

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

Bible Sunday - 18th October 2020

Collect:

Merciful God, teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty, that trusting in your word and obeying your will we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Psalm 119.9-16

9 How can young people keep their way pure?

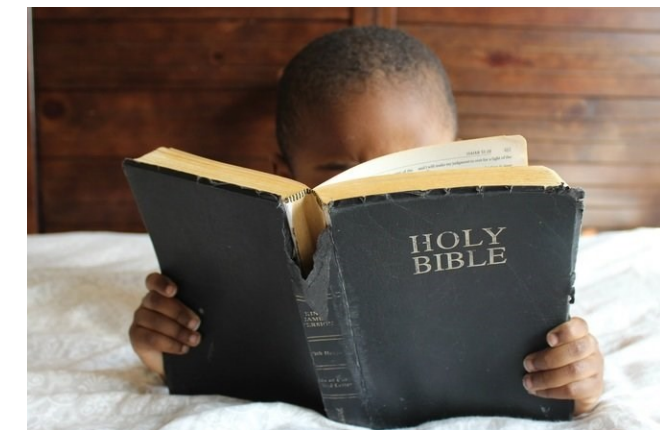
By guarding it according to your word.

10 With my whole heart I seek you; do not let me stray from your commandments.

11 I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.

12 Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes.

13 With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth.



14 I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.

15 I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways.

16 I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

A reading from the letter to the Colossians (3.12-17)

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is the word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (15.1-5)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

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

Reflection: Time for a bit of Bible... From Archdeacon Rhiannon

I'm writing this at home and, frankly, it's embarrassing. I have just been to my shelves and it turns out I have somehow accumulated over 24 Bibles which is a bit excessive even for a Minister. They're not all the same, mind you. My smallest measures just 5cm by 4cm (an unusual and amazing present from my godmother once), my oldest and tattiest is a family one passed down from my grandfather (would be helpful if I could read Welsh though!), my favourite is the study Bible I had as a teenager that I adored and scribbled all over. I also have a limerick version, a street one (don't ask), the Bible as a novel, the Bible in one year...1 Polish one, 1 Romanian one and lots of other language ones besides. My most beautiful one is a Bible (not the whole thing) made up of infographics... But the one I use most days is actually on my phone...the Message version of the Bible as an app. It's so easy to read and I find it inspirational and challenging in equal measures. (Quick advert: If you have a smartphone, it's £10 [the cost of 2 Big Macs.] Others are free). This means that as long as I've got my phone I've got my Bible. Perfect.

But in the grand scheme of things 24 Bibles is a tiny number, for the Bible remains the world's best seller (almost 4 billion copies sold in last 150 years) and it has been translated and studied and written about a gazillion times. Millions have testified, including me, to how it has changed their lives. I count myself incredibly fortunate because I got hooked as a fourteen-year old. If you are hooked tell others. If you're not yet hooked, pick up a Bible and simply ask God to reveal himself to you through it. There really is no better time than now. And watch out, because it's contagious and if you're not careful, you'll be telling everyone and there'll be no seats left in church.

Here's what a few people have said about the Bible:

Shane Lynch from the boy band, Boyzone said: 'I have 50 hours of tattoos on my body and my favourite part is tattooed down my back- Psalm 88.1-13 about the transition from darkness to light.'

Samuel Coleridge, the 19th century English poet said: 'I know the Bible is inspired simply because it finds me at greater depths of my being than any other book.'

John McCarthy, journalist and broadcaster, on reading the Bible while being held hostage in the Middle East had this to say: 'I was surprised and delighted to find so much almost 'ungodly' entertainment, like the humour of some passages in Ecclesiastes and the ... sensuality in the Song of Solomon. But ... it also helped me in a difficult process of self-examination that had begun the moment the cell door locked behind me. The portrayal of common human experiences, of individual struggles to face weakness and attempt to rise above it, helped me through periods of depression caused by my own sense of helplessness ...'

Diane Louise Jordan, TV Presenter, put it like this:

'The Bible is the best book I've ever read! It's packed with adventure, romance, wisdom, poetry, music, suspense, humour, action and much, much more. But most importantly, it gives meaning to all I do. It's quite simply my lifeline!'

This is why I love Bible Sunday so much. It's a great time to celebrate the benefits of being Bible-loving people and to shout about it (in a covid-secure way, of course).

In Colossians 3 we are encouraged to let the Word of Christ *dwell* in us richly and in John 15 we find a similar idea of ' *abiding* ' (residing) in Christ. Both remind us that we are being encouraged to live in the pages of the Word of God, to drink deeply of the many riches that God gives us.

If you've never really got into the Bible before there is a big and exciting adventure awaiting you. The Bible isn't just like a novel or a biography or a bit of history, or poetry...it's all of the above but it's also God-breathed in a way no other book ever has been. It's also a brilliant place to go with all our emotions, whether we're feeling anxious, lost, confused, sad or full of joy and hope. There's something for every moment, no matter what life throws at you.

Finally, if you want to take the plunge, or you're in the pool and you want to go further into the deep end, do have a look at the Bible Society website for some ideas. There are so many ways: using Bible reading notes, podcasts, asking Alexa to read you chunks, bible colouring books, book clubs, daily reflections, films, you name it....

Ask your friends at St Thomas too. What do they find most helpful? And remember that you're not just connected to St Thomas but to the wider deanery and diocese and there are lots of us here ready to help you too. You are never on your own. I might even lend you one of my 24!

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:

*A new commandment I give unto you:
that you love one another
as I have loved you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you.*

By this shall all know
that you are my disciples:
if you have love one for another.

By this shall all know
that you are my disciples:
if you have love one for another.

A new commandment...

You are my friends if
you do what I command you.
Without my help you can do nothing.

You are my friends if
you do what I command you.
Without my help you can do nothing.

A new commandment...

True love is patient,
nor arrogant nor boastful;
Love bears all things, love is eternal.

True love is patient,
nor arrogant nor boastful;
Love bears all things, love is eternal.

A new commandment...

I am the true vine,
my Father is the gardener.
Abide in me: I will be with you.

I am the true vine,
my Father is the gardener.
Abide in me: I will be with you.

A new commandment...

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
unfailing 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 & Jill, 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, Neil Pratt

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 & diplomates 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

**On the 20th Anniversary of his death,
we remember John Bird R.I.P.**

Call this number —> for free.

It's a lovely way to worship from home!



Notices:

Gift Day today: God loves a cheerful Giver (2 Cor.9.7)

We are losing £13,000 because we have no hall hire income, we don't collect money on the plate each week and haven't been able to do any church fayres. We are therefore relying on everyone's generosity to help us through this year. We welcome all forms of donations. It is now very easy and tax efficient to give via our website 'Donations'. **Please, say the Bishops' prayer on the previous page everyday!**

Faith Pictures starting on 28th October, 7 pm on ZOOM A 6-session course designed to help Christians talk naturally to friends, neighbours and colleagues about what they believe. The heart of the course is to help people identify a single picture or image that embodies something of their faith. The course is accessible and light-hearted; each session contains a short video and encourages discussion in pairs and as a whole group. www.faithpictures.org. To find out more or to join: contact Malcolm Gibbs.

APCM results: Thank You to everyone who serves in our Church: Church Wardens: Roger Elmer & Stephen Marginson; Assistant Church wardens: Sylvia & Russell Dickerson, Alison Gibbs, Jim Startup will be admitted on Sunday, 15th November at the end of the service.

Harvest gifts: Thank you to everyone who has brought gifts to church. You can keep bringing them until next Sunday (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.

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:

25th October—Bible Sunday: Preacher: Archdeacon Rhiannon

10am: Eucharist also on ZOOM & livestream
[Facebook/StThomasIpswich](https://www.facebook.com/StThomasIpswich)

Monday 26th October

4.30pm STPC Evening Prayer on ZOOM – contact Malcolm for ZOOM invite

Tuesday 27th October

NO Meditation Group livestream on
[Facebook/StThomasPilgrimCommunity](https://www.facebook.com/StThomasPilgrimCommunity)

Wednesday, 28th October

10am Eucharist in Church with livestream on
[Facebook/StThomasIpswich](https://www.facebook.com/StThomasIpswich)

7.00pm Faith Pictures on ZOOM (see notices above)

Next 'Bible from Scratch':

Thursday, 5 Nov, 4pm –on ZOOM
Contact Rev Cat for details

Church website:

[http://stthomasipswich.org.uk/](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)

Maggi Ross, Marilyn Smith, Brian & Jackie, Hugh Singleton, Jim & Daphne, Julie & Mark Stevens, Rosemary, Shirley Vivian, Angela Waldrige, Audrey West, Natacha & Amber, Jill Wilson, Pat & Jan Wright



Birthdays this week:

Oct 27: Sylvia Dickerson, Oct 28: Amelia Waller

Contacts:

Priest in charge: Revd Jutta Brueck m: 07958 360564

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

Lay Evangelist: Malcolm Gibbs m:07906 665530

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

m: 07961 859344 Email: 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