

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

15th November 2020 - 2nd before Advent

Collect:

Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Psalm 90 .1-12

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

3 You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals."

4 A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

5 Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death— they are like the new grass of the morning:

6 In the morning it springs up new, but by evening it is dry and withered.

7 We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation.



8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

9 All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.

10 Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

11 If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due.

12 Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

A reading from the first letter to the Thessalonians (5.1-11)

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. **This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (25.14-30)

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags

of gold; see, I have gained two more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ““So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ **This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, o Christ.**

Reflection:

Well! He would hardly have been nominated for the ‘Employer of the Year’ award would he? But I suspect that we are not meant to focus on the slave owner’s behaviour, but rather on that of the slaves. Remember that a parable is meant to be a broad brush way of teaching a point, based on every day life, not intended for detailed analytical study. So we shouldn’t waste time trying to work out who the land-owner represents, or who the slaves represent, but rather think about what the point of the story is, and in Matthew’s account of the parable which we have just read, it seems that the point is about the behaviour of the third slave.

In recent years, with the popularity of metal detectors we have become accustomed to large hoards of ancient gold and silver coins being found buried in some unremarkable field, so the idea of buried treasure has become more common place, which perhaps brings a new reality to today’s parable. We do not know why that particular slave is so afraid of the land owner and the other two are not – it may be that he is just one of life’s more timid souls, or that he had crossed swords with the owner on another matter previously, or even, as we would say today, ‘just a clash of personalities’, but whatever it is, it leads him to be so afraid that he simply hides the cash away, rather than risk doing something positive with it. I say cash, because scholars tell us that a talent was not a coin, but a weight, so the value of the talent would depend on whether the coinage was in gold, silver or copper and the commonest was silver.

Today it is not gold and silver that we bury, but we do often bury other treasures and hide them away, perhaps, because like the third slave in the story we are afraid of the consequences of getting it wrong, or of what people will say, or even worse, of being laughed at!

The treasures, I am thinking about are the God given skills, talents and abilities which we all possess in some measure. 2020 has seen a remarkable blossoming of all kinds of skills and talents in response to the pandemic and how grateful we have all been and still are for those who have summoned up all their courage and energy to take risks for the good of others. And perhaps that is the point of this story.....we are all called to take risks and use the treasures God has placed within us for the good of others and to better serve his world in which we live. Jesus showed us that that has to be a risk worth taking if we are really serious about following him. As a former Bishop of Stepney once famously put it ‘As Christians we are called to launch out into the deep AND burn our boats!!’ In other words we are all called to the risky business of trusting God and living and working in faith and love.

Part of that risk taking is the call to create an environment where the healing and warmth of the love of God can touch everyone, and enable them to blossom and develop to become the person God has created them to be. Even those who, like the third slave, are either too timid, too fearful, or too lacking in confidence for one reason or another to be able to launch out for themselves.

So this week I offer two questions to reflect upon:

What treasures has God given me to use in his service, and am I using them, or hiding them away? What practical steps can I take to help others recognise the gifts they may have within them?

As for the other two ‘successful’ slaves, it is perhaps, worth noticing, that they are not given a rest..... But rather more responsibility; more work; precisely because they have already responded to the love shown to them and the trust placed in them and developed the ability and skills needed to faithfully serve.

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:

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my words to them.
Whom shall I send?
Here I am, Lord...

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will send the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?
Here I am, Lord...

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, Maureen Dobson

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: Rachel Fry, Eric Gilson, Diane Bloomfield. RIP.

Call this number —> for free.

It's a lovely way to worship from home!



Notices:

Rev Jutta is being made an Honorary Canon! Jutta will be licensed as a Canon in a livestreamed service at 3.30pm on Sunday 15th Nov. Everyone is invited to join the service online by watching the livestream on the Cathedral facebook page. The link is below. Cathedral Canons are traditionally assigned a stall where they sit, and Jutta is being given St Benedict's stall, which is very fitting due to her work with the Pilgrim Community and creating the Benedictine course. Congratulations to Rev Jutta!

Hymn-athon & Carol-athon: Sunday 6th Dec, 11am. Simon is going to perform a **2 hour** marathon of hymns and carols as a fundraiser! Please sponsor this amazing event, which will be livestreamed on our facebook page, and do spread the word to get your friends and family to sponsor Simon! There will be a dedicated 'giving page' we can share online - watch this space!

Christmas Mini-Market is going ahead as 'mail order' market. More details soon!

We need: Christmas cards from St Thomas' church to the children. To volunteer or find out more, speak to Emma (emma.knight1@hotmail.co.uk; 07900 378930)

A huge Thank you to everyone who supported our Gift Appeal: We have raised an extra **£5725** in October, which will be a huge help given we are losing £13,000 because of COVID. **We are VERY grateful for your generosity!** Please, continue to say the Bishops' prayer on the previous page every day! Another huge **THANK YOU** : Canon Chris raised £287.50 for church funds through the sale of Christmas cards! Thanks all who bought cards from him.

Prayer for the Nation: every day at 6pm –please join in. Thank you.

This Week:

15th November

10am: ZOOM Church & Video—do let us know if you would like to join ZOOM Church on the phone

3.30pm: Jutta's licensing as Honorary Canon, livestreamed on <https://www.facebook.com/stedscathedral>

Tuesday 10th November

6 pm Meditation Group livestream on [Facebook/StThomasPilgrimCommunity](https://www.facebook.com/StThomasPilgrimCommunity)

Wednesday, 18 November

10am Eucharist livestream on [Facebook/StThomasIpswich](https://www.facebook.com/StThomasIpswich)
7.00pm PCC meeting

Thursday, 19 November

Bible from Scratch: 4pm –on ZOOM
Contact Rev Cat 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

Sylvia & Russell Dickerson; Susan Dickerson; Amanda, Ruth and Luke Di Benga; Lucy Drake; Susan and Rueben Dunn; Caren Elwis with Patrick, Emma-Louise, William and Daniel; Keri & Justin Harrison and family



Birthdays this week:

Nov: **17th** - Anna Brueck Seeley, Joan Scott, Val Derrett; **18th** - Caroline Fisk

Contacts:

Priest in charge: Revd Jutta Brueck m: 07958 360564
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Jutta's days off are: Fridays & Saturdays

Assistant Curate: Revd Cat Connolly m: 07530 412988
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Cat's day off: Mondays

Lay Evangelist: Malcolm Gibbs m:07906 665530

Director of Music: Simon Clark BA (Hons) FLCM ARCO
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If you would like to chat, you could also ring:

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