

Dear Friends

'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.' (Psalm 46.1, NIV)

This week we have been truly blessed. We have had some beautiful sunny days; the news on Covid 19 infections in Guernsey has been better than anyone could have expected and St. Sampson's church has re-opened for private prayer. We have just heard the news that the Island may move to Phase 4 on Saturday 30th - much earlier than expected. As you will know, the reopening of churches for congregational worship is part of Phase 4. We now await detailed guidance on the specific measures which must be put in place to allow congregational worship to take place. I will be back in touch during the course of next week to let you know what this will mean and how and when congregational worship will re-start at St. Sampson's and St. Mary's.

Yesterday was Ascension Day and marked the start of Thy Kingdom Come – the global wave of prayer. I circulated a variety of resources earlier in the week, so please do join with fellow Christians around the world through the coming days in praying in Jesus' name Thy Kingdom come.

Worship this week

Our weekly worship takes place via Zoom every Sunday at 10.30am. Last week we encountered problems with Zoom but these now seem to have been resolved.

This week's order of service is attached. As you will see, it is very similar to last week's (except the Collect and hymn are updated). I am also attaching the Collect and hymn as a separate doc for those who just want the updated parts.

Please click on the following link to access and join this Sunday's service:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85821512450?pwd=YjZsSDY5aWtHR2MxMXhQZXVTUWJrdz09>

Meeting ID: 858 2151 2450

Password: 9ArCPE

Worshipping in this way won't be everyone's cup of tea and so I highlight below, the religious broadcasts on the BBC this coming week.

TELEVISION:

Sunday 11.45am (BBC1) *Sunday Worship* The Bishop of Bangor preaches in a service from Bangor Cathedral led by the Dean.

1.15pm (BBC1) *Songs of Praise* Stories of faith from islands off the coast of the UK.

RADIO:

Sunday 8.10am (R4) *Sunday Worship* The Bishop of Sheffield and his wife, the writer Catherine Fox, reflect on coping with uncertainty.

3pm (R3) *Choral Evensong* A repeat of last week's archive recording from Christ Church, Oxford, first broadcast on 4 May 2016.

Wednesday 3.30pm (R3) *Choral Evensong* An archive recording from St Davids Cathedral, first broadcast on 27 May 2009.

Thursday 10pm (R3) *Free Thinking* A repeat of Simon Armitage's conversation with Lord Williams of Oystermouth at the 2018 Hay Festival.

Monday – Friday

9:45am (R4 Long wave) Daily Service

The following free resources, complimenting this Sunday's lectionary themes are available from Roots on the web:

For adults

www.rootsontheweb.com/adultsathome24may

For families

www.rootsontheweb.com/familiesathome24may

Bible Study Group

Our online Bible Study Group continues on Thursday evenings (via Zoom) using the Bible Society's 'Bible Course'.

If you would prefer to join a daytime group, please let me know and I will set one up.

Pastoral Support

'Elevenses on Tuesday' – a coffee morning every Tuesday morning at 11am by Zoom. Make your coffee, bring your cake (not obligatory!) and get comfy on the sofa. Dial in to Zoom by clicking on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87597960335?pwd=RXlrTXh4R2ZFamw3TzRMTDRtaVQrZz09>

Meeting ID: 875 9796 0335

Password: 4JswnR

We are continuing to try to ensure that congregation members receive a phone call every few days from one of our church leadership teams. Should you wish for specific spiritual support then please do be in touch with either me (my details are below) or John Le Page on 257436.

Sadness turned to joy – A reflection on John 16.16-24

Bible Reading: John 16:16-24

Jesus said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then in a little while you will see me.'

Some of the disciples asked among themselves, 'What does this mean? He tells us that in a little while we will not see him, and then after a little while we will see him; and he also says "It is because I am going to the Father." What does this "little while" mean? We don't know what he is talking about!'

Jesus saw that they wanted to question him about this, so he said to them, 'I said, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then in a little while you will see me." Is this what you are asking about among yourselves? I am telling you the truth: you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will be sad, but your grief will turn to joy. When a woman is about to give birth to a child, she has pain because her time has come, but when her baby is born, she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. That is how it is with you. Now you are sad, but I will see you again and your hearts will be filled with joy – the kind of joy that no one can take away from you.'

When that day comes, you will no longer ask me anything. I am telling you the truth – the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.'

Reflection

Many of the things that Jesus said are not easy to understand. Each word may be simple enough but put them together in sentences and it makes us stop and think. We are not alone in this. Even the first disciples – who had spent three years with Jesus and had the benefit of living in the same country and culture – did not always know what he was talking about!

This conversation with Jesus is a good example. 'A little while' appears seven times in a few sentences as he tries to prepare his friends for what lies ahead, when their world falls apart as they go through a time of desperate grief and loss but with joy round the corner when they see him alive again. As the pain of childbirth gives way to a joy that surpasses the memory of the pain endured, so they will experience a sudden joy arising from catastrophe that will upend their lives and lead to a new intimacy in relationship with the Father. Jesus tells them that they will no longer need to 'ask' him anything (in the sense of asking questions) as they will have a new understanding of Jesus, clarity about the meaning of his death and resurrection, and the help and indwelling of the promised Holy Spirit. They will now 'ask' (or petition) the Father in the name of Jesus as they take the revelation of God's love out into the world in word and deed.

Seeing, or not seeing, family and friends for what may be 'a little while' or a whole lot longer has resonances for today. Government guidance and advice on who we should see, where and when, for how long, and at what distance can leave us feeling bewildered and distressed. We can recognise the confusion of the disciples in today's reading as we too look forward to a time when 'We'll meet again' even if we 'don't know where, don't know when...' but hopefully not before too long!

We do know that our relationship with God is secure, that there is hope of new life (and we can see God's world bursting into life all around us in the countryside, fields and gardens), and grief will turn to joy. Meanwhile we have the task of sharing God's love and praying in Jesus' name 'Thy kingdom come'.

God bless
Gill
Revd Gill Nobes
Rector of St. Sampson

22 May 2020

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