



Connection

Sunday 1st August 2021
Ninth Sunday after Trinity



Collect

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Ephesians 4: 1-16

I, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, 'When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.' (When it says, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

John 6: 24-35

When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were at the place where Jesus had given the bread, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Post Communion Prayer

Holy Father,
who gathered us here around the table of your Son
to share this meal with the whole household of God:
in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace,
gather people of every race and language
to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Reflection



The sermon this week is from Reverend Claire Lording, Priest in Charge of Pershore and Pinvin, Wick and Birlingham.

"Whoever comes to me will never be hungry".

Can you imagine? No more being tempted to grab a chocolate biscuit just before lunch as tummies start to rumble. No more having another portion because we're not quite full. No more scenes of communities and countries having to deal with the brutal reality of failed harvests and famines and war and food shortages. What a world that would be when everyone has enough to feel satisfied and complete. The thing is though, that when Jesus declares himself to be the bread of life that should be sufficient for everyone, he is not actually talking about artisan bread or your favourite sliced varieties. He really is talking about himself and how he wants to share his very self with everyone. And Jesus is not talking about physical hunger, but rather a deep spiritual hunger that shows itself not in tummies making noises, but rather in our hearts aching and being full of longing instead.

Throughout the story of salvation, throughout the millennia of God's journey with the world and its people, God has sought to be generous in all things. God, in every conceivable way, looks to make connections and relationships with people so that they can grow and flourish and so that they can worship God and have God at the very heart of all that they are and all that they hope to be. The story of the Exodus, when God liberates the Hebrews from a life of slavery and control, is not just about freedom and new beginnings. It's about creating a community that is built on the foundations of life and valuing one another. It's about being a group of ordinary people, of all ages, that come together to worship the God who has set them free and desires that they should always have enough resources to be the very best versions of themselves. Sometimes God's people got it right and live life in a full and beautiful way, but there are plenty of other occasions when they get it wrong and complain and grumble and simply take no joy in being a community of faith and love. Perhaps there was some spiritual hunger going on for them too as they wrestled with a life lived in the wilderness and a sense of great uncertainty about what the future held for them. Trusting in God to provide, from a place of deep need, takes a lot of faith and courage.

It's a story we see again as Jesus spends his time teaching and being with the crowds who simply want more and more of him. No doubt many in the various crowds were carrying their own hunger with them, and much of it would have been spiritual. People followed Jesus wanting healing, wanting to be made whole, wanting to feel loved and valued. And Jesus again reveals the generous nature of God, by declaring that he is the bread of life, and it will be enough. This bread will not be like the manna that appeared in the wilderness, that was there for a day then vanished, leaving everyone hoping and praying that more would appear the next day. Jesus, as the bread of life, is always present, always there, always waiting for you to reach out and let him feed and sustain you. Jesus is always walking alongside you, always longing to have that close relationship that lets hope and joy be real and possible.

So today's gospel is a bit like an invitation really. Jesus is saying, I'm here and I'm always going to be here, so please come along and say you'll let me be a part of your life. Jesus is saying, come and share in the bread, which is me, every time you gather for worship and communion. Jesus is saying, every time you eat my bread and drink my cup, I will be there in the very midst of you. This is such an incredible invitation because it changes lives; it can change you and it can change me. Where there has been a hunger and a longing that you couldn't shift Jesus offers himself and says, it is enough. And that can be the starting place for a lifetime's journey of relying on Jesus to guide and direct you as you work out how you can best lead your life knowing that you are sustained by Jesus, the bread of life.



Requests for Prayers

We give thanks for the scientists, NHS staff and volunteers who are facilitating the vaccination of UK citizens.

We pray for all those who are sick everywhere and for those who have asked for our prayers and for their carers:

Roy and Margaret Putnam, Brian Bolam, Wendy Dufty, Yvonne Seward, Gayle Richards, Laurence Alexander.

We continue to pray for: Percy and Sharon Blizzard, Jackie Pickford, Clive Hunt.

We pray for those who are in residential care: Sheila

Bigland-Gibbons, Barbara Milton, Rita Sheppy and David Wilkinson.

We pray for those who have died everywhere: Anne Wood, Edward Bunn and Andy Caddell and their families. And also for those whose anniversary of death falls at this time.



Church Services

The church services this week will be at:

10.30am St Mary's, Elmley Castle – Rev Katryn Leclezio

10.30am Holy Trinity, Eckington – Rev Allison Davies

News from the Diocese
Prayers and diocesan news can be found at
www.cofe-worcester.org.uk



The Rota for August 2021

Date	Church	Time	Minister
8 th August	St Barbara's, Ashton Under Hill	10.30am	Reverend Katryn Leclezio
	St Giles, Bredon	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
15 th August	St Peter's, Besford	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
	St Peter's, Little Comberton	10.30am	Reverend Katryn Leclezio
22 nd August	Chapel of Ease, Bredon's Norton	9.00am	Reverend Doug Chaplin
	St Nicholas, Teddington	10.30am	Reverend Katryn Leclezio
29 th August	United Service St Giles, Bredon	10.30am	Reverend Katryn Leclezio

Midweek Communion

Date	Church	Time	Minister
11 th August	St Faith's, Overbury	10.00am	Reverend Allison Davies
18 th August	St Peter's, Little Comberton	10.00am	Reverend Katryn Leclezio
25 th August	St James', Defford	10.00am	Reverend Katryn Leclezio



Reverend Allison Davies

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

