

Please share this bulletin as far and wide as you can – thank you

## 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020 – Seventh Sunday of Easter



### View Inside a Vicarage

Good morning and hello from inside the vicarage once again, where, as I gaze from my study window, I can see summer flowers starting to emerge and blossom in the sunshine, as the warmth of the sun increases as the morning progresses. I write this Bulletin early in the week, so in reality I am always a few days ahead of the time when you read it; And so today, Monday, a week of soaring temperatures are promised (well a few days at least).

Inevitably with the sunshine, thoughts turn to the months ahead, when we would generally have been taking our summer holidays, although this year we are likely to have a very different type of summer. Many of us will, I guess, have booked holidays abroad, and only time will tell whether it may be possible to visit other countries this summer; Some of us, however, will have intended to stay in this country and take advantage of the beautiful countryside and coasts which this island has to offer, and Cornwall was to have been where we had planned to go.

Tourism, however, has become one of this world's most affected industries by the Corona virus, as the numbers of people who have been furloughed or lost jobs because of the impact of closed borders, Lockdown and people isolating are huge. Of course, the hope is that at some point, this industry will recover, as people are allowed to travel once again; But until such time, holidays are currently just a series of past happy memories and hopes for future times ahead.

However, whilst people are prevented from travelling and taking holidays around the world, our creation has been allowed to breathe again. Our environment, which was previously groaning through the way humanity was treating its natural resources, seems to have started to slowly recover; And during this time, I am sure we have all heard the loud birdsong when all around has been quiet, seen on television animals often associated with woodland walking freely in urban areas and heard about city polluted canals which now appear as clear and blue.

Last week's Reflection in the Bulletin focused on Rogation, a time in the churches calendar when we give thanks for the earth, for all that comes from it and for all who work with the land and the fruits of creation. There were several Rogation days in the churches calendar this last week, and so our prayers of thanks then, as indeed now, need to continually reflect God created a perfect world, and given that there are still so many places and areas within it which bring joy to the soul, we have much to be grateful for.

Our view of the world has perhaps shrunk over the last few months, as we have been forced to see only the immediate surroundings of where we live. However, as Lockdown gradually eases and some of us are allowed to travel a little more widely, we can start to see once again the wonders of our woodlands, the majesty of the mountains and the radiance of our rivers and seashores. God is in the midst of our creation and He continues to bless it; But it nonetheless challenges us, as we start to return to using it more widely, that its resources are limited, and that whilst the land has had a short time of relief from the many pressures humanity places on it, we need to learn the lessons we have observed during Lockdown, about not placing too many demands on it, without incurring significant and long term consequences.

The Church has its own role to play when we return to using our buildings again, by considering whether all that we do is environmentally efficient and that the products we are using as part of our worship are from eco-friendly and sustainable sources; We can look at who our energy and utilities are procured from, to make sure they are sourced from responsible environmental providers and we can ensure that we are all doing as much as we can to recycle wherever possible.

For Lockdown has shown me, that there were many things which I was previously buying, using and doing, but which I am now managing to do differently and which are more environmentally sustainable, because of not having been able to access products and things so easily; And the result that not only has this been a saving to the environment, but it has saved money at the same time.

Many volunteer groups are requesting that people look out their old duvets, pillow cases and clothes which can be turned into shrubs, wash bags or face masks; And so, I for one, am going this week to be looking through my airing cupboards to see what is lurking in there, largely forgotten, and kept just in case at some point in the future, I might possibly need that third spare set of sheets and duvet covers! Other requests I have seen from people have been for wool, so that they can use old bits of wools to make squares for blankets, which can then be given away to charities and to the homeless, for use when the weather gets colder once again.

So, please, do have a look for those unwanted items you may have in your homes, and if anyone has got any, then do contact me and I will ensure they get to the relevant volunteer groups.

As we move from the Church's festivals of Ascension to Pentecost, there are a number of additional services and initiatives taking place across the diocese and country, albeit in a more restricted way;

Not least of these is the Church of England's "**Thy Kingdom Come**" initiative, between 21<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May. I have focused on this in my Reflection this week, but if you want more details, then please go to their website. I will of course, be continuing to Preside at a Holy Communion service from Eckington church each Sunday morning, but would like to introduce into it, people from around the Hill, reading the lessons and prayers. If this is something you may like to do, then please contact me. You will, however, need to be able to record the reading and/or prayers and send the recording through to me, so that it can be inserted into the service before being uploaded onto You Tube and circulated to those who wish to use it for worship.

In the meantime, I hope that you can enjoy the sunshine this week, and that we can look forward to some level of summer holidays this year, albeit on a smaller scale than we may have planned. Do please keep praying for all those people who have been affected by the implications of the virus on the tourism industry and for all those who work within the various sectors within it; Also please pray for our farms, our market gardens, our food and grocery shops and all who are involved in getting food to those who are isolating and shielding, as well as for our Food Banks and charities, such as Christian Aid and Tear Fund, who so need our support in raising money for those are in desperate need during this international crisis.

May God bless and protect you this week in all that you do.

*Allison*

**Reverend Allison Davies**

Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group



PS Also, if you are aware that there is anyone who does not currently receive the Bulletin but who would like it to be sent to them through an email, then please contact Rachel Tebbatt at the following address:

[the.tebbatts@btinternet.com](mailto:the.tebbatts@btinternet.com)



## **Principal service based on Holy Communion for Seventh Sunday of Easter**

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

#### **Collect**

O God the King of glory,  
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ  
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:  
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,  
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us  
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

#### **Reading:** 1 Peter 4: 12-14; 5: 6-11

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

#### **Reading:** Acts 1: 6-14

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

#### **Reading:** John 17: 1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know



that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

### **Post Communion Prayer**

Eternal God, giver of love and power,  
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world  
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:  
confirm us in this mission,  
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**



### **Reflection for Seventh Sunday of Easter 2020**

**Sunday 24th May**

**John 17: 1 – 11, Acts 1:6-14**

When a doctoral student from Princeton asked, *“What is there left in the world for original dissertation research?”* Albert Einstein replied, *“Find out about prayer. Somebody must find out about prayer.”*

These words are the start of a book that I have long held on my bookshelves, a book entitled *“Prayer – does it make any difference”* by the American theological writer Philip Yancey; So, it will come as no surprise as to the content of the book! And, of course, prayer is the power tool and the way in which we connect with God, and He with us. It is of course

the way that Jesus talked to His Father in heaven, and the connection with God through which He was sustained throughout His ministry on earth.

Today's gospel reading is a prayer which Jesus prays both for Himself and for His disciples as he approaches His final days on earth; And just a little bit further in the passage, He will also pray for all future believers.

But what for Jesus was as easy as having any day to day conversations with His family, prayer is something which most of us struggle to do consistently, and dare I say it, well.

The word prayer comes from the Latin root *precarius*, a linguistic cousin to the word *precarious*; And we pray because we want to thank someone or something for the goodness of life, or because we feel small and helpless and sometimes afraid. We pray for forgiveness, for strength, for connection to the One who is, and we pray for assurance that in the magnitude of humanity and life, we are not alone.

Yancey says that prayer is universal, because it speaks to some basic need within us, and Thomas Merton, another theologian and writer, says that *"prayer is an expression of who we are.... A living incompleteness. We are a gap, an emptiness that calls for fulfilment."*

We need to pray because in spite of Christ's victory, our world is still a battleground, where the forces under Satan's power, and those under God's authority, are at war; And so just as Christ prayed that God would keep his chosen ones safe from Satan's power, setting them apart and making them pure and holy and uniting them through His truth, we need to do similarly, praying both for ourselves and for the world around us.

Many of you will know that across the country between the 21<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> May, the Church of England is encouraging people to pray as part of the Thy Kingdom Come initiative. In a message from the Reverend Canon Chris Russell, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisor on Evangelism and Witness, he states, *"that every single day hundreds of millions of our brothers and sisters around the world say the prayer Jesus put on our lips, praying 'Thy Kingdom Come'.*

*In the past few years, the focus of our prayers in these days between Ascension and Pentecost has been for the coming of the God's Kingdom in the lives of family and friends, neighbours and colleagues and that they might come to faith. However, Thy Kingdom Come is not a slogan, and it is vital we aren't tone deaf to what is occurring around us. The Holy Spirit always has an address, speaking in our mother tongue, thereby applying and particularising the work of Jesus Christ to certain individuals in different locations at distinct times.*

*So, when we pray 'Come Holy Spirit' during Thy Kingdom Come 2020, we pray in this specific context of the COVID crisis, with all that we face, all that is unknown and all we were helpless in before. Haven't we sensed more than ever the longing for the Kingdom of God – where there is no pain or crying, no injustice or loneliness? Haven't we longed for God's ways to be seen in the world? Haven't we been most moved by those who give their*

*lives to serve all that the Kingdom of God stands for? We long for signs of the Kingdom. And as a church do all we can to serve that Kingdom.”*

Therefore, although in previous years the Thy Kingdom Come prayer has normally been that the Holy Spirit will come on those who do not yet know Christ, so that they might encounter His love and peace and become followers of Jesus, in turn giving their lives in service of the Kingdom of God, this year, the focus will be on praying that friends and family, colleagues and neighbours, might not only encounter the love of God in Christ, but that they will experience that love in action.

Consequently, the prayer this year will be called the ‘Prayer and Care’; And even in these times of isolation and shielding, we are still encouraged to pray for those around us who we might not see, and whom we still have a caring relationship for. This encouragement asks that if we are able to commit to the Prayer and Care initiative, then to think of 5 people who do not know Christ, and to pray that through prayer, and the power of the Holy Spirit, they will come to know Him. But even as we might struggle to pray verbally, we can also pray through our actions – through our care for others, through socially distanced contact, and by serving, just as Christ served. In this way, relationships built up during this time of separation can be developed once the lockdown is over and when our church building are reopened once again; Then perhaps these prayers offered in lockdown can be actioned, by inviting them to come along to something appropriate.

Christ prayed for Himself, that on His ascension into heaven, His original place of honour and authority would be restored at the right hand of His Father, and for His disciples that through their trust and belief in Him, they would be similarly exalted and revealed through their lives Christ’s glory. We need to pray that we seek to serve Christ by being constant in our prayer; Not just for ourselves or those we love and care for, but for all those who have yet to experience the love of Christ, because in answer to Yancey’s original question, Yes, prayer does make a difference!

Therefore, as we face both the joys and challenges of the week ahead, may we all be united in harmony, and love, as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are united in the strongest of unions, and may we be ever willing and ready to pray that Thy Kingdom will Come, here on earth, just as it is in heaven. **Amen.**



### **Prayers for the Sunday After Ascension Day**

Let us pray for all people, everywhere, both close to us and far away.

Risen and ascended Lord, who now sits at the right hand of the Father. You tower over time, and all things find fulfilment in you. And yet you ask, in all humility and without pressure, to be Lord of our lives too. Give us the good sense to say yes, to let your presence fill us with gratitude, and your graceful wisdom to direct our lives.

Ascended Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

This morning we pray for the worldwide Church, and especially for all churches and parishes here in the Diocese of Worcester; We ask that just as you sent your Holy Spirit to empower the disciples to be your witnesses, that we, as Your Church in this place, might be known as Christians by our love.

We pray for Bishop John of Worcester, Bishop Martin of Dudley, and for all clergy and authorised ministries called to share your Good News. Give us courage, Lord, in our individual ministries, as we live our lives alongside all whom we meet.

Ascended Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

This morning we pray for people of every race and belief, and in every kind of need; And we ask that your ways may be known on earth and your saving power among nations. We pray that the time may be hastened when there is peace on earth and goodwill between all men; And we give thanks for this precious world, lent to us to nurture for a season, and pass on in good order to generations to come.

We remember all those countries where the basic needs of life are in short supply, and we give thanks, and ask your blessing, on all agencies seeking to bring relief to those who have so little. Help us to share and give generously what we have, and never to allow our compassion to become immune to their plight or their suffering.

Ascended Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**



In these times of the Corona virus, we give thanks for all those working in our hospitals, care homes, hospices and key roles in search of a vaccine, and ask for your protection on them as they carry out such vital work.

As people start to return to work after weeks of absence, we pray for the economy and for all our national and local businesses. We ask you to bless our queen, those in government and all positions of authority, and we pray that your Holy Spirit will direct their decision making in finding a way through the impact of this terrible disease on the lives of so many.

We give thanks at this time, for the many acts of kindness which have been shown by so many people across the country, ensuring that people stay connected and provided for; We ask that you bless the efforts of the many volunteer groups which have been set up as a result.

We pray for our young people, that they may grow up knowing love and hope, valuing life and respecting others, and we especially remember those who may be returning to school in the next week or so and those would have been about to embark on examinations at this time of year were it not for the virus. Lord we ask you to bless them as they anticipate the next stage of their lives, taking decisions about the future and striving to achieve their ambitions under difficult circumstances. Ascended Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who suffer in mind or body and for all those who care for them. We pray for the sick, the isolated, the depressed, the lonely or the abused, as well as any who are in special need of our prayers at this time; We remember those known to us personally now in a moment of silence ....

Lord, where there is suffering, may your healing Spirit bring light and comfort to their afflictions, and may they be comforted through the power of your everlasting love. Ascended Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We remember before God those who have died, those who are facing death, those whose anniversary of death we remember at this time, all who mourn and those without faith, hope or love.

In a moment of silence, we bring before you those whom we know and recall to mind...

Jesus, you are the light of the world, which shines eternally and brings hope. In the midst of our grief and sadness, we ask that You turn our darkness into light, so that in You shall we see light.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**Please pray for** the ill and isolated, hospital and medical research staff, all those working on the frontline and those who have died. We pray for all whose anniversary of death falls at this time and for all who have been bereaved.

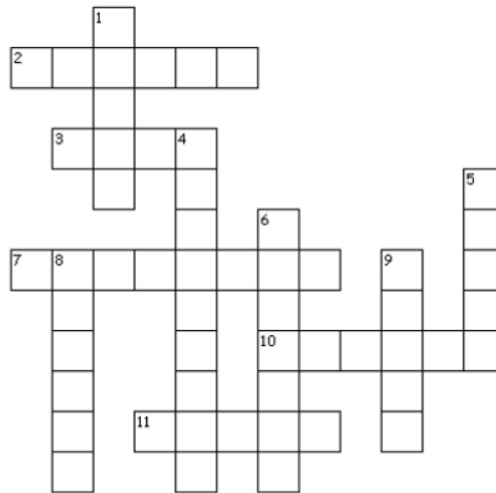
**Those on the frontline:** Alison Herbert a nurse who has been working with the DART (Disaster and Relief Team) and the Mercy Ships in Italy

**Those in residential care:** Barbara Milton

**Those who have died and their families:** Jon Doney, Barbara Howell, John Bennett, Charles Bigland-Gibbons



## THE 12 DISCIPLES CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### Across

2. Asked Jesus to show him the Father.  
(Read John 14:8-9)
3. Jesus told him to care of His mother, Mary.
7. Replaced Judas Iscariot
10. Doubting \_\_\_\_\_
11. He denied Jesus after the rooster crowed

### Down

1. Another name for Peter
4. Philip told him he had found Jesus.  
Jesus said He saw him under a tree.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Iscariot
6. Tax collector
8. Peter's brother
9. Son of Zebedee, brother of John

www.hsnkids.com

## Search for Jesus' 12 Disciples



Can you find the names of the twelve disciples from the word box below?

ANDREW	JOHN	PHILIP
BARTHOLOMEW	JUDAS	SIMON
JAMES	MATTHEW	THADDAEUS
JAMES	PETER	THOMAS



Spot 7 differences





**Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.**

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.



*“With many in our country on lockdown, it’s important that we support those who are feeling lonely and isolated, whatever age they are.”* Archbishop Justin Welby

Options available include materials also available digitally by the Church of England’s Communications team such as [Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer](#) updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England [weekly national online service](#).

A section called Hymn Line offers callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled ‘Hymns We Love’, provides a hymn and reflection and is based on an initiative by the Connections group.

Downloadable resources include logos and posters to help publicise this free service to those who need it most. The link for this is <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-parishes/daily-hope-phone-line>

## Prayer diary – May

22 Apr 2020 By [Sam Setchell](#)



Recent events have meant that many of our prayer diary entries are out of date. We will therefore be issuing monthly pdf updates. Download the [updated prayer diary for May 2020](#).

Updated prayers will also be available on our website 'prayer for the day' and our social media streams.

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