

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #11

27th May 2020

Dear Church Family,

Every day I use the Church of England's 'Reflections for Daily Prayer' app which provides a helpful reflection on the day's lectionary (set) readings for Morning Prayer. This morning's reading (Tues) reflected on the additional weekday reading of 1 Samuel 10: 1-10 where Samuel has anointed God's choice of Saul as king of the people of Israel. To endorse the action that Samuel has taken, Saul is told that he will receive a series of signs that will confirm God's choice of him as king. The signs are very detailed and pretty improbable. He's told he will meet two men who will engage him in a bizarre conversation about lost donkeys; he'll then bump into a further three men who will give him two loaves of bread; before coming across a band of prophets playing the harp, tambourine, flute and lyre in a prophetic frenzy. At this point, the spirit of the Lord will possess him and he will be in a prophetic frenzy with them and will be turned into a different person. In verse 9 of that passage, we're told that as he *'turned away to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all these signs were fulfilled that day.'*

For most of us, that degree of clarity over decision-making rarely happens. Mostly, as if we are in a swirling fog, we struggle through our dilemmas, fumbling our way through tight spots and living with nagging uncertainty as to whether we've done the right thing. We wonder 'Is this what I should do? What might be the best way forward?' Only very, very infrequently are we promised any degree of certainty.

Yet, it is true that looking back across our lives, we may sense a providential pattern. We may see that the hesitant, difficult decisions we took years ago have resulted in unexpected and undeserved blessings; we may see that what once put us through agonies of doubt has nevertheless had wonderful effects. Of course, we might be deluding ourselves and creating a pattern where none really exists, but in truth it doesn't feel like that. It feels as if the hand of God has been upon us, even in our darkest hours. It's as though while we were seeking certainty, God in love is finding us.

I wonder if this period of lockdown will be a time that we look back on in years to come, and see that it was a time where God *was* indeed at work in our lives, where the impact of a different rhythm of life, greater opportunities for rest and for drawing close to God resulted in blessings we wouldn't otherwise have experienced. I wonder what stories we will have to share.

Thank you for your positive comments about the online services. Martyn and I enjoyed helping the puppets to lead the first hymn. If you need help in finding the YouTube video, please ring me and I'll talk you through the process.

Services and events happening this week are:

Fri 29th May at 2pm – Weekly Bible Study on 1 Corinthians led by Frances Horgan using Zoom. If you've downloaded Zoom and want to join, please let me know and I'll send you the link.

Sun 31st May – Pentecost online service of Holy Communion available on Facebook and YouTube from early on Sunday morning. Watch at whatever time is convenient to you. If you would like to receive a consecrated communion wafer so that you can 'receive' on Sunday morning, please let me know (by email) by 7pm Thursday evening (28th).

Sun 31st May at 11am – coffee and chat after the service using Zoom. Do join us and catch up with one another.

Sun 31st May at 6pm – Evening Prayer using Zoom led this week by Alison Wedgbury. If you want to join, please let Cheryl (cheryl@cynewulf.co.uk) know, and she'll send you a link to the service. During May and June, we are exploring the meaning of The Lord's Prayer, one line at a time. This week, it's 'Give us this day our daily bread'.

For your prayers, please could you remember the following:

- The families of Rosalie Dunnico and Ruby Jean Blythe
- Those with long-term ill-health and their families caring for them
- All those working in the NHS and care homes during the pandemic; all other key workers keeping vital services going; those developing a vaccine for Covid-19 and effective treatment for those seriously ill in hospital
- For Cottenham Primary School as it plans to increase provision for more children from 1st June
- For the government as they implement their strategy to bring us gently out of lockdown, and for those who are worried at the possible consequences of this.

If you are using the 'Prayer and Worship from Home' resource and saying Morning or Evening Prayer, these are the Lectionary (set) readings for the week ahead:

Sat 30 th May	Numbers 32: 1-27; Luke 9: 1-7
Sun 31 st May	Acts 2: 1-21; John 20: 19-23
Mon 1 st June	1 Samuel 2: 1-10; Mark 3: 31 to end
Tues 2 nd June	Joshua 2; Luke 9: 28-36
Wed 3 rd June	Joshua 3; Luke 9: 37-50
Thurs 4 th June	Joshua 4: 1 to 5: 1; Luke 9: 51 to end
Fri 5 th June	Joshua 5: 2 to end; Luke 10: 1-16

We are currently updating the Church Directory. If you are not presently in the directory, or your details have changed in any way, please let Matthew Unwin-Riches, Parish Administrator know (admin@allsaintscottenham.org.uk or 252298 on Wed mornings).

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Best wishes, Lynda.

Rector of All Saints Cottenham with Rampton
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