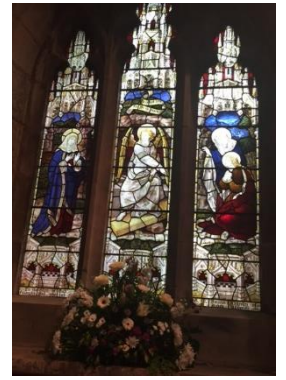




**UNITED BENEFICE OF CORLEY
PARISH CHURCH & ST MARY & ALL
SAINTS CHURCH, FILLONGLEY WITH
FILLONGLEY METHODIST CHURCH**

Anglicans and Methodists in Unity.



Dear Friends

What makes you feel safe? Is it your home, your work, your friends and family? I wonder, with all that has happened over this last few months if that has changed?

Sometimes, when we feel out of control, we don't feel safe. The global Coronavirus pandemic has been so very far out of our individual control that it isn't surprising if we don't feel as safe as we have done in the past. At its height, just being outside of our homes was dangerous to us all, so lockdown, in a strange way, was comforting. Stay inside, don't expose yourself to danger was the message. An easy to understand message even if its ramifications were difficult. But now, with lockdown easing we are having to re-evaluate how we operate. The Government guidance has changed. We are allowed more freedom if we choose to exercise it. But what does that look like and how does it make us feel?

We are entering into a new phase of decision making. We have to decide where and how to start to reintegrate into the 'new' normal. Although the 2 metre social distance is still in place we can now get closer to others if we take other precautions. Face masks will become a more familiar sight, as will one-way travel through shops and other public spaces. Cashiers shielded behind walls of Perspex and hand sanitiser at every entrance and exit. All necessary precautions for the safety of us and others, but while we navigate the new normal our anxiety levels may rise. This is when we need something familiar and comforting to hold on to.

For many, faith is that anchor. Holding onto God's promise that God has plans to prosper and not harm us (Jeremiah 29:11), trusting that God sent God's only Son into our world and our history so that we might have life, life in all its fullness (John 3:16, John 10:10) and if the worst case scenario happens, then God is with us and will welcome us home to the place that Jesus has prepared for us in our heavenly Father's house (John 14: 1 – 7).

Perhaps, when navigating our new normal, Jesus' words will help us to process and engage with the new Government guidance. Jesus said in John 13:34 that we should love one another as we are loved. Loving each other means wanting the best for each other; making the right choices for ourselves and each other; doing those things that we know will protect others even if they still continue to inconvenience us. So, my prayer for each of us at this difficult and sometimes scary time, is that we remember and know that we are loved, and that love will be our guiding principle as we start to re-engage with the wider world.

As I write this, I am waiting for the updated guidance from the Diocese and the Church of England about re-opening our churches. The Church Councils have been working very hard on preparing to re-open in a safe and sustainable way and we hope to welcome you back into our buildings

when that work has been completed. Please keep an eye on our website for the latest information as the details for each of the churches may be different but I am really looking forward to meeting you in person and to continuing this journey together.

As always, if you are struggling, please do not hesitate to contact me or anyone on the team and we will do whatever we can to help.

May God bless you and keep you, may God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you, and may God grant you peace.

With love and prayers

Ali

LECTIONARY Readings and Prayers for Sunday 28th June 2020 **Trinity 3**

Collects

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; 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.**

God our Saviour, look on this wounded world in pity and in power; hold us fast to your promises of peace won for us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Readings

Genesis 22: vs 1-14 ~ Psalm 13 ~ Romans 6: vs 12-end ~ Matthew 10: vs 40-end

A Reflection for the Third Sunday after Trinity ~ from Revd Ali Massey

In our modern world we sometimes feel that we have to make a choice about how we live. A binary decision, either to live for God or to live for the world.

Before the Coronavirus pandemic, the worldly way, was the way that applauds financial or career success, our worth being counted by what we own, where we live or what car we drive. The desire to be counted as successful in worldly terms or the drive to become successful can, on occasions, lead us to a place where we no longer recognize ourselves or like what we have become. Paul in his letter to the Romans (Romans 6: 12 – end) describes this behaviour as being a slave to sin – when the outward 'stuff' of the world that is defining and driving us. I wonder, that as we emerge from the pandemic, will this worldview be changed?

Paul tells us that when we welcome Christ into our lives, we change from involuntary slaves to the world's view into willing servants motivated by our desire to serve the God who has saved us, in and through Christ.

That change, from being a slave to the world to becoming a servant to God, can be a dramatic one – like Paul's own transformation on the Damascus Road or it can be a more gradual change. For me, that change came about in a gentle and measured way, with Christ gently disentangling me from the desire for outward trappings of success. Releasing me from the driven-ness of wanting more and better. The desire to live only from myself changed to the desire to live for and to serve Christ.

I hope, that when we finally start to meet together again in church, I might have the privilege of sharing my story of coming to faith. The short version is that I imagined and hoped that in my 50s I would be 'a lady who lunches'. Not having to work, having enough income to do pretty much what I liked. The biggest decisions being about who to meet for coffee or where to go on holiday. My biggest worries being what to wear or how my hair looked. A shallow existence that I had thought would satisfy me. Fortunately for me, God had other plans (although at first I did have to be dragged screaming and kicking away from those worldly aspirations).

In last week's Gospel reading (Matthew 10: 38) we heard Jesus say that to be his disciple, we needed to take up our cross and follow him. Sometimes, that cross can be a huge life-changing event, like Paul on the road to Damascus. Making that decision to be counter-cultural and live our lives for Jesus rather than to follow the 'worldly' path. Listening and being obedient to the call that God has on our lives.

But every day we are still being urged to take up our cross and follow Jesus. Every day we make many small decisions that may not seem to have massive moral implications, but we should always be asking ourselves, do the decisions we make serve our own worldly purposes or those of the Kingdom of God. Decisions about what we buy, what we read, what we watch on the television, how we spend our time. All those seemingly insignificant daily choices which cumulatively can bring us into the slavery of sin or into the presence of Christ, who calls us into his righteousness. That righteousness is a state in which we exist before God; we are put right before God through Christ. But it is also the nature of the life we live. To be right with God means having the desire to live in ways that please God.

Jesus tells us in this week's Gospel reading (Matthew 10: 40 – end), that to be his followers we must be so closely identified with Christ that those who receive and welcome us are receiving and welcoming Christ through us. There is a reward for those followers but also a reward for those who receive his followers.

But what does it mean for us to be closely identified with Christ? I'm a member of the Diocesan Board of Education and there is a phrase that we use when discussing the provision of C of E schools – it is their 'Christian distinctiveness'. So, what is our Christian distinctiveness? Our lives should make it obvious that we are Christian, the way we live and behave should make it self-evident that we are followers of Christ. It isn't just those of us who are publicly, identifiably, Christian by wearing a dog collar. Jesus calls us *all* to live out his risen life in our lives so that others can see the risen Christ in us. Our lives should be attractive to others and to be a blessing to others. We can lead others to the truth of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ by the way we live so that they too can live their lives in the fullness that life in Christ offers.

Formerly, I thought that life in all its fullness meant having a big house and a nice car, entertaining friends with good food and fine wines. It was all about what I could do for others in a material

sense. I'm not saying that we should clothe ourselves in sackcloth and ashes and be miserable. Just the opposite, we know from our Gospel that Jesus himself was very big on hospitality and spent some of his time eating and drinking with his friends. But when he was at a party, Jesus attracted others to himself by his demeanour, by his closeness to God. Other people wanted to be close to Jesus and learn from him. People were transformed by their encounters with Jesus. Jesus' outrageous hospitality offered not just physical sustenance, but the gift of grace from God and the promise of eternal life through him.

And this is, I think, our challenge. Are our lives lived in a way that reflects the life and light of Christ? Are we, as followers of Jesus, people that others want to welcome into their lives and homes? Do our lives encourage others to come close to Christ, to learn more about him and to be prepared to be transformed by the encounter with Christ through us? Some people that you meet in life are just like that, they are naturally attractive because they exude the love of God, the light of Christ shines out of them. Our natural (or worldly?) response might be to feel that 'that is ok for them but...'

But... the good news is that we can all be 'like that'. We all have an example to follow, a pattern to base our lives on so we can be 'like that'. Jesus who rescues us from the slavery of worldly sin, Jesus who gives us our lives back, who helps us to live our lives in the way that God intended them to be. Jesus who understands the temptations of the world and forgives us when we slide back into the more familiar or comfortable ways of the world. Jesus who came to give us all life, life in all its fullness. Jesus the one that, whoever we are, however we have lived our lives up until now, gives us a new and fresh start.

So, the choice for us today is, do we lose ourselves in our own self-interest or do we offer ourselves and our lives to God in whom we discover the freedom and wholeness that living life with God can bring. Jesus reminds us that living for him brings freedom and purpose to our lives. Living life with Jesus means that we can put down the burdens of the world and lift up his yoke instead. A yoke which is light and full of life.

HYMNS & WORSHIP SONGS

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

[Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine \(StF 548\)](#)

[Brother, sister, let me serve you \(StF 611\)](#)

[When I needed a neighbour were you there \(StF 256\)](#)

This one has just got to be this week's singalong ☺

[We are marching in the light of God \(StF 483\)](#)

Here is the link ~

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqNdoExJido>

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 our imminent return to our places of worship – Churches, Chapels, Cathedrals – may we all draw additional strength and comfort from God in these very special places.

TO SING OR NOT TO SING..... ?

Making music, be it singing in a choir (or in the shower☺) or playing a musical instrument in an orchestra or a band, is one of the most enjoyable parts of life for so many people. This includes those who make their living as professional musicians and those who belong to amateur choirs and orchestras. Singing in a choir is not only about being in a community but also for many it is essential to their emotional well-being and positive mental health.

So there I was, at the start of lock-down, with the three choirs that I sing with all having had to stop their rehearsals and cancel planned concerts, and then I discovered *The Self Isolation Choir*. This choir was forming and planning to perform Handel's Messiah online on May 31st, The Day of Pentecost, which soon became known as Hallelujah day. Several weeks of virtual rehearsals ensued and once I had overcome the strangeness of singing on my own with my computer, it became a really enjoyable experience. Over 3,500 people took part from all over the world and a real sense of friendship and purpose amidst our shared situation, developed.

As a follow up to the great success of *Messiah at Home*, three weeks of Summer School were planned, the first being this current week when we have been singing the music of John Rutter. Something which I have noticed this week while rehearsing music with which I am fairly familiar, is that I am paying much more attention to the words of the pieces. Two pieces in particular have words which are very appropriate to our current situation so I have reproduced them for you here to use as prayers.

A Clare Benediction

May the Lord show His mercy upon you;
May the light of His presence be your guide;
May He guard you and uphold you;
May His spirit be ever by your side.

When you sleep, may His angels watch over you;
When you wake, may He fill you with His grace.
May you love Him and serve Him all your days,
Then in heaven may you see His face

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May the light of His presence be your guide:
May He guard you and uphold you;
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When you sleep, may His angels watch over you;
When you wake, may He fill you with His grace.
May you love Him and serve Him all your days,
Then in heaven may you see His face

Look at the World

Look at the world, everything all around us,
Look at the world and marvel every day.
Look at the world: so many joys and wonders,
So many miracles along our way.

Chorus:
Praise to thee, O Lord for all creation.
Give us thankful hearts that we may see
All the gifts we share, and every blessing,
All things come of thee.

Look at the earth bringing forth fruit and flower.
Look at the sky, the sunshine and the rain.
Look at the hills; look at the trees and mountains,
Valley and flowing river, field and plain.

Chorus

Think of the spring, think of the warmth of summer,
Bringing the harvest before the winter's cold.
Everything grows, everything has a season,
Till it is gathered to the Father's fold:

Chorus

Every good gift, all that we need and cherish,
Comes from the Lord, in token of his love.
We are his hands, stewards of all his bounty.
His is the earth and his the heavens above.

Chorus

Suzanne Whiting

RESOURCES

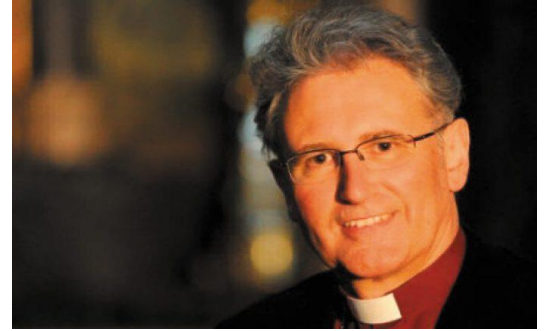
During this last week Bishop Christopher introduced us to a survey in his latest video message

Here is the link to the Bishop's Video

<https://vimeo.com/431192544/51c5faa2d7>

and here is the link to the survey.

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/8-may/news/uk/survey-coronavirus-church-and-you>



STOP PRESS!
St Mary & All Saints Church, Fillongley
YOUR CHURCH



is opening again very soon

Wednesday 1st July 2020 10am – 12noon

PRIVATE PRAYER

Sunday 5th July 2020 10:30am

SERVICE of the WORD

We have followed all the official guidance to prepare the church for your visit. Coming into church might feel a little bit different, but please follow all the safety guidance and instructions. A warm welcome is assured!

Please spread this news to everyone!

(News of the opening of Corley Church will be in next week's eBulletin)

Attached to this Bulletin are these items:-

✚ Lift up your hearts *Church Times 19th June 2020*

✚ A Reflection from the Revd Andrew Haines for Trinity 3

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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