



Connection

Sunday 22nd August 2021
Twelfth Sunday after Trinity



Collect

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Ephesians 6: 10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

John 6: 56-69

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept

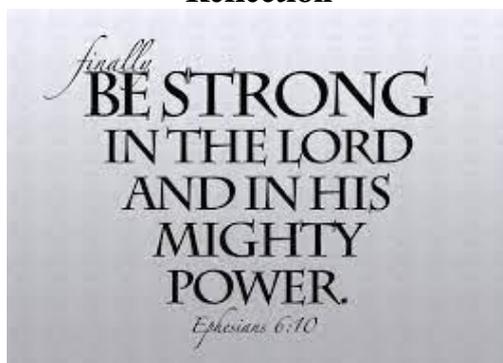
it?" But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father." Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.

Post Communion Prayer

God of all mercy,
in this eucharist you have set aside our sins
and given us your healing:
grant that we who are made whole in Christ
may bring that healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Reflection



The sermon this week is from the Archdeacon of Dudley, Nikki Groarke.

You can listen to the podcast at www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/your-faith/prayer-worship/sermon-podcasts

Be strong and pray at all times!

Good advice from Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, and helpful that it is our reading on the same day as a difficult passage in John's gospel, where the reality of some of the challenges of following Christ are brought into focus.

Being Kingdom People, followers of Jesus is the very best way to live, but it also encompasses death. Death to self, following Jesus to the cross, laying down our lives as he did - difficult teaching to accept. No wonder the disciples grumbled and complained, and some of them decided they couldn't, or wouldn't, take the tough parts of this faith journey along with the blessings. But those who knew Jesus best, the twelve who had walked closely with him, they were sure they had found the Holy One of God, the one with words of eternal life, the one who they would follow to the end. They had certainty that his words were indeed words that gave life, but they were also close enough to him to know that the life on offer was one they could not live in their own strength. They would need the Holy Spirit. Their strength would need to be in the Lord.

I am sure that you, like me, at times feel simply that life is just too hard. Certainly in this last year we have faced so much, and even as we emerge in fits and starts from the pandemic, life is a struggle. The ongoing impact of covid will be felt for a long time to come, and we don't yet fully know the toll it will

have taken on the education of our children and young people, jobs and the economy, hospital waiting lists and mental health issues. So how are we, as people of faith, to respond?

Be strong in the Lord and the strength of his power, standing firm, clothed in truth and righteousness, confident and secure not because we are good or strong, but because God is. When our faith is in him, when we are growing as kingdom people because we are rooted in prayer, holding on to the word of God and worshipping him creatively, we are able to withstand the ravages of covid, knowing our eternity is secure, and that the Spirit of God gives us life.

Then we can prayerfully proclaim the gospel of peace, inviting others to explore the mysteries of the kingdom of God, that they too may come to believe, become disciples of the one who gives life in all its fulness.

We have a vision in this diocese for many, many healthy and sustainable churches, groups of disciples who will share hope and transform their communities. The wider Church of England vision urges us to become a simpler, humbler, bolder, church.

I believe this short passage in Ephesians captures both those themes wonderfully. Simpler - pray at all times about everything, as led by the Holy Spirit. If we do simply that, it will change the way we live! Humbler - be strong, but not in our own strength, in the strength of the Lord. Those early disciples who gave in when it got tough are example enough of just how hard the life of a Christ follower can be if we try to do live it in our own strength. True humility means recognising our utter weakness and acknowledging that there is nowhere else reliable to go other than to Jesus. We need all his strength, wisdom and protection to get through. Bolder - with that prayerful strengthening, we can be bold to share the message of the gospel, knowing it is truth and life.

If our churches are full of people growing in this simple, humble and bold way, they will be healing and sustaining communities of faith, healthy and sustainable churches, able to withstand whatever comes our way.

May we be communities of faith who are strong, and who pray at all times!

Amen.



Requests for Prayers

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, Yvonne Seward, Laurence Alexander, Ros and Rob, Bryony Baynes.

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

We pray for those who are in residential care: Barbara Milton, Rita Sheppy and David Wilkinson.

We pray for those who have died everywhere: Peter Eyden, Sheila Bigland-Gibbons, Edith Lucy 'Dot' Jeffrey and Andy Caddell and their families. And also for those whose anniversary of death falls at this time.

If there is someone or something that you would like us to pray for, please email eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com and we will include them on the prayer list

Church Services

The church services this week will be at:

9.00am Chapel of Ease, Bredon's Norton – Rev Doug Chaplin

10.30am St Nicholas, Teddington – Rev Katryn Leclezio



Rota for August 2021

Date	Church	Time	Minister
29 th August	United Service St Giles, Bredon	10.30am	Reverend Katryn Leclezio

Midweek Communion

Date	Church	Time	Minister
25 th August	St James', Defford	10.00am	Reverend Katryn Leclezio

Rota for September 2021

Date	Time	Place	Presiding
5 th Sept	10.30am	Little Comberton	Canon Roger Spiller
	10.30am	Eckington -Climate Sunday	Reverend Allison Davies
	11.00am	Beckford – Service for the Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers	Archdeacon Robert Jones
12 th Sept	9.00am	Besford	Reverend Allison Davies
	9.00am	Bricklehampton	Reverend Katryn Leclezio
	10.30am	Bredon	Reverend Allison Davies
	10.30am	Elmley Castle	Reverend Katryn Leclezio
19 th Sept	9.00am	Bredon's Norton	Reverend Allison Davies
	9.00am	Elmley Castle	Canon Roger Spiller
	10.30am	Eckington	Reverend Allison Davies
	10.30am	Overbury	Reverend Doug Chaplin
26 th Sept	9.00am	Defford	Reverend Allison Davies
	10.30am	Alstone (Harvest Service for Alstone and Teddington)	Reverend Katryn Leclezio
	10.30am	Bredon (Harvest Service)	Reverend Allison Davies
	4.00pm	Great Comberton (Harvest Service)	Reverend Katryn Leclezio

Midweek Communion

8th September – Overbury – Reverend Katryn Leclézio

15th September – Lower Comberton – Reverend Allison Davies

22nd September – Defford – Reverend Allison Davies



News from the Diocese

Prayers and diocesan news can be found at

www.cofe-worcester.org.uk

Rev Allison will be on annual leave from Friday 20th August to Saturday 4th September. Please contact Rev Katryn Leclézio at klbhteam@gmail.com or Bredon Hill Co-ordinator Alison Khan at acbhteam@gmail.com Thank you.



Reverend Allison Davies

Vicar of Eckington and Defford-cum-Besford, and Associate Priest in Overbury, with Teddington, Alstone and Little Washbourne with Beckford and Ashton under Hill, as Priest-in-Charge of Bredon with Bredon's Norton, and as Associate Priest to Elmley Castle, with Netherton, Bricklehampton, and The Combertons



Reverend Katryn Leclézio

Priest-in-Charge to Elmley Castle, with Netherton, Bricklehampton, and The Combertons, and of Overbury, with Teddington, Alstone and Little Washbourne with Beckford and Ashton under Hill, and as Associate Priest to Bredon with Bredon's Norton, and to Eckington with Defford-cum-Besford, all within the Bredon Hill Group