

# Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

## Eighteenth after Trinity - 11th October 2020 (APCM)

### Collect:

God, our judge and saviour, teach us to be open to your truth and to trust in your love, that we may live each day with confidence in the salvation which is given through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### Psalm 106.1-6

1 Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.  
2 Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord, or declare all his praise?  
3 Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.



4 Remember me, O Lord, when you show favour to your people; help me when you deliver them;  
5 that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory in your heritage.  
6 Both we and our ancestors have sinned; we have committed iniquity, have done wickedly.

### A reading from the book of Exodus (32.1-14)

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. He took the gold from them, formed it in a mould, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord." They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

The Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation."

But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

*This is the word of the Lord.*

### Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (22.1-14)

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything

is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

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

### Reflection:

As we have our APCM today - our Annual Parochial Church Meeting - I want to ask two questions: first, **what is the ‘Church’?**, and secondly, **why do we have it?** Maybe an answer pops into your head straight away. As I started writing this reflection at home, I typed the question ‘what is church’ into my computer, and some of the websites that pop up on Google assume that you are asking about buildings, and will tell you all sorts of facts about spires, bells, and odd bits of Norman architecture. But that’s not where the word ‘church’ actually comes from. Instead, as you may know, it comes from the Greek word ‘*ekklesia*’ (which is from the New Testament, as the New Testament was written in Greek). “*Ekklesia*” means gathering; assembly; or the called-ones. So ‘church’ is when a group of people come together. Our buildings are called ‘churches’ because they are the places where church happens!

So the next question: why do we *have* church? And we’re given an answer in today’s gospel reading. Right at the beginning, Jesus tells us what the parable is about – the Kingdom of heaven - and then he goes on to weave this dramatic tale of a King trying to throw a banquet. And we find that the Kingdom is about *ekklesia*! A great gathering together of people to eat, drink, and have a good time. The kingdom of heaven looks like an opulent feast, a celebration! And everyone’s invited! But of course, as we learn from the parable, not everybody *wants* to be part of it. Those who the king originally invited turn down the invitation, causing the king to widen his search, and bring in anyone else who was willing to come. So this gathering turns out to be a glorious hodgepodge, a melting pot of every random person off the streets, brought in to celebrate together with the King and his son. I imagine a scene of excited chaos, with a crowd of people who couldn’t believe their luck that they were feasting in a palace! Whoever they were, the invitation was freely offered. They just had to accept it.

Invitation, and gathering. These are the two things to hold onto as we think about ourselves as the church this morning. Why do we have the church? To gather as the body of Christ, and to invite others in to join us. And I think St. Thomas does a lot of that really well!

But this also brings its challenges. For one thing, God’s open invitation to others which we extend to those around us, drawing them in to be a part of this community, part of this church, this body, necessarily invites in change. This is therefore the nature of Church. It’s nature is one of natural change, of always being fluid, ready to evolve, always ready to move and respond to new challenges and opportunities. Remember that image of the church as a body - we all know first-hand that bodies never stay the same! So it’s true of the church as well. If we put ourselves into today’s parable, we are both the ones invited into the feast, and we are the ones sent out to find more guests. We gather ourselves, and we go out to spread the invitation. We are sent, and we are brought in. It’s like the movement of a wave on the ocean, both coming and going at the same time, and never exactly the same.

What is church and why? Church is all who come, because we are invited. So today as we reflect on the previous year, on how we have grown and changed, gathered and celebrated, let’s use this opportunity to be encouraged, and to see how God is at work among us. We are all here because we have responded to God’s invitation ourselves, and now we are part of the *ekklesia* at the feast. But it doesn’t stop there. We are asked to fling the doors open wide and to go out into the streets, to gather in all who will accept the invitation. To grow the Kingdom of Heaven. So as we look back, we also look ahead, as we take part in God’s unfolding story of church.

- 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.**

**This week's hymn**

Let us build a house where love can dwell  
and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell  
how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

Let us build a house where love is found  
in water, wine and wheat:  
a banquet hall on holy ground  
where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

Let us build a house where hands will reach  
beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

Let us build a house where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed  
as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
prayers of faith and songs of grace,  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

**For Our Prayers:**

The Bishops are calling on every parish to join them using this prayer at home and at every act of worship for our church, that we grow in trust in God's providence and deepen our own generosity giving of ourselves and of our gifts.

**Loving God,  
you are always with us,  
and give us all we need to be your church in  
Suffolk.**

**Help us, we pray, to give as we have received:  
abundantly, generously, and joyfully,  
that our worship and our service  
may bear witness to your Kingdom of un-  
failing love.**

**In the name of your Son who gave himself for  
us,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

**Please pray for:**

**Those with chronic or long-term illness:** Eric Dickerson, Rosemary, Jenny, Andrew Barfield, Kathy Steele, Frank D., Andrew, Peggy, Natacha, Christine, Stephen, Samantha, Rex, Margaret Christian

**Those undergoing treatment or currently ill:** Emily, Gloria Elmer, Helen Harlow, Jean Dominy, Leslie Bloomfield, Katie (cancer), Jim, Alice (Joan's grandson's wife), Vincent Lightbody, Trish, Roger Dickerson, Vicky & Matt

**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 all who have lost their lives & livelihoods, the injured, the bereaved. For hospital and health care workers*

**For our government & MPs', and local councillors: for honesty in politics, for wisdom and justice for all. For refuges** across the world & diplomats and peace makers, working to end conflicts

**Those who have recently died, and their families mourning their loss:** Gwen Strike (Phyllis' sister), Colin Wells, Rachel Fry

**Call this number -> for free.**

**It's a lovely way to worship from home!**

 **0800 804 8044**  
**DailyHOPE**  
A free phone line of hymns,  
reflections and prayers

## Notices:

**APCM: 11 October** at 11 am after the Eucharist in Church and on ZOOM. Paperwork was sent by post or emailed last week. **If you have any questions, please contact Revd Jutta. We want to include everyone, if we possibly can. Please, read the reports before the meeting, as we will read them in the meeting, but only take questions**

**Next Sunday: 18th October at 10am: Baptism & Confirmation Service with Bishop Mike.** We are delighted that Julie & Amber Purnell and Rick Bayly have asked to be baptised & confirmed. Please, keep them in your prayers as they are preparing for their special day.

**Harvest gifts:** Thank you to everyone who has brought gifts to church. You can keep bringing them over the next few Sundays (leave in bags at the back of church), or give directly to FIND - you can donate online on their website, or send them a cheque—the last newsletter has the address written down.

### **Church Finances: Giving Days and Fundraising**

I wrote to everyone last week explaining the financial situation of St Thomas' Church given that our income this year is much reduced. We are losing £13,000 because we don't collect money on the plate each week; we have no hall hire income and haven't been able to do any church fayres. Therefore we are holding **Gift Days on Sundays 18th and 25th October** hoping that everyone will make a one-off donation to help us through this year.

**Christmas cards on sale in the church car park: £2.50 for 5**, on Sundays from 18th October and Wednesdays, from 14th October. All proceeds to church funds. Our thanks to Canon Chris for organising this—pick up a flyer in the porch.

### **This Week:**

#### **11th October—Trinity 18 & APCM**

**10am: Eucharist & ZOOM Worship**

**11am: APCM in Church & online**

**6 pm: YOUTH GROUP online**

#### **Tuesday 13 th October**

**NO Meditation Group livestream on  
Facebook/StThomasPilgrimCommunity**

#### **Wednesday, 14th October**

**10am Eucharist in Church with livestream on  
Facebook/StThomasIpswich**

#### **Next 'Bible from Scratch':**

Thursday, 22 Oct —on ZOOM

Contact Rev Cat for details

#### **Next 'St Thomas Pilgrim Community' Open Prayer meeting:**

Monday, 19 October, 7.30pm on ZOOM

Contact Rev Jutta or Malcolm for details

### **Church website:**

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

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

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

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

*Carol & Frank Groom, Mrs Hughes, Emma with Steve, Bradley & Esmae, Jill Last, Zoe with Conrad, Kurt & Rebecca, James Matthews, Stephen Marginson, Nigel & Karen with Hayden & Harrison, Sma & Michael Ndlovu*



### **Birthdays this week:**

Oct 17th : Emma-Louise Elwis

### **Contacts:**

Priest in charge: Revd Jutta Brueck m: 07958 360564

Email: [jutta.brueck@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:jutta.brueck@cofesuffolk.org)

*Jutta's days off are: Fridays & Saturdays*

Assistant Curate: Revd Cat Connolly m: 07530 412988

Email: [revcatconnolly@gmail.com](mailto:revcatconnolly@gmail.com)

*Cat's day off: Mondays*

Lay Evangelist: Malcolm Gibbs m:07906 665530

Director of Music: Simon Clark BA (Hons) FLCM ARCO

m: 07961 859344 Email: [sussexsi@aol.com](mailto:sussexsi@aol.com)

Church wardens: Roger Elmer m:07810 274586

Sylvia Dickerson 07903 739487

### ***If you would like to chat, you could also ring:***

Mary Bullass 625135 Gloria Elmer 745590

Rev Jackie 07962 172639 Revd Pat 464748