

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

Ninth Sunday after Trinity - 9th August 2020

Collect:

Gracious Father, revive your Church in our day, and make her holy, strong and faithful, for your glory's sake in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Psalm 105.1-10

1 O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
2 Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his
wonderful works.
3 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those
who seek the Lord rejoice.
4 Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his
presence continually.
5 Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered,
6 O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of
Jacob, his chosen ones.



7 He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all
the earth.
8 He is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word
that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
9 the covenant that he made with Abraham, his
sworn promise to Isaac,
10 which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to
Israel as an everlasting covenant.

A reading from the book of Genesis (37.1-4,12-28):

Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" "I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (14.22-33)

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." **This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, o Christ.**

Reflection:

While the story of Jesus walking on water appears in three of the four gospels, Peter also stepping out on to the waves only occurs here in Matthew's gospel. This may be because the gospels have different emphases - for example while Luke writes to tell Gentiles about Jesus, Matthew writes to persuade Jews that Jesus was the promised messiah. So in the gospel of Matthew we see lots of links with the Old Testament, and lots of pointers that prove that Jesus was who he said. In this story with Peter, not only is Jesus showing a power over wind and waves that only God had (for example, at Creation, or the Flood story), but there is an element of testing, of asking for a sign and being given one. Peter demands proof, and for once, Jesus responds with a miracle.

Now, there are several different ways of thinking you could go with this passage. I've heard sermons saying, that we should be brave and bold like Peter; ones that said 'silly Peter, he should have just kept his eyes on Jesus and he would have been fine', and ones that suggest Peter's mistake was to step out of the boat in the first place. In the small bible study group which has been running over the last few months, we have been focussing on Peter, and he is an intriguing and relatable character as he is so full of mistakes and eagerness, so impetuous and headlong into everything. In the bigger picture, this story is basically a "classic Peter" snapshot. But actually, Peter isn't even the main character in this passage. The headline act is, of course, Jesus himself (which I think we sometimes forget in our excitement about a human walking on water!).

Something to notice here about Jesus is that he has really made the effort to have some private time to pray. The language is quite forceful - Jesus 'made' the disciples get into the boat, and I imagine his dismissing the crowds was in a rather firm manner! If we look quickly at the context of this whole chapter, Jesus has just heard the news that his cousin, John the Baptist, has been beheaded. As soon as Jesus hears this he tries to withdraw to be alone, but the crowds follow and find him, leading to the feeding of the five thousand. Straight after this miracle (Matthew uses the word 'immediately' at the start of today's passage), Jesus again pursues his time alone with God. His response to bad news, to fear, to grief, to exhaustion, is to seek and create space to pray.

It is only then, after a few crucial hours of rest and reconnecting with God, that Jesus comes to rescue his hapless disciples who are battling the elements. It is at this point, after prioritising prayer and refocussing on his mission, that Jesus responds to Peter's demand for proof with the invitation, 'Come'. For the disciples, and for us today, we are called to model Jesus. We are supposed to do our best to be a group of people who echo Jesus' words and actions. So as we take our cues from Jesus in this passage, we will probably never walk on water, but we can certainly pray. We can be determined in our creating of that space to be with God. Prayer is what orientates us, sustains and refills us. Then it is on the bedrock of prayer that we can go out into the world and have the boldness to tell our friends and neighbours, to invite them, 'Come'.

- Rev Cat

*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:**

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation,
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation

Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing
It finds an echo in my soul
How can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die?
I know my Saviour liveth
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth

No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes, the cloud grows thin
I see the blue above it
And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love it,

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart
A fountain ever springing
For all things are mine since I am his
How can I keep from singing?

No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?

Father, Lord of all creation,
ground of being, life and love;
Height and depth beyond description,
only life in you can prove:
You are mortal life's dependence:
thought, speech, sight are ours by grace;
Yours is every hour's existence,
sovereign Lord of time and space.

Jesus Christ, the man for others
we, your people, make our prayer
help us love, as sisters, brothers
all whose burdens we can share
where your name binds us together
you, Lord Christ, will surely be
where no selfishness can sever
there you love the world may see.

Holy Spirit, rushing, bringing
wind and flame of Pentecost
fire our hearts afresh with yearning
to regain what we have lost
may your love unite our action
nevermore to speak alone
God, in us, abolish faction
God, through us, your love make known.

*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 church at 10am, followed by ZOOM coffee at 11, worked 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.

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, *Thanks for Baby Freya's quick improvement*

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/sthomasipswich/>

Sunday 9 August Trinity 9 - 10 am: Eucharist & ZOOM Worship, followed by 11am ZOOM coffee

Wednesday, 12 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)

Carole & Frank, Emma Knight with Steve, Bradley & Esmae, Zoe with Conrad, Kurt & Rebecca, James Matthews, Stephen Marginson, Andrea with Fiona & Patrick, Nigel, Karen, Gemma, Darren, Hayden & Harrison



Birthdays this week:

Amanda (9 August)
Abigail Rudge (10 Aug)

Church website:

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

Please note: Our website is down due to problems with the server. Please go to facebook/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