



The Benefice of St Mary's, Chalgrove
with St Helen's, Berrick Salome

Issue 2 | 5th August 2020

Pews News

Welcome

Welcome to the updated Pews News, which we aim to publish monthly. Unlike the old Pews News, which was circulated in print form, we are making the new Pews News available electronically. If you are not able to access the electronic edition, please be in touch, as we are printing some copies for those who need them.

This month's edition has readings for the coming Sunday (Trinity 9), a copy of Fr Grant Bayliss' sermon from Trinity 6 in July (by request), articles by Bob Kuyper, and the Friends of St Mary's.

Our Next Service (Trinity 9)

This week's service in the benefice is the Methodist Worship Book Service at St Mary's Chalgrove, beginning at 10am. As Revd John is away, the service will be officiated by Jennifer Thompson.



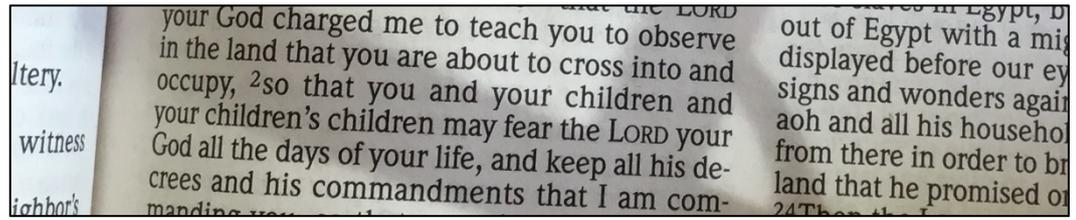
Sermons on the readings for this week are available in various places. The preacher on the Benefice YouTube channel is Revd Lucy Austin from the Icknield Benefice. We are glad to welcome her. The channel can be accessed using a YouTube app on a smartphone or other device (including Smart TV), or you can access the channel in a web browser by following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/c/stmaryschalgrovewithsthelensberricksalome>; if you have a smartphone, you can even access the channel by pointing your camera at the Quick Response code image in the margin to the left.

The Methodist circuit has a website for their weekly worship resources. You can access this here: <https://oxfordmethodistsworship.wordpress.com/>

The Oxford Diocese service, called Church at Home, is available here: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/podcast/church-at-home-full-service/>

Finally, for a trial period, we are making sermons available using a dial-a-sermon call-in facility. If you would like to use this, please call 01491 529988

This Gospel for Trinity 9: Matthew 14.22–33



*Jesus spoke to them
and said,
'Take heart, it is I;
do not be afraid.'*

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

²⁸ Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' ²⁹ He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. ³⁰ But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' ³² When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

Sermon for Trinity 6 (19th July): Romans 8.12-25

Revd Canon Dr Grant Bayliss, Canon Precentor, Christ Church Oxford



"One of the things I've really missed during lockdown is taking a trip out on my day off to watch birds of prey at the Hawk Conservancy Trust. It's a simple pleasure at the end of a busy week at the Cathedral to slip away and watch these majestic creatures take wing, soaring through the skies. The highlight is the moment where they release two bald eagles a couple of miles away. The commentator bids us look out over the valley, towards the distant horizon, and try to spot the black speck against the treeline. The audience fizzes with anticipation. Little children literally bounce up and down, pointing excitedly at dot after dot, almost all of which turn out to be something else. Expectation ebbs and flows until someone identifies the right silhouette and hundreds of eyes strain to follow the birds. Excitement builds as they come into their final approach and rush across the field and land triumphantly on the handler's glove, heads thrown back in a raucous victory cry.

It's a simple hope, almost always fulfilled. Once in a while the birds dawdle across the landscape, the dramatic music runs out, the staff talk earnestly upon their walkie-talkies but eventually they come. Every day they do it and every day the crowd's expectation is palpable. Many like me will have seen the display countless times but still we're caught up into hope, expectation, anticipation.

St Paul tells us that Christian faith too is all about hope. For it's in hope we were saved. In today's reading he talked of the Holy Spirit within us, joining together with

our spirit to bear witness that we are children of God – a Spirit that cries ‘Abba, Father!’ He paints a vivid picture of God’s Spirit, our spirit, and the whole creation groaning, yearning, expectantly looking forward for the fulfilment of what is promised. He talks of a deep longing that runs through everything and binds all together in hope.

But is that really how we think of daily Christian life? Most mornings when we get up and say our prayers, there is little of that yearning, groaning or expectation. We find rhythms and habits, we may read the psalms and Scriptures of the office or direct short arrow prayers to God as we brush our teeth. We settle into a pattern, where often there is much patience but little hope. At its best, it can be something beautiful – what Michael Ramsay called ‘being before God with the people on your heart’, and Mary Oliver ‘a doorway into silence in which another voice may speak’.

Rowan Williams on prayer: “You simply have to be there where the light can get at you”

Rowan Williams famously compared this aspect of prayer to sunbathing. He said, ‘When you’re lying on the beach or under the lamp, something is happening, something that has nothing to do with how you feel or how hard you’re trying. You’re not going to get a better tan by screwing up your eyes and concentrating. You give the time, and that’s it. All you have to do is turn up. And then things change, at their own pace. You simply have to be there where the light can get at you.’

St Paul knew prayer was itself a gift, a grace that comes from beyond us, being caught up into the life of God. He goes on in the next few verses of Romans to talk of the Spirit interceding within us with sighs too deep for words. Prayer as standing in the outpouring of the divine life. A place where we find ourselves in the midst of Father, Son and Spirit giving away to one another not just all that they have but all that they are, holding nothing back.

But here it catches us up in the groaning of creation, the yearning of all things for the Kingdom that is yet to come, the Kingdom that will only come when humanity finds its proper place as adopted children coming into our inheritance. Taking the time to say, ‘Abba, Father’ is not just about getting what we want from the God who loves us, not just about spending time in his presence but about a hope for the future.

“In prayer we bathe in the light of God, we swim in the overflowing tides of the love poured out from Father to Son to Spirit”

Hope for transformation. Hope for change. All creation stood subjected to futility, all creation was in bondage to decay. In prayer we bathe in the light of God, we swim in the overflowing tides of the love poured out from Father to Son to Spirit and back. We do it not to escape from the world but to be caught up in something more.

The pangs and sufferings of our present age are all too evident at the moment. From pandemic to climate emergency, from unemployment and recession to black lives matter and awful injustice. The great temptation is to think we need to pray harder, more earnestly, as if by some great effort we can storm the Kingdom.

Our reading today calls us instead to focus on gift to adopted children. To rekindle a sense of expectation. To let our churches be a little more like the bird displays I’ve missed so much. In our online services, in our everyday faith and work, we should strain our eyes towards the horizon. Be a people on the edge of their seats, hoping, yearning, expectant. Not for an eagle flying home but a glory about to be revealed, the birth of a Kingdom of justice and peace, where God is all in all.

In hope we were saved, St Paul says. Christ’s life, death and resurrection opened up new vistas of possibility – the redemption of not just our bodies but all creation. Let us hold onto that hope not just with patience but true expectation. Amen”



Please Pray

Please pray for Fr Michael, Revd John, and the PCCs as they monitor the use of the buildings in order to keep us all safe. Pray especially for our Tuesday Cleaners, our flowers teams, our Wednesday Stewards, and all who contribute to our public worship on Sunday.

Please pray for those who are using the buildings for private prayer on Wednesdays.

Please pray for our communities.

Please pray for our bishops, archdeacon, area dean, and for our neighbours Fr Patrick, Fr Daniel, and Canon Sue.

Please pray for those who mourn, and for the departed

Two Prayers

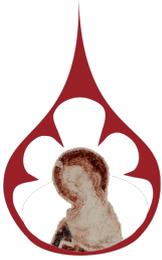
Lord Jesus Christ, you are the way, the truth and the life:
 let us not stray from you who are the way,
 nor distrust your promises who are the truth,
 nor rest in anything but you who are the life,
 for beyond you there is nothing to be desired
 neither in heaven nor in earth.

from a prayer of Erasmus (1536)

Support us, O Lord, all the day long of this troublous life,
 until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
 the busy world is hushed,
 the fever of life is over
 and our work is done.
 Then, Lord, in your mercy grant us a safe lodging,
 a holy rest, and peace at the last;
 through Christ our Lord.

adapted from the 1928 Prayer Book

A Note from the Friends of St Mary's



Lynn Baker on behalf of the Friends Committee?

How often do we or others say that the crisis of the pandemic has brought distressing loss and uncertainty, as well as unexpected gains?

Since lockdown began, Friends events, like so many others, have had to be cancelled. We have lost all those hoped for opportunities to raise money and to bring pleasure to others as well as our members.

What has been gained is of value beyond any numerical figures. It is the timely reminder of the importance of our members' loyalty to the scheme. Their annual membership donations always make a significant contribution to sustaining the life, work and fabric of St Mary's. This year's circumstances make it particularly so and we are grateful indeed for their continued generosity.

There is a remarkable and new resource being developed that the Friends are currently helping to fund. St Mary's church is richly blessed with beautiful heritage features that are a feast to the eye. We want to help those with visual impairment to enjoy them too. The resource consists of 6 tactile images and accompanying audio recordings; 3 describe specific wallpainting images and 3 describe architectural features.

This is just one way in which monies raised by Friends enlarge, enhance and support the life, work and fabric of St Mary's. Membership of the scheme is by annual donation of whatever amount you choose to give. Everyone is welcome regardless of faith, belief or the amount donated. All members receive the Friends Quarterly newsletter and an annual invitation to a special social event – currently a strawberry cream tea in a private garden.

Why not be a Friend, both to back our efforts and to enjoy the benefits?

If you'd like more information about the scheme, please phone me on 01865 400402 or use the email contact friends@chalgrovechurch.org



Church Finances during Covid19 Lockdown

Bob Kuyper, St Mary's Treasurer

In the first of several bulletins from PCC officers in both of our parishes, we hear from Bob Kuyper about finance.

Firstly I would like to thank all the people who have continued to give their offerings to the Church by Direct Debit through the Bank. It has also been a delight to receive weekly collections through my letterbox (58 High Street Chalgrove, next door to the Pharmacy).

*St Mary's at CAF
(Charities Aid Foundation)
Sort Code 40-52-40
Account No. 000334407*

We do have a new St Mary's bank account with CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Sort Code 40-52-40 Account No. 000334407. Church members have been changing their Direct Debits to this account. Any new Direct Debits or payment for the Church should use the CAF Account. Our old Nat West Bank Account sort code 60-22-19 Account No. 65281020 remains as our 'Friends of St Mary's' Bank Account.

When the Church reopens for weekly services the usual way of donations will be accepted but there will also be a swipe reader for Credit/Bank cards where at the touch of an amount (finger then cleaned) you can donate up to £30. This will then be gift aided for everyone via the GASDS (Gift Aid Special Donations scheme) for an extra 25% from HMRC. Therefore £10 becomes £12.50 and £30 becomes £37.50. If I have your email address you will get a receipt or you can email me at treasurer@chalgrovechurch.org and I will send you one. As with Gift Aid if you are a higher rate tax payer you can also claim another 25% back from HMRC for all your registered Gift Aid or GASDS.

At the date of writing (13th July) the church is £9,600 in credit, with another £3,500 going to the Diocese shortly thereafter. This sounds good, but each month we have outgoings of £4,700 (so six months left in 2020 plus 2 quarterly outgoings of £2,500 makes £30,700 for the remainder of the year). We will receive £10,000 from the Church Estate making a grand total of approximately £19,600 in credit but we will need to ask for the remaining **£11,100** from church members via offerings just to end the year in the black. Sadly, the £8,000 from events and £5,000 from weddings and funerals will not be raised this year, though we raised £1,118 from our quiz night in February.

None of us could have foreseen the ongoing disruption of Covid19 in our lives and the life of the Church but, as Treasurer, I am sure with your generous contributions, we will be able to meet any shortfall this year.



Pathways Magazine

For the first time, Pathways is available online. You can download it here: <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/pathways-pdf-version/>

The diocese remains committed to distributing printed editions to churches in future, and hopes to have the autumn edition distributed to churches. In the meantime please feel free to distribute the link to the electronic version.

There will also be a small print run so that people can order individual copies from <https://store.oxford.anglican.org> when the online store re-opens (date to be confirmed). There will be a small charge for postage and packing.

Other Notices

“I would like to express my thanks to all who provided services during lockdown, and indeed are still doing so. Thank you to Michael, John, Julian, Jennifer, Bob and Carol, the students and more. The opportunity to log on and find Morning Service, Communion or Compline was a great boon and a comfort in strange times”

Judith Bennett

“I am taking a scheduled period of annual leave (‘stay-cation’) from 7th August to 21st August with Kirsty and the girls. In my absence, please contact the church wardens.”

Fr Michael

Do you have items for the next edition?

Please be in touch with Fr Michael by email.

Contact Details

When writing cheques for the church please make them out to “**St Mary’s PCC, Chalgrove**” or “**St Helen’s PCC, Berrick Salome**” – this avoids ambiguity!

Websites you might find useful:

St Mary’s: www.chalgrovechurch.org

St Helen’s: www.berricksalomechurch.org.uk

For all enquiries contact Fr Michael Lakey, tel: 890392, vicar@chalgrovechurch.org