



The Churches of
**Legbourne
Woldmarsh**

'Sharing the good news of the kingdom of God'

PARISH NOTES AND PRAYERS

Sunday 10th JULY 2022

4th SUNDAY after TRINITY

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' ; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"

LUKE 10.27



Collect for the Week

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. AMEN.

Bible Reading

LUKE 10.25-37

A lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Thought for the week

Let's be honest: this most famous of all parables can feel like a big ask; a placing of an impossible burden upon our consciences. It shouldn't! This is a parable of great comfort.

I find great comfort in it. I, who am about to move away from you all, am reminded that I remain your neighbour nonetheless! And, in seeing, as we should, the Good Samaritan as Jesus, and ourselves, fallen, broken humanity, as the man in the gutter, we get a clear depiction of what Christ has done for us. That his love, his sacrifice,

has picked us all up, and dusted us down, and put us back on the road to our proper destination, should comfort us and stir within us a love for him.

But we also might find ourselves sympathising a little with the lawyer, with whom he is debating.

The lawyer likes laws, rules, guidelines. He wants a neat code of practice to follow, which will set out what he must do, and what he need not do. Jesus dismisses this outlook. Any restriction on love and mercy is false and inexcusable. So when Jesus tells him that he must 'love his neighbour', the man wants to know specifically who counts as his neighbour. Jesus' reply is that there is nobody whom you should not consider to be your neighbour. A neighbour, a person worthy of your care, is not just the people you choose to share your life with but everybody in need. We are challenged to be neighbours to the world. Now this can strike us as a rather daunting proposition, hearing our Lord basically refuse to put any limitations on our duties. But in truth, we are being reminded that our religion should never be allowed to become a set of restriction regulations. Rather, the Christian faith is about recognising and rejoicing in the boundless opportunities for grace, wonder and transformation which flow through our common lives. This is a message I always try to get across to couples on their wedding day. You could approach a marriage in the same way the lawyer in our Gospel approaches his religion: as entering into an agreement which sets out what you can and can't do. A contract of constraints: from now on you cannot have a romantic relationship with anybody else other than your partner. You cannot spend your money as you please, because it is no longer just your money etc etc. Put like that, it is a wonder anybody ever gets married. But of course, that is not what Christian marriage is. Marriage is about receiving, in love and faith, the other person as a gift from God, and rejoicing in the boundless opportunities that sharing a life together brings for honouring and deepening that love. Living under such vows means that nothing is ever ordinary ever again. Even something as mundane and frankly unappealing, such as taking the bins out, is gilded by the understanding that in doing so, one is already living the life of the Kingdom of heaven, and making it more of a reality for the other. And the same is true of our religion in general, as Christ tries to teach us in his parable of the Good Samaritan. We are not to ask God, 'who is it that I have to love and help?' We are to ask ourselves, 'how can I help that person, or love these more?' Not, 'who is my neighbour', but 'how can I become a better neighbour'.

This needs to be the question we ask ourselves as we all look to new chapters. It will be a question I ask God's help with as I discern what shape my future ministry should take. I am excited by the opportunities, currently unknown to me, that await

me. And it is a question our church communities must ask themselves. What opportunities to let our faith run free in love lie before us?

Because there are always such opportunities. I began by describing this parable as one of comfort and . It is also one of hope. It is not an inconsequential detail of the story, that the man who is robbed is described as being 'half dead'. When we hear the story, we imagine that the two who passed the poor man by, did so because they lacked the Samaritan's compassion. There may well have been an element of this. But just as likely is that they lacked the Samaritan's faith. They saw a victim, in a bad state, and diagnosed a hopeless case; beyond help, and not worth their time or effort therefore. The Samaritan refused to see the man as being without hope. And by pouring out his love upon him, he revived him. There are two points that we should take from this. The first is that, just as the Samaritan symbolises Christ, so his actions symbolise the ministrations of his Church: again, it is no coincidence that the instruments used by the Samaritan for healing are oil and wine. Here we see represented the oil used for baptism and anointing, and the wine of the Eucharist. To this we should also add the hospitality that the Samaritan lays on. We, as God's church, has immense opportunity to heal, through our sacraments and our nurturing of community. So again, keep faith in this work, and never let it just feel humdrum or routine.

The second point is just as important, and that is that just as we have the means to heal the world, so we too can and will be revived ourselves. Looking at the state of the church, both locally and nationally, there is plenty to feel despondent about. We know that Jesus told us that there would always be challenges, but we cannot help but look back to half-remember glory days of the past, as we have to accept the situation we are in. But just as the man, who was half-dead and seemingly beyond help, was revived by the Christ-like Samaritan, so will Christ's church be, by Christ himself. If we take anything from this Gospel, let it be to never give up on God's people or God's cause. Because God is by our side, and can do 'great marvels'. Something which I think is beautifully communicated in the 'prayer for the clergy and people' which comes at the end of the traditional Anglican order for morning prayer - and which, it strikes me, cannot by coincidence borrow from the image of the good Samaritan storing, by asking for the pouring and anointing of God's grace to heal and empower his church:

'ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels: Send down upon our Bishops, and Curates, and all Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen.'

For your prayers

In this time of political upheaval, we pray for good, wise and peaceful government in our land.

Praying for the sick, we are asked to pray by name for

Yvonne Waldren Betty Allen Ken Patience

Pat Martin Wendy Lamb Sandy Walpole

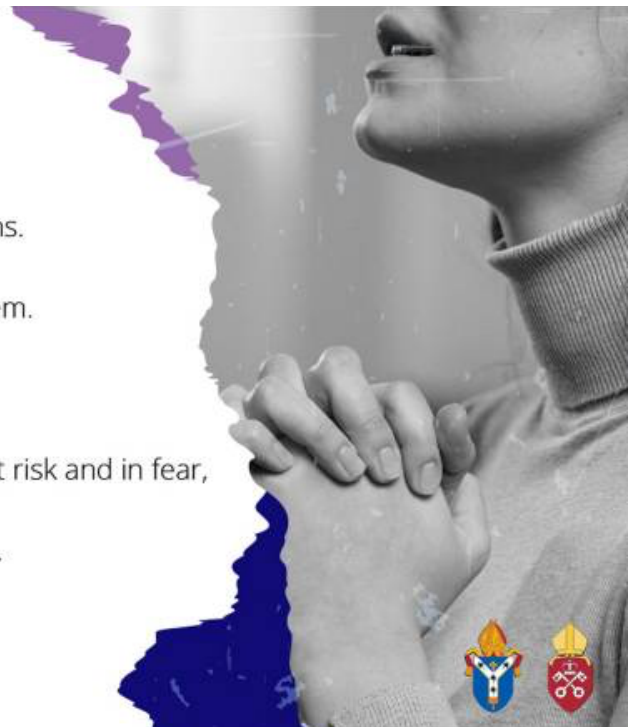
Rev'd Moira Davis Don and Sylvia Martin Henry Smith

Praying for those who have died, either recently, or at this time in year's past, we pray by name for **Joy Sleight Kathryn Farrow**

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion
to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen.

Archbishop Justin Welby
Archbishop Stephen Cottrell



NOTICES

UPCOMING WORSHIP

SUNDAY 10th
JULY
TRINITY 4
11am HOLY
COMMUNION
ST JOHN'S,
BELLEAU

SUNDAY 17th
JULY
TRINITY 5
11am HOLY
COMMUNION
ALL SAINTS',
LEGBOURNE
Fr James' Final Service

SUNDAY 24th
JULY
ST JAMES
10am HOLY
COMMUNION
ST JAMES',
LOUTH

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once I have left, the newly-formed Benefice Worship Committee will take responsibility for arranging services and other events across our churches. It is hoped that Legbourne will be able to organise a monthly family service. Holy Communion is celebrated weekly in our area, although not necessarily in our parishes. St James', Louth has a Eucharist every Sunday at 10am and every Tuesday at 12. This newsletter will continue, and so will remain a good source of activity and upcoming events across our benefice, but will be sent out on a monthly rather than weekly basis.

Prayer for the Week Ahead

Eternal God, comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken, you have fed us at the table of life and hope: teach us the ways of gentleness and peace, that all the world may acknowledge the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

As ever, do get in touch with me if you would like a chat, or need a helping hand.

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