

19th Week after Trinity – BIBLE SUNDAY: 23rd – 29th October 2022

Greetings from Eileen

Dear Friends,

A Prayer for Anytime

Lord,
when squalls and storms
disrupt our journey,
when plain sailing
turns into precariousness
and puzzlement,
when we are reminded
that the ocean
is big and powerful
and our boat feels
small and fragile,
reassure us
of your presence,
your promises,
and your love.
AMEN

What a week it has been for our country politically. Whatever political party you may support, we all look for national leadership that is acutely aware and compassionately sensitive to the people who should be served and represented. There is no denying that we have experienced unhelpful turmoil.

How should we as the Church and people of Christian faith to respond? Friends, we pray.

We pray by faith that the God of grace, mercy, and compassion, will instil in those who are in political life at Westminster and in government, true wisdom and heart for service, that they may rise to their responsibility of representation and leadership.

We pray for a leader who will come forward, with integrity, awareness of people's needs, stature to address institutions and nations, and be able to communicate with clarity and inspiration. We pray for sound election of such a leader.

We pray for courageous and competent civil servants and colleagues around this leader, who will get on with their duties for the good of this country.

On other matters, we are delighted that our missional endeavours are blessings. Our Teesdale Riverside Pilgrimage experience has been picked up by the Diocese as an inspiring breakthrough for people with disability, in particular those who are unable to physically walk on pilgrimage. If you were unable to join our pilgrimage weekend, do access the weblink, read about it, and join in: <https://durhamdiocese.org/launch-of-the-virtual-pilgrimage.php>

I have attached information about our **Churches Together in Gainford screening of the Virtual Pilgrimage on Thursday 3rd November 7pm** Gainford Village Hall Supper Room.



A WARM & WELCOME SPACE in Gainford: A community team, led by Wendy Broderick (our Lay Pastoral Ministry), is planning for a weekly space for anyone who would welcome socialising in a warm environment. Please look out for a questionnaire that would be distributed with the Parish News and be posted on social media.

SERVICES THIS SUNDAY: I hope to see you if you're in our parishes this Sunday

9.30am St Andrew's, Winston – Holy Communion

10.45am St Mary's, Gainford – Holy Communion *with guest speakers, Doug and Rachel Dickson of 'Good News for Everyone' (formerly The Gideons). They will share with us the work of this faithful organisation, distributing and placing Bibles in places all around the world.*

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

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

NOTICES:

Congratulations to Luke and Sophie Turner married on Saturday 15th October 2022 at St Andrew's, Winston.

The picture shows the newly married couple in the glories of Winston's Teesdale landscape with the River Tees hidden by the lush early Autumn greenery.



Pray for Lennon and Finn Stephenson, who will be baptised at St Andrew's, Winston this Sunday 23rd October 2022 at 12.30pm



Schools are on half-term. We pray for families to enjoy a time of refreshment. Our Children and Youth Ministry leaders have organised a 'holiday club' **LIGHT PARTY on Wednesday 26th October 4.30pm to 6.30pm including a light Tea for 5-11 year olds to come dressed as their favourite SUPER HERO, and there are PRIZES TO BE WON!**

Only £1 per child. To book a place or find out more, contact **Claire Mead (Children, Youth & Families Missioner) StMarys@gainfordwinston.church**



Breaking (GOOD) news! Gainford's school and St Mary's Church have been awarded the **Growing Faith Foundation Partnership Certificate** by the Church of England. We are the first to receive this award! More of this in the coming weeks.

Collect for the 19th week after Trinity

Faithful Lord,
whose steadfast love never ceases
and whose mercies never come to an end:
grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the gifts of your love,
new every morning,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Post Communion Prayer

Holy and blessed God,
you have fed us with the body and blood of
your Son
and filled us with your Holy Spirit:
may we honour you,
not only with our lips
but in lives dedicated to the service
of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

First Reading (Bible Sunday): Romans 15.1-6

¹ We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour. ³ For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' ⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading (Bible Sunday): Luke 4:16-24

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' ²³ He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself!" And you will say, "Do here also in your home town the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum."' ²⁴ And he said, 'Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's home town.

Sermon, 18th Sunday after TRINITY: Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop, 16th October 2022 (2 Timothy 3.14 - 4.5; Luke 18.1-8)

Tradition is to be treasured, time-honoured and transcends time, when it is according to God's will. The reading and teaching of Scripture is such a tradition.

"All scripture is inspired by God..." wrote the Missionary Apostle Paul. When he wrote these words as part of a letter to the young ministry leader Timothy, Paul would not have known that his words would become part of scripture compiled, affirmed, and authorised as the Bible. 'The scripture' that Paul referred to are those of the Old Testament – the narrative of God's people, the Psalms, of the Law and the Prophets. People identified by God throughout all ages, both those whose lives, thoughts, words, and actions are recorded and those who by God's leading authorised the Old and New Testaments, have given us the Scriptures. In them we encounter God, engage with Him, explore who He is and enter into personal relationship with Him.

It is extraordinary how we meet God through all earthly and human agency, including the written word. And the Scriptures are extraordinary in their honesty. There are parts of God's message that are delivered through the most dreadful wickedness, and there is no pretending that disasters befall the natural world, which wipe out creatures great and small. About 10 years ago I was at a mid-week Morning Prayer, when the Old Testament reading happened to be 1 Samuel 15:3 *"Now go and strike Amalek and completely destroy everything that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."* Some colleagues refused to read it, and others muttered that they hoped no one would ask them to preach on it. And then we know the words of the Gospel, including the Apostle's John's words: *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."* Knowing the corrupt and terrible state of the human world, God came to us and joined us amidst the terrible narrative of life that my colleagues felt too horrified to read.

So, what does “*All scripture is inspired by God...*” mean? In more accurate translations from the original Greek, this phrase reads: “*All scriptures are God-breathed*”. The whole of Scripture comprises the breath of humankind over thousands of years as they interacted or communed with God. As God breathed life into being, purposefully for people to be in relationship with Him. And what we find is both human determination and its consequences as well as God’s inspiration and intervening.

I think it’s rather a shame if we engage with God’s Word only during Sunday services through a preacher’s sermons. It’s often affected by whether the preacher is boring or compelling! And those who influence how services are managed, deal with uninspiring preaching by insisting that sermons should take no more than 10 minutes. Well, I hope we’d wish to spend more than the weekly 10 minutes with God’s Word. Why? If Paul is to be believed, because God’s Word in the Bible *‘is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work’*. Friends, if we don’t learn from God’s Word what it is to follow Christ and to live in love and peace with all, then we are in danger of such accusations of being hypocrites or people whose lives bring the Church into disrepute. The world becomes our teacher and guide.

Our Gospel passage today is one of Jesus’ less memorable parables. If you’ve only heard God’s Word through sermons preached on Sundays, then you may not know this parable. Jesus contrasts a widow looking for justice, with an unjust judge, who admits he is no respecter of man or God. In the culture then, women had no voice and widows depended on the goodwill of others for their livelihood. This widow is incredibly determined, risking everything to get justice. This judge, so full of his powerful status, could simply have ignored this widow. But this is what happens. The judge says “... *‘because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’*”

The Greek phrase that is translated here as *‘may not wear me out’* is more accurately translated as *‘punched so repeatedly that I have black eyes’*, and is used only at one other time. It was used in the narrative of Jesus’ crucifixion: God was like the powerless widow. He was totally dependent on the response of His people. But he persisted with us so much in hope that we may take notice. The widow’s cry for justice was so relentless that the unjust judge was made to be just.

I hope God’s Word isn’t accommodated at services out of cultural tradition. God is persistent with us each time His Word is delivered. I pray instead it is your personal desire to be enlightened and encouraged by meeting Him in His Word that nourishes this tradition.

Next Sunday in October is designated Bible Sunday, and this Sunday usually commemorates Luke the Physician and for healing. Perhaps we could bring these 2 designated occasions together. May we reflect on God’s gift of himself to us in His Word that we may find healing as Christians, as God’s people, of our lives and of our relationship with God.

Amen