Gospel Reading (St Mary's): Luke 17:5-10

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' ⁶ The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

⁷ ‘Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, “Come here at once and take your place at the table”? ⁸ Would you not rather say to him, “Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink”? ⁹ Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, “We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!”’

First Reading (St Andrew’s - Harvest): Genesis 2:4-15

⁴ When the Lord God made the universe, ⁵ there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted, because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land; ⁶ but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

⁷ Then the Lord God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

⁸ Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹ He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.

¹⁰ A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; beyond Eden it divided into four rivers. ¹¹ The first river is the Pishon; it flows around the country of Havilah. (¹² Pure gold is found there and also rare perfume and precious stones.) ¹³ The second river is the Gihon; it flows around the country of Cush. ¹⁴ The third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria, and the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it.

The Gospel (St Andrew’s - Harvest): Matthew 6:25-33

(Jesus said) ²⁵ “This is why I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn’t life worth more than food? And isn’t the body worth more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds: they do not plant seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren’t you worth much more than birds? ²⁷ Can any of you live a bit longer by worrying about it?

²⁸ “And why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. ²⁹ But I tell you that not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. ³⁰ It is God who clothes the wild grass—grass that is here today and gone tomorrow, burned up in the oven. Won’t he be all the more sure to clothe you? What little faith you have!

³¹ “So do not start worrying: ‘Where will my food come from? or my drink? or my clothes?’ ³² (These are the things the pagans are always concerned about.) Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things. ³³ Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things.

REFLECTION by Revd Dr Andrew Dowsett, Minster Priest in Sunderland, on the Feast of St Michael & All Angels, 29th September 2022

I share this an informative reflection by my colleague Andrew Dowsett.

Today is Michaelmas, the Feast of St Michael & All Angels. (Happy feast day to all Michaels/Mikes & Angelas among my friends!)

In one sense, Michael is an unusual saint, in that almost all saints are humans whose lives demonstrate an unusual awareness of the presence of God. The exceptions are the few angels whose names are revealed to us, including Michael, and in this greater sense Michael is an exemplary saint, for the angels live in unbroken awareness of God's presence.

Michaelmas is to Michael as Christmas is to Christ: (not a birthday, but) a season of great thanksgiving for what God has done. In Christmas, we celebrate the incarnation, that, in Jesus, God has become one with God's creation. In Michaelmas, we celebrate divinization, that, by and with and in Christ, creation is being caught up in union with God. Michaelmas is a consequence of Christmas, and its near-completion, as, in the Church calendar, we move towards the Feast of Christ the King.

There is a story in Genesis of a broken man running away from the mess he has created, who, in the restless sleep of drained exhaustion, is graced the vision of angels descending to earth and ascending to heaven. Sent from and returning to God, their beginning and their end. And early in John's Gospel, Jesus calls another runaway to follow him, saying he shall see the angels of God descending and ascending on the Son of Man, that is, the faithful community which is focused on Jesus, the Alpha & Omega, the source and completion, of angels and disciples alike.

According to later legend, Michaelmas is the day on which Michael defeated the rebellious angel Lucifer, and threw him down to earth; the fallen angel, who landed in a briar patch. Some say you should not pick its fruit, the blackberry, after this date. But if you are looking to celebrate the Feast of St Michael, a blackberry crumble would be appropriate.

Happy Michaelmas! In these days, may you become increasingly aware of God's presence in our world, in our midst.