

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

Seventh Sunday after Trinity - 26th July

Collect:

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow: though our faith is small as mustard seed, make it grow to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 128

- 1 Happy is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways.
- 2 You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.
- 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.
- 4 Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.



- 5 The Lord bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
- 6 May you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel!

A reading from the book of Genesis (29.15-28):

Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful. Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" Laban said, "This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years." Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (13.31-33,44-52)

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

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

Reflection:



In lockdown, I learned to make challah bread as I like it very much, and I couldn't go to the market to buy it anymore. I use 7g of dried yeast – a small amount of tiny little grains. These tiny grains, with some water, sugar, flour and eggs produce the most beautiful dough, and then bread. I love it, when during the proofing, the dough doubles its size and fills the whole bowl.

Today's gospel reading from Matthew includes several parables of the kingdom of heaven, and they are all about things we use in everyday life, one of them about the difference a tiny amount of yeast makes to bake beautiful bread.

I wonder, when we think of the kingdom of heaven, do we think of it as being part of our everyday lives or as something that we only find in church or when we worship, or we have to wait until we die? If that's the case, we may think the kingdom of heaven might be quite boring, unless we love being in church or worshipping all the time. So, we may keep 'God' for that bit, but the rest of our lives we prefer to keep separate from God, to be able to carry on doing the things we really enjoy.

Jesus is showing us something quite different. He often makes the point that the kingdom of heaven is right among us, everyday, where we are, in our everyday lives. It's in us, in our hearts, with tiny seeds or grains of yeast, such as love – the self-giving variety-, or kindness, patience, compassion, forgiveness, generosity. And these tiny seeds of love & goodness, put into practice, create the kingdom of heaven among us. So, to give a couple of examples: since Covid19, many more people have been buying extra food to give to the foodbanks, thinking of others and acting on it – that's a bit of the kingdom of heaven. Or, someone who hadn't talked to their sibling for a whole year, decided to give them a ring, realising that life is too precious to hang on to grudges. Or, a parent has time to sit down with their child, enjoy doing something creative together, cherishing each other's presence; or someone was so grateful for the treatment they received in hospital that they decided to give something back to the NHS through sponsored walking in their garden. Their grain of gratitude inspired millions of people to support him, and so he raised £30 mill for the NHS – a bit of the kingdom of heaven among us.

Jesus is encouraging us to be so excited by the kingdom of heaven and the fact, that we can be a big part of it, that he wants us to make it the aim of our lives; to allow the good seeds in our hearts to bear fruit; to notice when we are blessed through them and to allow our gratitude to spill over and create more and more good seeds and fruit. Everyday life has its challenges, its struggles, its doubts and pain. But we all know, that little things, small actions make a huge difference and that we are not alone. Jesus encourages us to trust God and to notice them, to be thankful for them and allow our gratitude and love to grow the kingdom among us.

Everytime now, when I make challah bread I will think of heaven. I will give thanks not just for the bread, but for everyone and all that enriches my life, for the one who gives it all, and the people I can share it with, especially when lockdown comes to an end.

Revd Jutta

*We are the body of Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.
Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life.*

Alleluia! 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:**

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

Praise him, praise him,
Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
Sing, O earth, his wonderful love proclaim!
Hail him, hail him, highest archangels in glory;
strength and honour give to his holy name!
Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard his children;
in his arms he carries them all day long.

*Praise him, praise him!
Tell of his excellent greatness;
praise him, praise him, ever in joyful song!*

Praise him, praise him,
Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
For our sins he suffered and bled and died;
he, our Rock, our hope of eternal salvation,
hail him, hail him! Jesus the crucified!
Sound his praises! Jesus who bore our sorrows,
love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong.

Praise him, praise him,
Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
Heavenly portals loud with hosannas ring!
Jesus Saviour, reigneth forever and ever;
crown him, crown him, Prophet and Priest and
King!

*Call this number ↓ for free, for a greeting
from Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury!
Then 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



This Sunday, 26th July: our first service back in Church, combined with ZOOM church at 10am, followed by ZOOM coffee at 11. We continue to make videos to reach as many people as possible with the Good News of Jesus Christ. **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 12noon. **We are starting Wednesday 10am communions this week as well**—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.

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 (Lyanne's neighbour), Alice (Joan's grandson's wife), Beryl Field.

All who are affected by the Coronavirus in the UK and around the world: For **New Dawn, India** supporting communities affected by Covid 19 **for all health care staff, for teachers and for businesses opening again. For all who have lost their jobs due to Covid19; all who are despairing.**

For our government & its advisors: for guidance and wisdom.

Those who have recently died, and their families mourning their loss: Susan Rutter

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

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

Sunday 26 July Trinity 7 - Eucharist & 10am ZOOM Worship

Tuesday 28 July LiveStream Meditation 6 pm on facebook/ StThomasPilgrimCommunity

Wednesday, 29 July, 10am Eucharist in Church with livestream on Facebook/

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

Phyllis Chevous, Margaret Christian, Simon & Chris, Ian Davey with Helen, Freddie & Frankie, Val & family, Rebekah, Kirsty Dexter & family, Sylvia & Russell, Susan D.



Birthdays this week:

Jenny Biggs (27th)
Carole Groom (30th)

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.

Church website:

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

Contacts:

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Cat's day off: Mondays

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

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