



**UNITED BENEFICE OF CORLEY PARISH
CHURCH & ST MARY & ALL SAINTS
CHURCH, FILLONGLEY WITH FILLONGLEY
METHODIST CHURCH**

Anglicans and Methodists in Unity.



Dear Friends,

I hope that you are well and enjoying the beautiful weather. The sunshine really does help to lift the mood and if you are lucky enough to have a garden to sit outside in, then there can be few more delightful things than to sit and enjoy the beauty of God's creation whilst enjoying a cup of tea or maybe a glass of wine. Simple pleasures that we might have taken for granted before the lockdown.

Now the lockdown restrictions are started to be eased, the natural response is to want things to 'go back to normal'. Normal was what we were used to. We can understand normal because that is what we have done for so very long. But, one of positive things to come out of lockdown has been the time to reflect on what normal really is, and what sort of normal do we want to go back to. I really hope that we remember some of the, sometimes painful, lessons of lockdown. In particular to remember exactly who was important to us during the pandemic. The people that we really can't function without. All the frontline staff, many of whom survive on minimum wage, who have kept the country going. I don't want to get into a political debate, but I do hope that we don't all have collectively short memories next time there is an election.

On the subject of getting back to 'normal' a friend sent me the following recently and it really struck a chord with me.

"For a few weeks now I have heard people saying "I just can't wait for things to be back to normal." Especially just to be able to be with my family. But as I've thought about our current situation I have realised how much I don't want things to go back to exactly the way they were.

Here are a few of my reasons...

- I hope that the next time a friend grabs me and pulls me in for a hug, I actually take the time to appreciate the gift of their presence and embrace.
- I hope that when school resumes and you are dropping your children or grandchildren off, you take the time to thank the staff for the amazing gift that they give to your family.
- I hope that the next time I'm sitting in a crowded restaurant I take the time to look around at the smiling faces, loud voices and be more appreciative of the gift of community.
- I hope that when I am at the supermarket that I take a moment to acknowledge the necessities of life and the amazing people who work so hard to keep us supplied.
- I hope that I never again take for granted the ability to hop in the car and visit a friend, go to the beach, a restaurant, walk or hike wherever whenever etc.

So, truth is, I don't want things to return to the way they once were. I hope and pray that we take the lessons and challenges of the past few weeks and create a new normal.

My goal is to appreciate more, love harder, and truly appreciate the daily abundance of blessings that were so easily overlooked just a few weeks ago. If someone tells you they love you, take it to heart!"

So my hope and prayer for all of us is that we do have the opportunity to count our blessings, that as we emerge from lockdown we will have a safer, gentler more caring world to return to. That we value those things that we have for so long taken for granted and that we never have to experience anything like this pandemic again.

If the sunshine is not cheering your spirits and you would like to have a chat with someone, please do not hesitate to contact me or anyone else in the team.

With love and prayers

Ali



LECTIONARY Readings and Prayers for Sunday 31st May 2020

The Day of Pentecost

Collects

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, ignite in us your holy fire; strengthen your children with the gift of faith, revive your Church with the breath of love, and renew the face of the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Readings

Acts 2: vs 1-21 Numbers 11: vs 24-30 Psalm 104 I Corinthians 12: 3-13

John 20: vs 19-23 or John 7: vs 37-39

A Reflection on the Readings for Pentecost ~ from Revd Ali Massey

Have you ever had a really great present?

When I was about 8 years old, my parents gave me a bike for Christmas. It wasn't a new bike, it was a second hand one that Dad had restored and painted bright blue. It was a very special present as, being the youngest of 4 children, big items like bikes were often hand-me-downs, but this was just for me! I loved that bike and rode it virtually every day. It was a great present.

Today we celebrate one of the greatest gifts ever given. A gift that was given to the first disciples over 2000 years ago, the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But like so many corny adverts claim, this gift really is the gift that keeps on giving. It is a gift that wasn't just for those first disciples, but for all who turn to the Lord and accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour and friend.

When I prepare to lead worship, my prayers before each service always includes the words, 'not in my strength but only in yours'. I can do nothing on my own, it is only the gift of the Holy Spirit that makes what I do and say worship. I can read the liturgy beautifully and my sermon may have been prepared studiously, but it is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes anything I do or say meaningful or spiritual in any way.

At Pentecost we remember and celebrate the day when the disciples received that precious gift of the Holy Spirit for the first time. Jesus had promised the disciples, and us, that God would send the advocate, the comforter, the sustainer, the enabler to help them and us after his ascension into heaven.

That first encounter with the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to go out into the world. To proclaim the great good news of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. It was the birth-day of the church. However Christians are worshipping today, whatever tradition, whether Catholic or Protestant, Methodist, Pentecostal or Free Church, it is the same gift of the Spirit and the same birth-day that we are celebrating.

Paul in the epistle set for today (1 Corinthians 12: 3 – 13), describes the impact and the results of the gift of the Holy Spirit in God's people. When we are filled with the Spirit we are empowered to use our God given gifts to build up God's church and to help to spread the good news in our particular place and time.

As Paul tells us, there are many different gifts that the Spirit encourages within us. The most obvious one may be leadership – not just standing at the front of church leading a service, but leadership in its widest sense. Leaders help to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church, leaders motivate us to work together, they realize that the sum of the whole is greater than the individual parts and empower team working. There are so many leaders in each of the parishes, some whose work is unseen so when we are able to start meeting again in church, perhaps we ought to think about all those leaders and to thank them for all that they do for God's church in our communities? To acknowledge the work that has gone on, adapting to the changing circumstances that we have found ourselves in.

Others may have the gift of administration, not just the paperwork and 'stuff' that helps to get things done. Administrators are essential to help lead the body of Christ by steering others to remain focused on tasks that the church has decided upon. Again, when we restart our physical church gatherings, we may need to think about our offering of worship. As well as rejoicing in being able to gather in person, is there something about offering worship online that could be helpful and inclusive?

Some will have the gift of teaching, and this can take many different forms, but Christian teachers share the truth of God's word to help to build up and unify the church. Teachers help others to grow in their discipleship and to deepen their relationship with God. Some will have the gift of knowledge, slightly different to teaching, some with the gift of knowledge may not be teachers and vice versa, but knowledge is the ability to learn, know and explain the truth of God's word.

Perhaps you are wise? Wisdom is the gift that looks for the action of the Holy Spirit in the church and applies Jesus' teaching and actions in the church. Or maybe you have the gift of prophecy? Prophecy can be proclaiming God's word boldly as a teacher or preacher, but is also the gift of coming close to God and discerning what God wants for God's church. Prophecy is closely related to discernment, the gift of recognising the action of the Holy Spirit in others, it sees the truth and proclaims it to build up others and the church. We also need people with the gift of exhortation. Those wonderful souls who encourage others to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. They are those people whose enthusiasm is catching, you can't help but want to become involved in things that they are describing.

Or maybe you are a shepherd? When (eventually) I am licensed to be your rector I will receive a 'share in the cure of souls' in the communities along with the Bishop. Being the vicar is to be a shepherd, but it is not an exclusive role. There are many other shepherds in our communities, those kind and generous souls who care for others and often show that care in practical ways.

Then there are our prayer warriors. Those who faithfully pray for our communities and for individuals. The ones who understand that everything that we do needs to be underpinned by prayer and supplications to our Lord and Father.

There are so many other gifts – the gift of faith that encourages others when they are in doubt, the gift of evangelism which builds up the church by spreading the good news about the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And of course we mustn't forget the gifts that some people say 'are just the way I am' the gifts of service, mercy, giving and hospitality. All those gifts that need celebrating, because they make our communal life so much happier and really oil the wheels of what it means to live our lives as the family of God in this place and time.

Remembering that we are celebrating the church's birthday, perhaps we need to think about presents again. When I remember that blue bike, I think about how some presents change us. That bike made me more adventurous, it gave me more freedom. It was a transformational gift.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is always a transformational gift. Those first disciples were changed into apostles. They were transformed from people who had experienced life with Jesus to people who could share that experience with others. They were empowered with the strength, courage and vision to go out from Jerusalem and to communicate the reality of what a life lived with the God of love could be like.

The gift of the Holy Spirit allows us all to experience the transformational power of God in our lives. So my prayer for us all this Pentecost is that we are open to the gift, and that we are willing for the gift to change us, so that we too can grow into the people that God intends us to be. To do our part in helping to bring about the Kingdom of God to a world that so desperately needs transformation.

Come Holy Spirit, inspire, transform and energise your people. In Jesus' holy name **Amen**

HYMNS & WORSHIP SONGS

Here are the Hymns that we would have been singing in Church on Sunday ~

[This is the day the Lord has made \(StF 151\)](#)

[There's a spirit in the air \(StF 398\)](#)

[All creatures of our God and King \(StF 99\)](#)

[Come down, O love divine \(StF 372\)](#)

And to sing along with this week it's got to be this one! We hope that you enjoy this slightly modernised version of the traditional tune, Down Ampney, arranged by composer Will Todd.

https://youtu.be/LYty6E_2GpE?list=RDLYty6E_2GpE

PRAYERS



Sundays @ 7pm.

A reminder that we are lighting a Candle every Sunday at 7pm during this crisis and putting it in our windows to be a sign of our solidarity and hope in the light of Jesus Christ that can never be extinguished.

This coming Sunday our prayers will be focussed on those who are worried, concerned or afraid of the return to some sort of 'normal'. We also pray that we will always remember and appreciate all those who have helped us in any way during this crisis.

Fill this moment, Lord.

Open my eyes to your presence.

Open my ears to your call.

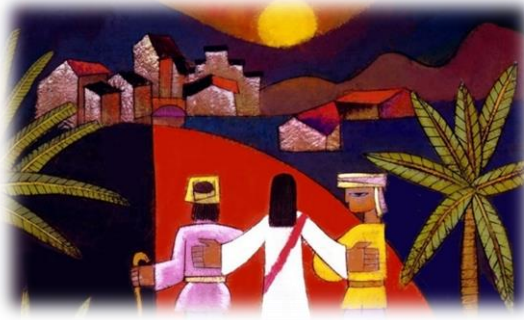
Open my heart to your glory

now, in me, in all.

A Prayer from Africa

As tools come to be sharpened by the blacksmith,
so may we come, Lord.

As sharpened tools go back to their owner,
so may we go back to our everyday life
to be used by you



Reflection on The Lord's Prayer - Easter to Trinity

Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.....

We don't have to look hard in the current situation to see many evils: sickness, suffering, death and isolation. The last line of the prayer of Jesus offers this short, sharp prayer for deliverance. It is not wrong to ask God to save us from evil. To pray in this way is a sign of strength not weakness. To pray these words builds hope and resilience even in the midst of pain and disease. We cannot and do not pretend that all is right in the world. But each day we can place ourselves and those we love and the whole world under God's protection.

READ Luke 22: vs 39-46 Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives

The seventh line of the Lord's Prayer is vital. As we pray each day, 'But deliver us from evil', we build strength and resilience for every challenge we face, whether large or small. All too often, we give way at the first sign of opposition or difficulty.

Jesus loves his disciples. Yet his love does not wrap us in cotton wool or take us out of a world in which we will face evil. We are called to share in God's mission and that means being part of the great resistance.

In Gethsemane, Jesus faces his greatest trial and prays for strength not to turn away from the cross. We, too, may face defining moments in our lives and ministries. We build our own strength for these key moments of our lives in the quiet daily disciplines of prayer, cultivating a deep resistance to evil and living against the tide.

Ephesians offers a picture of the Christian life as a battle. The Church encourages every Christian at their baptism to fight valiantly 'against sin, the world and the devil'. We do battle against the evil which remains in our own lives. We do battle against the evil which is in the world. We do battle against the devil, who represents the spiritual forces of evil we cannot see.

READ Ephesians 6: vs 10-20 The whole armour of God

One translation of this line of the Lord's Prayer is 'deliver us from the evil one'. Sometimes, the evil which besets us seems not random, but to have a strategy to pull us down, accuse us or distract us.

The daily call to resist evil is a call to courage and to take seriously the challenges of living as a disciple. Ephesians offers help here through a picture of the armour of God: the qualities of truth, righteousness, salvation, peace, faith and the scriptures which shape our inner lives.

Evil disturbs us. Some of the hardest parts of the gospels to understand in our generation are the miracles of deliverance. We rejoice that Jesus restores those whose lives are distorted in ways we cannot understand. But we are perplexed at the diagnosis of conditions we might now describe differently.

READ Mark 5: vs 1-20 Jesus heals a demon-possessed man.

The Church is called to take evil seriously. The baptism service still contains a prayer of deliverance at the signing of the cross: 'May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness...and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.'

The prayer reflects the truth that there is a deep spiritual dimension to our lives. Evil can affect us in ways we do not realize or understand, but no situation is beyond the reach of the power and the love of Christ. Part of our calling is to bear witness to how much Jesus has done for us.

Sometimes when we pray, 'deliver us from evil', it seems as though nothing changes. What's the right way to respond in those situations? It can seem as though God has abandoned us.

READ Revelation 2 vs 1-7 The message to the Church in Ephesus

The Book of Revelation begins with seven letters to different churches. Each faces different challenges. The Ephesian Church is simply worn out by its efforts to keep going over many years. The letter reminds us that evil, itself, is deep seated and persistent.

Christ commends the Ephesian Church's patient endurance, but also (gently) recalls this same Church to their first love. Sometimes, life throws so many things at us that all we can do is hold on. In those times, we rely on the strength of others to hold us up and sustain us. But when life drains us, we also need to hear the call of Christ to return to our centre – to our first love – and be renewed.

We are created for life with a longing for eternity. Everything within us wants to live. From a Christian perspective, death is therefore seen as the last enemy. Christ has won the victory over every form of evil, including our own mortality.

READ 1 Corinthians 15 vs 20-26 The last enemy to be destroyed.

In Easter, we proclaim for 50 days: alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ's victory over death does not simply mean that Christ will live for ever. Christ's victory means resurrection for all who trust in him by faith.

When we pray, 'deliver us from evil', we make our prayer from the perspective of this great and permanent victory. Neither cancer, nor abuse, nor depression, nor bereavement, nor dementia, nor an accident of any kind can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

This victory, in turn, gives hope, strength and resilience in every dimension and every period of our Christian lives.

RESOURCES

Understandably, a lot has been written about resilience in lockdown.

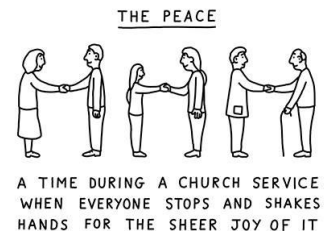
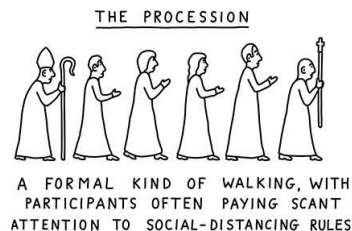
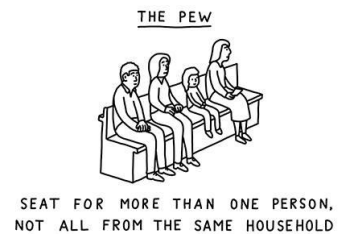
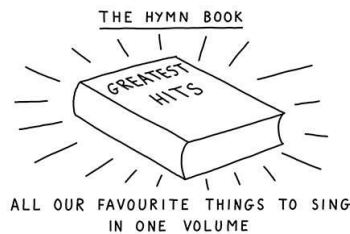
Justine Allain Chapman suggests practical ways to cope with the mental-health challenges of the pandemic in her article, An A-Z of resilience in lockdown. It can be found at this link:-

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/15-may/comment/opinion/an-a-z-of-resilience-in-lockdown>

Resilience in Life and Faith: Finding your strength in God by Tony Horsfall & Debbie Hawker
Published by the BRF is also a source of useful reading on this subject.

REMINDERS OF FORGOTTEN CONCEPTS

Dave Walker's Cartoon this week....



Attached to this Bulletin are three items ~

- ✚ Pentecost Greetings from Revd Jane.
- ✚ A Reflection from Revd Andrew Haines for Pentecost Sunday
- ✚ A catholic spirit – extracts from Celtic Daily Light

AND FINALLY DON'T FORGET

If there is anything that you need or know of someone who would appreciate being contacted or added to the mailing list for this weekly e-bulletin, please do not hesitate to contact Revd Ali, Revd Jane or any of the Churchwardens and Church Stewards listed below. ⁱ

ⁱ *Contact Details:*

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