

Sunday 4th August 2024: Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.

The first hymn is no. 1 in both our latest hymn book, and the previous one. It is based on Psalm 100 and is usually sung to the tune 'Old 100th'.



StF 1 H&P 1 'All people that on earth do dwell' by William Kethe (d 1594)

Opening Prayer

Think of the past week and say both 'thank you' and 'sorry' to our loving God.

Epistle Reading set for today: Ephesians 4 v 1 – 16

To think about

Like last week, the epistle reading is one of the highlights of Ephesians, particularly verses 1 – 6 and 11 – 13. Read these verses on their own and let God speak to you through them.

StF 608 H&P 753 'All praise to our redeeming Lord' by Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Gospel Reading set for today: John 6 v 24 – 35

Message from a Circuit Friend

This portion of the gospel needs us to read the beginning of chapter 6 as it follows on from the feeding of the 5,000 where Jesus fearing that the crowd would try and make him King has removed himself elsewhere. His disciples have got into a boat to sail to Capernaum. The following day, the crowd who witnessed the miracle want to find Jesus. Boats arrive from Tiberias but Jesus and the disciples aren't present, so people get into the boats (I doubt whether it was the entire 5000) and set off for Capernaum, where they find Jesus on the other side of the lake. They question him and ask him when he got there? Jesus tells them they are looking for him because they were fed physically with food, not for anything else. He reminds them that they need to work for food that will last and give them eternal life. The people ask what must they do to perform the works of God? The answer 'That you believe in him who God has sent'. Asking Jesus for signs, they quote their ancestors being given heavenly manna by Moses in the wilderness. Jesus tells them that it was his Father who sent the manna, the true bread from heaven, and that the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. The questioners ask for this bread and Jesus responds with the words in v5 'I am the bread of life...' and the assurance that they will never be hungry or thirsty. We all know that we have to feed our bodies with food and water, we have to pay our bills, help one another. But often we put all this first and neglect our spiritual health. It can be so easy to get into the structure of going to Church, singing, listening and then going home again until the next week. If we want true life then we need to respond to Jesus as the central part of our daily earthly lives, not just on Sundays. We need to accept Jesus as our Saviour, listen, seek, worship, pray, learn more and serve. The words of the old hymn come to mind '*I serve a risen Saviour he's in the world today...*' and the chorus ends with '*You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart.*' Are we truly in a relationship with God through Jesus? Are we seeking to deepen our faith, and be able to state "*I believe in Jesus who died for me that my sins are forgiven and I have the assurance that God loves me.*" Amen.

Aileen Fox Local Preacher and now member of Swaffham Methodist Church)

StF 153 H&P 467 'Break thou the bread' by Mary Lathbury (1841 – 1913) / Alexander Groves (1842 – 1909)

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for our world... for the church... for our communities... for our families & friends...

It is Holocaust Memorial Day on Tuesday. Pray accordingly...

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

MP 295 'I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today' by Alfred Ackley (1872 – 1958)

OR **StF 440 'Amazing grace – how sweet the sound'** by John Newton (1725 – 1807)

May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.