

Newsletter 46

New plans for the Eucharist and the offering of bread and wine

During the Covid pandemic, we followed the Church of England's recommendation of offering 'communion in one kind' at the Eucharist, i.e. bread but no wine.

More recently, the guidance changed and it was up to parishes to decide on how and when to reintroduce the offering of wine at the Eucharist. Up to now, our parish has been cautious, but open to review the situation. In the past few weeks, the clergy, wardens and PCC have given careful and thoughtful consideration to how and when to begin to offer wine at the Eucharist in our parish. The decision we have come to is that for the next few weeks, starting this coming Sunday, 15th May, we will intinct the wafers so all who wish to may receive bread and wine i.e. communion in two kinds. The person distributing the bread (usually the priest and/or deacon) will dip it into the chalice of wine then drop it into the hands of those who come forward for communion. This means that only one person, with sanitised hands, will be touching the wafers and dipping them into the wine.

Equally, it is perfectly fine if you prefer to receive bread that is not intincted, if you indicate this as you come forward to receive. I believe that however we engage with the communion service, we are, as a church community, doing it in remembrance of Jesus.

We will review the situation in early July in consultation with our new Curate-in-Charge, Matt Wood.

Platinum Jubilee Picnic – Sunday 5th June at Holy Trinity Vicarage garden

All are invited to bring a picnic lunch to have in the vicarage garden following the 10 am Pentecost Eucharist service and coffee in the hall on Sunday 5th June.

We hope for good weather so please bring garden chairs so we can sit outside.

This is a great opportunity for all who would like to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with the church family and to enjoy time together.

You are also invited to offer some kind of entertainment at the event! All offers welcome!

Update on forthcoming funerals

Peter Quarrell died at St. Luke's hospice on Tuesday 26th April. There will be a private crematorium service at Hutcliffe Wood. A thanksgiving service for Peter's life at Holy Trinity Church has been arranged for Wednesday 13th July at 11.30 followed by refreshments in the church hall.

David Cunnington died on Friday 29th April at the Northern General Hospital.

David's family have asked that we let all those who knew David that he died peacefully and that his funeral will take place at Hutcliffe Wood Crematorium at 11 am on Wednesday 1 June. All are invited to refreshments at the Cross Scythes Inn, Topley, following the funeral.

For catering purposes, if you would like to go to the Cross Scythes, please contact Angie Lauener by Wednesday 25th May, including any special dietary requirements (tel. 0114 236 2188 or email angielauener@me.com).

A thanksgiving service for David's life will be held at St. John's church at a date to be arranged.

PTO

A note from the Nuttall family:

The family of Stan Nuttall would like to thank everyone at Holy Trinity and St Johns who sent messages and supported us at his funeral. It was humbling to see how much Stan was cared for by the Church community. Special thanks to Angie for her care at this time and the very meaningful services for both the funeral and interment of ashes. Also to Eric for his help at both services, to Mary and the choir for the music and to Holy Trinity Hand bell ringers for their contribution, and to everyone who came along and supported us in various ways. Thank you also for making it possible for people who could not attend to join the zoom link. From Jennie, Gillian and Liz and all the family.

Christian Aid Week is May 15th - 22nd

Donation envelopes will be available from this Sunday at the back of Holy Trinity Church and in St. John's Church Hall.

The next **Litany of Reconciliation** service will be on Thursday 19th May 12 noon outside Holy Trinity Church on the grass in Grove Road.

Ascension Day Eucharist – Thursday 26th May 7.30 pm at Holy Trinity Church.

All are welcome to celebrate the ascension of our Lord at a service to commemorate this significant event in the life of Jesus.

Other events coming up:

John Savournin's son, John, who is a professional opera singer and director, is bringing his own company, Charles Court Opera, to Sheffield. They will be performing the *Gilbert & Sullivan operetta "Patience"* at the Montgomery Theatre, Surrey Street, on **Sunday, 22nd. May at 3.30 pm** Tickets from 0114 327 3456 or themontgomery.org.uk."

With warm wishes,

Angie

Sermon - 8 May 2022 Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 9.36-end; Revelation 7.9-end; John 10.22-30

WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THREE GRAPHIC IMAGES IN TODAY'S READINGS. THE FIRST TWO ARE GREATLY CONTRASTING :

The Acts reading gives us a *homely* image of the house where Dorcas (Tabitha) lived and worked. Just a few people, a close-up of an everyday setting.

The reading from Revelation gives a more mysterious, alien image. A fantasy world, with crowds of people, a big expanse – the very opposite of 'homely', but perhaps *heavenly*? An exciting and hopeful image of a future time when

"They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; ... and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (vv.16,17)

The third reading, the Gospel, is equally graphic – it is winter, Jesus is walking in the temple, and there is quite an antagonistic exchange going on between him and the Jews. The reading ends abruptly with some incongruous sounding words, that you may not have registered:

The Father and I are one. (v.30)

WHY THESE READINGS NOW?

This is the fourth Sunday of Easter. Still some Easter chocolate around in our house! Still plenty of evidence in church, notably the glorious cross on the banner. A reminder of Jesus suffering and death and resurrection. And rightly so ... after remembering and celebrating again such a momentous event, it is good to ponder some more about what it all meant for the world at that time, and what it means for us now.

The Acts reading about the miracle of Tabitha being raised to life from the dead is a reminder of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. A reminder that God has conquered death. Interestingly, also a reminder of the change in Peter's life. The fearful disciple who denied three times that he knew Jesus now boldly and confidently performing a miracle.

He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' (v.40)

The Revelation reading helped encourage the early Christians. Some had been expecting the risen Jesus to come back soon and were disappointed and disillusioned. This book of Revelation, and this reading in particular, were a reminder of the bigger picture, the eternal picture of God's plan for all humanity.

It helps us now, to look forward to eternal life. At a time where we are aware of deaths suffering around the world, and of recent deaths in our parish, it is good to be reminded of these truths.

I suggest that those easy-to-miss words at the end of the Gospel, '*The Father and I are one*', complete the picture of Jesus' birth, life on earth, death, resurrection and ascension. Things have gone full circle. Jesus came from God and is at one with him. This was always the case.

If this was a help for the early Christians, **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US NOW?**

At the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) International Litany on Friday, Oliver Schuegraf, the German Lutheran pastor who led the reflections spoke of his visit to St. Mary's, Lubeck, in Northern Germany – a CCN partner - where he was preaching on the 80th anniversary of the bombing of their church.

There, he had seen an animated film of a wall painting that used to be in this medieval church, painted in 1463. It was a genre of art called, in German, *Totentanz* and in French, *Danse Macabre* – dance of death. This genre of art arose following the Black death (bubonic plague) – the most deathly pandemic in history – still more deathly than Covid, according to the figures I have seen. These 'dance of death' 'paintings highlight the inevitability of death. It will happen to all of us. So, in that sense, we are all equal. It depicts people of all status and background holding hands, all heading for the grave like a procession, a dance. This style of art came at the same time as two Latin texts called 'Ars moriendi' about the art of dying – how to be ready for death.

This may seem a rather morbid topic, yet it can have a positive effect.

Before we said the Litany, we read Psalm 90, which writes about passing nature of life on earth and eternal nature of God and of our lives with God, echoing the Revelation reading.

v.12 – So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart

These words could feel quite pressuring and stressful if we try to do it in our own strength. I heard an alternative way of saying the same thing in a radio interview with a Ukrainian professor who now teaches in the UK. He was describing how he had heard that his 85-year-old mother had died in Mariupol. He talked of the hard life she had had for most of her years. Asked what he thought this whole experience says to him about the future, he said that he thought we should aim to be the best that we can be in our lives.

So perhaps today's readings are a reminder to look forward to the eternal salvation that we are all promised. A reminder that God has conquered death. That suffering and pain will be no more in the glorious future that God has planned for humanity in eternal life.

We are left with the question,

And how will we be the best that we can be?

How will we learn to count our days that we may gain a wise heart?

Amen