

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER

14TH AFTER TRINITY

STADHAMPTON — 9:30AM FAMILY SERVICE

WARBOROUGH — 11:00AM PARISH EUCHARIST

SUNDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER

15TH AFTER TRINITY

STADHAMPTON — 9:30AM PARISH EUCHARIST

WARBOROUGH — 11:00AM MORNING WORSHIP

WARBOROUGH — 6:00PM HOLY COMMUNION BCP

SUNDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER

16TH AFTER TRINITY

STADHAMPTON — 9:30AM FAMILY EUCHARIST

WARBOROUGH — 11:00AM PARISH EUCHARIST

SUNDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER

17TH AFTER TRINITY

WARBOROUGH — 8:00AM HOLY COMMUNION BCP

STADHAMPTON — 9:30AM PET BLESSING SERVICE

WARBOROUGH — 4:30PM CLUSTER EVENSONG

NOTICES



*Newington, Stadhampton with Chiselhampton,
Warborough and Shillingford*

PEWS NEWS

SUNDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER

14TH AFTER TRINITY

THE COLLECTS

Holy and eternal God, you are the Maker of heaven and earth, you are the Word through whom all things were made, and you are the Spirit, the giver of life: draw us into the mystery of your love, that with all creation we may proclaim your praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

O God and Father of all that was, is and ever shall be, help us to be thankful for all that is made at the hands of your Son and through the wisdom of your Spirit, that we may care in heart and in deed for the life of our world, to the praise and glory of your holy name.

Amen

BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 55.12–end

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Colossians 1.15–20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Matthew 8.23–27

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴A gale arose on the lake, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵And they went and woke him up, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!' ²⁶And he said to them, 'Why are you afraid, you of little faith?' Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. ²⁷They were amazed, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'

Post Communion

God our Creator,
by your gift the tree of life was set
at the heart of the earthly paradise,
and the bread of life at the heart of your Church:
may we who have been nourished at your table on
earth be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's
cross and enjoy the delights of eternity;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

We pray for your Church throughout the world.
When we are tempted to fear, strengthen our faith.
When we cannot see a way ahead, help us to trust in
your presence. Give wisdom and courage to all who
lead your Church, and make us faithful witnesses to
the hope we have in Christ.

We pray for all those whose lives are caught in
storms of conflict, violence and uncertainty. For
those fleeing war and persecution; for those living
with poverty or hunger; and for those whose homes
and livelihoods have been destroyed by natural
disaster. Bring peace where there is conflict, justice
where there is oppression and comfort where there
is suffering. May those who have the power to
change circumstances have the courage and
compassion to do so.

We pray for our schools, our workplaces and our
families, particularly at this time of new beginnings
and changed routines. For children starting a new
school year, for teachers and support staff, and for
parents adjusting to new demands and
responsibilities.

We pray too for all who quietly carry the burdens of
others: those who listen, encourage, organise,
comfort and simply remain alongside someone when
life feels overwhelming. Give them strength when
their own resources are running low and remind
them that they do not have to weather every storm
alone.

We bring before you all who feel that they are
drowning beneath the circumstances of their lives:
those who are anxious or afraid, those facing illness
or bereavement, those struggling with relationships,
work or financial worries, and those who cannot see
any way through their present difficulties. Help us not
to assume that faith means having no fear, but to
discover the deeper faith which trusts that you are
with us even when the storm has not yet passed.

Amen

Views from the Pews: Jen's Lens

There are some weeks when you feel as though you're keeping all the plates spinning; and there are other weeks when you realise that actually, you're just standing underneath them waiting for them to fall.

Personally, this week has been somewhere in the middle, erring on the side of the latter. With the children going back to school and me going back to school at Ashfold, life has suddenly felt like much more of a juggle than we've been used to for the last eight weeks. Add to that some extremely full on eleven-hour days at work without really having time to finish everything that needs doing, let alone finding any downtime. There have definitely been moments this week when I have felt as though I'm drowning.

I am very lucky, though, because in all of this I have a voice of calm: Ralph. He is the peace to my tempest, particularly when I have to be the peace to other people's storms or drownings.

Ralph has always been this to me. The day he asked me to marry him, I had spent the day with some close friends who had fallen out with each other in a fairly spectacular and, as it turned out, irreparable way. I was comforting one of them while actually siding with the other, which made for a rather stressful afternoon. Then Ralph arrived and I remember this extraordinary wave of relief washing over me. Everything suddenly felt as though it was going to be alright. So when he popped the question later that evening – not necessarily the best timing, but that's a different story – there was only ever going to be one answer. If he could manage that particular chaos, he was definitely a keeper!

And his peace-bringing has continued. This week, he has managed the children's return to school while I've been at work, met me at the front door with a large gin and at least half a sympathetic ear, and done the things that I simply haven't had time to get to – including packing for our trip to Scotland this weekend. Because, obviously, what our already over-full week needed was a trip to Scotland. Who needs sleep?

I suppose there is something rather comforting knowing that, however chaotic things become, there is someone alongside you who is not panicking.

The disciples in Sunday's Gospel find themselves in trouble. They are in a boat with Jesus when a great storm suddenly blows up. This isn't just any storm. Several of the disciples are seasoned fishermen, accustomed to the dangers of the Sea of Galilee, and yet they are terrified. Matthew describes it using the

Greek word *seismos* – the word from which we get “seismic”, and a word associated with earthquakes and violent upheaval. This is not a little bit of choppy water, they genuinely believe that they are going to die.

Meanwhile, Jesus is asleep.

An image pops into my head at this point of a Tottering print, by the aptly named Annie Tempest, in which Lady Tottering shouts at her husband, “Being calm and rational is of no help to a cross wife!”. I can imagine the panic and frustration of the disciples shouting to Jesus “Lord, save us, we're dying!” and Jesus says, not for the first time, “oh ye of little faith”. Perhaps not the most soothing response. And yet Jesus does calm the storm. Nature obeys his word, the wind and waves fall silent, and the disciples are left staring at him in amazement.

It is tempting to take from this the comforting message that when life becomes frightening, Jesus will always step in and make everything alright, but I'm not sure that is quite what this story promises us. Because sometimes the storm doesn't stop. Sometimes the drowning feeling continues for much longer than we would like. Sometimes, as I touched on last week, the answer to our prayers isn't what we expected or hoped for, but rather what we need.

Perhaps, then, the “ye of little faith” is not so much a rebuke for being frightened as a challenge about where we place our trust when we are frightened. It asks us once more to have faith in God's greater plan for us, rather than to focus on the boundary walls of what's happening right now.

The disciples seem to assume that because Jesus is asleep, he is somehow unaware of their danger. But Jesus has not left the boat – he is right there with them, even when he appears to be doing nothing.

That's important because, while they can only see the immediate danger, they actually have everything they need to make it through. In the same way that being “calm and rational” is what's needed to calm the wife's tempest (however irritating), the disciples also have everything they need – they have Jesus in the boat.

I don't think that faith necessarily means believing that God will remove every difficulty from our lives. It is not a guarantee that the storm will always be calmed on our preferred timetable, or even that it will be calmed in the way we would choose. Faith to me is, perhaps, trusting that the storm is not the whole story.

Jesus is the constant in the boat. The waves can crash around him, the wind can howl, the disciples can panic, and yet he remains. The storm may knock them about, but it cannot remove him from the boat.

There is a lovely moment in *The Lord of the Rings* when Frodo, having a crisis of confidence, asks Gandalf why he was chosen to carry the ring. Gandalf's answer is, essentially, that perhaps there was something bigger at work than any of them could see. And then he adds: "That is an encouraging thought".

I think there is something of that encouragement in today's Gospel. We don't always know why we find ourselves in the particular storms we are facing. We don't know how they will end, or whether they will end in the way we would choose.

But we do know who is in the boat.

When we are exhausted, frightened or simply feel as though we are drowning, we may not always get the miracle we were hoping for. We may not even immediately recognise that Jesus is doing anything at all. But he is there with us. Perhaps there are some storms we are meant to weather, perhaps some of the spinning plates are meant to drop on our heads, and maybe what we learn from it is the greater gift.

The peace of Christ is not the absence of the tempest, rather the presence of someone who cannot be swept away by it. And that is an encouraging thought.

I wish you all a wonderful week ahead.
Jen