

Cycle of Prayer – Sunday, 6 September to Saturday, 10 October 2020



Galilee Dawn

Welcome

Like previous monthly editions of this Cycle of Prayer, this is once again produced in a temporary format necessitated by pandemic working arrangements. As usual each parish, deanery and church school has an entry in the cycle over the course of a full year. Where specific intentions or prayers have been received from parishes or deaneries they are included. The listing also includes the names of licensed parish ministers, lay and ordained, and the bishops named in the worldwide Anglican Communion Cycle of Prayer (currently under re-development). Items for possible inclusion, whether parish based or not, are welcome – please email jane.hood@chester.anglican.org.

Sunday entries are currently prompts for reflection and prayer based on one or more of the lectionary passages for the principal service. Contributions for this column are also welcome, please be in touch with your suggestions.

Once the public calendar of events and anniversaries returns to something like an established pattern Sunday entries will revert to a more topically based approach. Again brief scripts and suggestions would be welcome so that the Cycle of Prayer can indeed be a working document of mutual intentions and support.

Christopher Burkett

Sunday 6 September

Thirteenth after Trinity

(Prompted by the Gospel set for Proper 18A)

Whether we like it or not – when a relationship breaks down, regardless of who is at fault, Jesus puts the burden on us – on you and on me – to initiate reconciliation. He does that because you and I have experienced the reconciliation that is ours through the death of Jesus. We know what it is to feel the relief and joy of knowing that the gap between God and us has been closed because of what Christ has done for us. And we have to live that reconciliation in our own lives.

The Jesus way of doing that is practical and has a profound realism about it. Try to set the matter straight in private he says. How wise that is. Don't go sounding off about it, that will only make things worse. It's only if the private approach doesn't work that others are asked to help – and notice the careful steps advocated here. Try to work it out within a spirit of reconciliation – try and try and try again. This is how it should be, and this comes directly from Jesus.

*Pray for the Anglican Church of South Africa
Archbishop Thabo Makgoba - Archbishop of Capetown and Primate of Southern Africa*

Monday 7 September

Church Lawton

C: Steve Clapham. LM: Bev Boulton, Margaret Cruxton, John Atkins.

*Bishop Geoffrey Chukwunenye, Oru (Nigeria)
Bishop Mark Short, Canberra & Goulburn (Australia)*

Tuesday 8 September

Odd Rode

C: Philip Atkinson. LM: Robert New.

Woodcock's Well C of E School.

*Bishop Andrew Haruhisa Iso, Oskaka (Japan).
Archbishop and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Canterbury (England).*

Wednesday 9 September

Sandbach

C: Bee Boyde. LM: Joan Plowman.

Almighty God, give your grace, we pray, to your servant Briony now called to your service in the parish of St Mary, Sandbach. Grant that she may be a faithful minister of your holy Word and sacraments and a godly example to the people committed to her charge, that together they may bear true witness to your love for all people. We make this our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Bishop James Afolabi Popoola Osun (Nigeria).
Bishop Victor Atta-Baffoe, Cape Coast (West Africa).*

Thursday 10 September

Sandbach Heath with Hassall Green

C: Bernard Sword. LM: Alan Warburton.

Sandbach Heath St John's C of E School.

*Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Cape Town (Southern Africa).
Bishop James Scobie Newcome, Carlisle (England).*

Friday 11 September

Smallwood

C: Anne-Marie Naylor.

Please pray especially for the children of our school as they explore admission to Holy Communion.

Smallwood C of E School.

*Bishop Abiodun T Olaoye, Osun North East (Nigeria).
Bishop Michael Andrew James Burrows, Cashel & Ossory (Ireland).*

Saturday 12 September

Swettenham

C: Ian Arch. LM: Howard Lawton.

*Vacant, Ottawa (Canada).
Bishop Michael Lubowa, Central Buganda (Uganda).*

Sunday 13 September

Fourteenth after Trinity

(Prompted by the Gospel set for Proper 19A)

The unforgiving slave makes a mockery of the king's mercy towards him. No wonder then that the king is so angry and orders him to be tortured. The parable has an over-the-top quality to it in order to make the point forcefully. All the action of the parable takes place within one royal household. Everyone listening to the parable knows exactly how honour and personal obligations work in such a household. The king forgives his slave an absolutely huge debt that has accrued whilst he's been making full use of his position in the household. The king's forgiveness goes way beyond what a person of inferior status might have expected. The king extended his royal compassion to include someone who has no claim whatsoever to such royal mercy.

That the slave refuses to extend such mercy to another slave (someone of a status similar to his own) who owes him a paltry sum in comparison to his own forgiven debt is to profoundly dishonour the king's mercy. It is as if what the king did was less than worthless. The slave's action is the worst kind of insult. It leaves the king with no alternative but to respond in the harshest manner. His anger is justifiable. Is it that we, like the first slave, refuse to emulate in our behaviour towards one another the mercy we ourselves have received? The parable suggests such behaviour mocks God.

Pray for the Anglican Church of South America
Archbishop Gregory James Venables - Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church of South America & Bishop of Argentina.

Monday 14 September

Holy Cross Day

Siddington with Capesthorpe

C: Ian Arch. LM: Howard Lawton.

Bishop David Bello, Otukpo (Nigeria).
Bishop Patrick Wakula, Central Busoga (Uganda).
Bishop Lambert Funga Botolome, Kisangani (Congo).

Tuesday 15 September

Marton

C: Ian Arch. LM: Howard Lawton, Raymond Rush, Douglas Wisener, Diane Wisener.

Bishop Chukwuma Oparah, Owerri (Nigeria).
Bishop Victor Scantlebury, Central Ecuador (The Episcopal Church, USA).
Bishop Zerubbabel Katsuichi Hirota, Kita Kanto (Japan).

Wednesday 16 September

Marton & District C of E School

Bishop Stephen Ayodeji Fagbemi, Owo (Nigeria).
Bishop Gregory Brewer, Central Florida (The Episcopal Church, USA).

Thursday 17 September

Malpas Deanery

Bishop Steven Croft, Oxford (England).
Bishop Russell Kendrick, Central Gulf Coast (The Episcopal Church, USA).
Archbishop Leonard Dawea, Central Melanesia (Melanesia).

Friday 18 September

Aldford

C: Julian Beauchamp, Karl Jones. LM: Kath Wentel.

Bishop Williams Oluwarotimi Aladekugbe, Oyo (Nigeria).
Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe, Central New York (The Episcopal Church, USA).

Saturday 19 September

Bickerton

C: Ian Davenport, Helen Molesworth.

Bickerton Holy Trinity C of E School.

Bishop Joseph Maker Atot, Pacong (South Sudan).
Bishop John Watton, Central Newfoundland (Canada).
Bishop Stephen Kewasis, Kitale (Kenya).

Sunday 20 September

Fifteenth after Trinity

(Prompted by the Gospel set for Proper 20A)

It is right for the labourer to be paid at the end of the day (see Deuteronomy 24), but that is about as far as the landowner can be seen as being right in the eyes of the labourers. They expected differentials based on performance. They expected the superiority of some to be reinforced at the expense of the others. Instead of using wages to reinforce distinctions, the landowner uses them to express equality and solidarity. He evens out the distinctions. The one with great wealth, the one with the most to lose if egalitarianism rules, does the surprising thing. This isn't the expected thing by any stretch of the imagination.

No wrong has been done – at least in terms of agreement, but I think the landowner is 'a wrong 'un.' After he does the strange thing, he goes on to justify himself based on elitist privilege – he can do just what he likes with his wealth. That privilege he asserts has enabled him to do what is good, that is to treat them all equally. This is the Godlike thing that is done. It should not elicit jealousy or envy.

In God's empire the last will be first, and the first will be last. The irony is that the landowner, of course, has the most to lose (and to gain) in this. He becomes the cartoon character whose exaggerated action is larger than reality but discloses something vital and truthful about reality. Christian households will be shaped by a new reality that has nothing to do with fairness.

Shouldn't we rejoice in this? Which of us can come anywhere near the justice and love of God? What hope have we of fairly deserving God's love? None at all. So, I thank God that God is not fair. We cannot earn what God gives. There is no way God can be in our debt. This is a theological point, but not only a theological point. The parable asks us to live this alternative lifestyle where what counts isn't the pecking order, isn't the labour put in, isn't the social status we accrue, isn't ranking according to social or economic position. No, in the household of God different norms apply. This is dangerous and subversive stuff, but it's the stuff of discipleship. In every circumstance we can depend on God's 'bleeding-heart charity.' Thank God, God is a master who always makes mistakes on payday!

*Pray for the Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan
Archbishop Justin Badi Arama – Bishop of Juba and Archbishop of the Province of the Episcopal Church of
South Sudan*

Monday 21 September

St Matthew

Bickley

C: Richard Diggle.

*Bishop Isaiah Chambala, Kiteto (Tanzania).
Bishop Wilson Kitara, Kitgum (Uganda).
Bishop Josephat Mule, Kitui (Kenya).*

Tuesday 22 September

Bruera

C: Julian Beauchamp, Karl Jones. LM: Kath Wentel.

Saighton C of E School.

*Bishop Julio Murray Thompson Panama (Central America).
Bishop Audrey Scanlan, Central Pennsylvania (The Episcopal Church, USA).
Bishop Augustin Ahimana, Kivu (Rwanda).*

Wednesday 23 September

Bunbury

C: Tim Hayward. LM: Claire Wilson, Kathy Collinge, Michael Verity, Tom Crotty, Peter Collinge, Joy Parker, Pat Edgeley, Nicholas Sanders, Amber Middlemiss.

Bunbury Aldersey C of E School.

*Bishop Dr Olumuyiwa Ajayi, Pankshin (Nigeria).
Bishop Dixie Copanut Taclobao, Central Philippines (Philippines).*

Thursday 24 September

Burwardsley

C: Lameck Mutete.

*Bishop Seme Nigo Abinda, Panyana (South Sudan).
Bishop Ben Seka, Central Solomons (Melanesia).
Bishop Dickson Chilongani, Central Tanganyika (Tanzania).*

Friday 25 September

Coddington

C: David Scurr. LM: Raymond Moulton.

Clutton C of E School.

Bishop Derek Gary Kamukwamba, Central Zambia (Central Africa).

Saturday 26 September

Farndon

C: David Scurr. LM: Raymond Moulton.

*Bishop Peter John Henry Bartlett, Paraguay (South America).
Bishop Ignatius Makumbe, Central Zimbabwe (Central Africa).
Bishop Augustine Naoaki Kobayashi, Kobe (Japan).*

Sunday 27 September

Sixteenth after Trinity

(Prompted by the Gospel set for Proper 21A)

Who do you think you are? Who do you identify with in this story of the Temple court? Is it those who do the will of the Father? Probably ... but remember how they are characterized here, and I don't just mean the generic 'tax collectors and prostitutes' label. For example, have you considered the circumstances of the family triangle in the parable? It is set in a peasant village where the houses are rudimentary and most activity takes place outdoors. What we mean by privacy didn't exist, and the rules of social place and honour applied in every circumstance. For the first son to say "no" to his father was a deeply shaming thing—everyone knew about it, everyone commented on the lack of respect, the father was derided for his lack of authority, the family was the subject of gossip. In other words, although the son eventually does the Father's will it is as at great cost to the Father's prestige and standing in the community—shades of the Father in the parable of Prodigal Son perhaps? Is the parable telling us how costly it is for the Father to give his children the freedom to find out who they think they are for themselves?

Disarmingly the expression 'will of the father' occurs four other times in Matthew's gospel, and always in the context of Jesus' instruction of his disciples. Jesus' own prayer is that he might do his Father's will (26.42). Surely Matthew is urging his own community to follow the 'good son,' – to do the Father's will. And through his words to them, he urges us to do the same.

*Pray for the Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan
Archbishop Ezekiel Kumir Kondo - Archbishop of the Province of Sudan & Bishop of Khartoum.*

Monday 28 September

Handley

C: Lameck Mutete.

*Archbishop Philip Marandih, Patna (North India).
Bishop Younas Massey, Chandigarh (North India).*

Tuesday 29 September

St Michael and All Angels

Hargrave

C: Christopher Deakin.

Huxley C of E School.

*Bishop Meriglei Borges Silva Simim, Pelotas (Brazil).
Vacant, Chelmsford (England).*

Wednesday 30 September

Malpas and Threapwood

C: Ian Davenport, Helen Molesworth.

*Bishop Daniel Gutierrez, Pennsylvania (The Episcopal Church, USA).
Bishop Mark Tanner, Chester (England).*

Thursday 1 October

Marbury

C: Veronica Green. LM: Jane Lunt, Diana Thomas.

*Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy, Perth (Australia).
Bishop Robert Ali, Chhattisgarh (North India).
Bishop Jeffrey Lee, Chicago (The Episcopal Church, USA).*

Friday 2 October

Shocklach

C: Tim Robinson, Norma Robinson. LM: Chris Gilbert, Trisha Swift.

Shocklach Oviatt C of E School.

*Bishop Jorge Luis Aguilar, Peru (South America).
Bishop Martin Warner, Chichester (England).*

Saturday 3 October

Tarporley

C: Georgina Watmore, Julian Osborne.

Please hold in prayer our curate Julian Osborne, alongside all others being ordained priest today, and all in Tarporley Parish, our churches and villages, as we navigate a safe way out of Covid restrictions. Pray that we might grow in knowledge, trust and love of God and find the fullness and richness of life promised through his son Jesus Christ.

*Peshawar (Pakistan) The Most Revd Humphrey Peters (Primate)
Bishop B. B. Baskey, Chotanagpur (North India).
Bishop Felix Odei Annancy, Koforidua (West Africa).*

Sunday 4 October

Seventeenth after Trinity

(Prompted by Isaiah 5.1-7 and Matthew 21.33-46 [Proper 22A])

Today's Gospel is a midrash on Isaiah 5—in other words a kind of amplifying exposition and interpretation of scripture that fill it out, as it were—a way of handling scripture that the rabbis loved. The plot is simple: a man constructs a vineyard – reminiscent of God's care in Isaiah 5. He leases the vineyard to others and then wants his share of the produce. He sends three servants, whom the tenants rough up and kill, followed by another set more numerous than the first, who are treated the same way. A bad lot, these tenants! With seemingly obtuse logic, the owner muses that if he sends his son, they will respect him. Not surprisingly, the tenants see this as an act of powerless desperation and kill the son. As in Isaiah, the mood shifts. The owner will come, 'and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.' These others will produce just and fair fruit.

In all the Gospels the parable becomes an allegory of the rejection of Jesus by the Jerusalem establishment, which results in the destruction of the Temple (in the year 70) and the transfer of the vineyard to other tenants. But I wonder whether on the lips of Jesus there aren't subtler shades to it. The utterly illogical action of the owner in sending the son reflects that pattern in which a long-suffering and compassionate God reaches out in the face of the most blatant forms of apostasy and idolatry (think, for example of Hosea 11-12). So, a better title for today's Gospel might be *The Long-Suffering God* rather than *The Wicked Tenants*.

The readings today re-enact on the vast and eternal scale of God's abiding love the age-old tragedy of spurned love. Love that should grow all kinds of beautiful things is refused or abused. What had promised delight turns into crucifying hurt—literally. We are the gifted tenants of the vineyard of God – Isaiah and Matthew remind us what the consequences of neglecting that tenancy will be.

Pray for the Anglican Church of Tanzania
Archbishop Dr Maimbo Mndolwa - Archbishop of Tanzania & Bishop of Tanga

Monday 5 October

Tattenhall

C: Lameck Mutete.

Bishop Donald Spargo Allister, Peterborough (England).
Bishop William Mostert, Christ the King (Southern Africa).

Tuesday 6 October

Tilstone Fearnall

C: Tim Hayward.

*Bishop Bijay Nayak, Phulbani (North India).
Bishop Peter Carrell, Christchurch (Aotearoa NZ & Polynesia).
Bishop Sandeep Suresh Vibhute, Kolhapur (North India).*

Wednesday 7 October

Tilston

C: Tim Robinson, Norma Robinson. LM: Chris Gilbert, Trisha Swift.

*Bishop Dorsey W M McConnell, Pittsburgh (The Episcopal Church, USA).
Bishop Peter Ichiro Shibusawa, Chubu (Japan).*

Thursday 8 October

Tushingham

C: Veronica Green. LM: Carolyn Wort.

We pray for our rural community in this parish of Tushingham. We offer thanks for the wonders of nature, our farms, our food, our animals, our wildlife, our gardens; the generosity of people coming together in our community at this difficult time. We seek blessing on our health and care workers, our teachers, shopkeepers, emergency workers, farmers and growers and all those living and working in our community. We pray for the support of friends and neighbours, for comfort and healing for all those sick, grieving, and struggling with mental issues or worried in any way about their lives, their futures and that of their loved ones. Give us patience and courage to endure this coronavirus pandemic knowing this will pass eventually and we offer special thanks to the ministry team. Give us courage to look to a brighter future for all.

Tushingham-with-Grindley C of E School.

*Archbishop Fereimi Cama, Polynesia (Aotearoa NZ & Polynesia).
Bishop John McDowell, Clogher (Ireland).
Bishop Baker Ninan Fenn, Cochin (South India).*

Friday 9 October

Waverton

C: Julian Beauchamp. LM: Kath Wentel, June Hargreave.

*Bishop Lindsley Ihove, Popondota (Papua New Guinea).
Bishop Timothy Ravinder, Coimbatore (South India).*

Saturday 10 October

Whitewell

C: Veronica Green. LM: Carolyn Wort.

*Bishop Denny Bray Guka, Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea).
Bishop Francisco Duque, Colombia (The Episcopal Church, USA).
Bishop Oommen George, Kollam - Kottarakkara (South India).*
