

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity - 23rd August 2020

Collect:

God of glory, the end of our searching, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom, and to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond all price, through our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Psalm 124

1 If it had not been the Lord who was on our side — let Israel now say —
2 if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when our enemies attacked us,
3 then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us;
4 then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us;
5 then over us would have gone the raging waters.

6 Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth.

7 We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

8 Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

A reading from the book of Exodus (1.8-2.10):

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labour. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live." But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live." Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (16.13-20)

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, o Christ.

Reflection:

Jesus says something in this passage that is enormously comforting for preachers across the land. He says 'flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven'. And for anyone trying to come up with a sermon, trying not to just say what they've said a hundred times before, that's quite the relief! No matter how cleverly I play with words, or how persuasively I argue my case, any spiritual growth in someone listening or reading isn't going to be because of me. Phew!

But this is by no means a worry just of preachers. It's a worry we all often get stuck on when we think about mission, or about the scary notion of 'telling our neighbour' about Jesus or that we go to church. We might think, 'what if I don't say it right, or can't explain my faith, or don't know what words to say?' and if you do think that, you are not alone!

Faith is a tricky thing to try and explain, even to other Christians. We might be familiar with certain 'church language', but using our own words to express what Jesus means for us is hard. That's one of the reasons it's so wonderful that we have people from our church family tell their faith stories during Lent. The more we hear other people talk about it, the easier we might find it to talk about our own faith ourselves. But still, this niggle of worry often remains (with me anyway!). I worry that I wasn't persuasive enough, or that I could have phrased things better. I forget that it's not up to me at all. But thank goodness, it is God who does all the work of changing people's hearts, and guiding us to deeper faith. We are like a human conduit, through which God connects with others. Our own words themselves don't have any power, but the Spirit moves through us, and through our words, to settle in the hearts and minds of the hearer. It is the Spirit, sent from Jesus' Father in heaven, who reveals the truth of God's love to people.

And dear Peter, what a wonderful example of someone who kept making mistakes all over the place. If Peter, of all people, could be someone God built the church on, then we can all be church-builders too. No matter how fumbling we might think ourselves, we are like that image of living stones, each one of us playing a crucial role in making the church into the wonderful, vibrant, diverse thing that it is. That's the wonder of our faith. It is simultaneously not about us at all, because it's all God, but it's also completely about us at the same time, because it is us that God loves and that Jesus came for. Peter had come to understand something in this moment, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. This was not something he'd decided through logic, or been persuaded of by another disciple. It was something he knew as truth, from deep within. For to really understand and believe who Jesus is, comes from faith. It is a faith that we share in, bound together in our discovery of the whisper of the Spirit in our soul. It is this Spirit within us who helps us to stay curious, to stay connected with our faith, to keep learning and growing, and trying every day to be more like this man Jesus, who we too believe to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Peter was the first, and we follow in his footsteps. So next time you feel a worry that you don't have the words, fear not. Our words have no magic, no matter how fancy they are or how simple they are. Instead it is God who works through us to do the revealing.

I always imagine those 'living stones' to be a bit shimmery, with colours flowing over the surface. Beautiful and a bit mysterious, drawing you in to get a closer look. And that, beloved child of God, is you. Beautiful and a bit mysterious, shimmering with the light of the Spirit within. Full of God.

Amen.

- Rev Cat

God is love. Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

Here are the words of two hymns you may like to sing or pray this week:

All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth the Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
This our song shall ever be:
you our only hope, our Saviour,
yours the love that sets us free!

All for Jesus: you will give us
strength to serve you hour by hour;
none can move us from your presence
while we trust your grace and power.

All for Jesus! you have loved us,
all for Jesus! you have died,
all for Jesus! you are with us,
all for Jesus crucified.

All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
all our talents and our powers,
all our thoughts and words and actions,
all our passing days and hours.

All for Jesus, all for Jesus!
This the Church's song shall be
till at last her children gather,
one in him eternally.

*Call this number ↓ for free, to
listen to hymns being sung, prayers,
or reflections. Give it a go, it's a lovely
way to worship from home!*



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers



Our services back in Church, combined with ZOOM at 10am, followed by ZOOM coffee at 11, are working well. **In order to attend church on Sundays, you need to book in, ideally with the electronic booking form or by phoning 01473 742973** (Church answer phone) by Saturday 9 am. **To attend the Wednesday 10am communions**, book in by phone, but you can just come along. We look forward to seeing you soon.

St Thomas Church is open for Private Prayer, on Mondays and Thursdays, between 11 am and 2 pm. The Peace Garden is Open for use every weekday. On Monday 31st (bank holiday) church will only be open for private prayer between 11am—12.30pm.

Please pray for:

Those with chronic or long-term illness: Eric Dickerson, Rosemary, Sophie, Adam, Jenny, Andrew Barfield, Kathy Steele, Frank D., Andrew Derrett, Peggy, Pat, Natacha, Christine, Stephen, Julie, Samantha, Jill, Rex, Molly Johansen, Margaret Christian, Marion (Val's sister-in-law)

Those undergoing treatment or currently ill: Emily & family, Juliet Adams, Gloria Elmer, Helen Harlow, Jean Dominy, Leslie Bloomfield, Pete Tancred, Katie (cancer), Peter, Jim, Richard (June's nephew), Sylvia Eley, Dougie, Robert, Andy, Alice (Joan's grandson's wife), Beryl Field

All who are affected by the Coronavirus in the UK and around the world: *For all who have lost their jobs due to Covid19; all who are despairing. For the people of Beirut following the explosion this week—for all who have lost their lives & livelihoods, the injured, the bereaved. For sufficient assistance and recovery. For our government & MP's: for honesty in politics, for wisdom and justice for all.*

Those who have recently died, and their families mourning their loss: Susan Rutter, Sethe Dube R.I.P

Sunday Worship Video & other Worship resources on the Church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasipswich/>

Sunday 23rd August Trinity 11 - 10 am:
Eucharist & ZOOM Worship, followed by
11am ZOOM coffee

Wednesday, 27th August, 10am Eucharist in Church with livestream on Facebook/ StThomasipswich

Pray for members of the St Thomas Congregation
(each week we will include a dozen names)

Joan Scott, Marilyn Smith, Brian & Jackie Sears, James (Hugh) Singleton, Jim & Daphne Startup, Mark & Julie Stevens, Rosemary Suggate, Shirley Vivian



Birthdays this week:

Debbie Rudge (25th), Archie Lightbody (25th), Gerry Biggs (26th), Lyanne Brendt (29th)

Church website:

<http://stthomasipswich.org.uk/>

Please note: Our website is down due to problems with the server. Please go to [facebook/stthomasipswich](https://www.facebook.com/stthomasipswich/) for any updates

Contacts:

Priest in charge: Revd Jutta Brueck

m: 07958 360564 (on holiday)

Email: jutta.brueck@cofesuffolk.org

Jutta's days off are: Fridays & Saturdays

Assistant Curate: Revd Cat Connolly

m: 07530 412988

Email: revcatconnolly@gmail.com

Cat's day off: Mondays

**YOUR SUPPORT NEEDED FOR NWIPSWICH
FOODBANK organised by the Big Local Trust:**

Please drop non-perishable food at Castlehill Community Centre, Highfield Road on MONDAYS between 9.30 and 11.00am.

If you would like to chat, please do give us a ring:

Revd Jutta: 07958 360 564 Rev Cat 07530 412988

Roger Elmer 07810 274586 Sylvia Dickerson 07903 739487

Malcolm Gibbs 07906 663530 Mary Bullass 625135

Gloria Elmer 745590

Rev Jackie 07962172639

Revd Pat 01473 464748