



Sunday 20th September 2020 Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Notices and Forward Look – continued

Andrew's thoughts: What I would like to say this week is how nimble and strong you and our community is becoming. Very impressive. On what grounds do I make this claim?

Well, in the last week we have had the new rule of six introduced and whilst we were yet to receive specific guidance on how it affected our gathered life as a worshipping community, we had to think and adapt. Two notable adaptations happened last weekend in our worship. Broadhempston, who had been planning a pet service, decided it would be best postpone it to the end of the month. In its place it was decided to have a communion service. With ease the community was informed, a preacher was found – Anne, who had written our weekly reflection (and was going to attend the service anyway), prayers were written and music arranged. The rest of the services remained unchanged until our Charlotte developed a cough on Saturday and therefore needed to go for a COVID test on Sunday with the rest of us isolating until the result [negative!]. So Anne was asked to preside as well as preach in Broadhempston. Woodland changed from Communion to Morning Worship which was led by Hillarie with Sheila reading Anne's written reflection. I was later in the day able to enjoy the service from Denbury which had been recorded from the comfort of my study. It was also wonderful to hear about Vanessa and Tom leading a beautiful Celtic Morning Prayer in Ipplepen. I could get used to Sundays off!!!

All of this adaptation happened with ease –, so yes nimble and strong are the words that come to mind. This strength and nimbleness I believe derives from lots of us being involved and offering a little so when change was needed it was simply a matter of asking people who were already contributing and involved to do a little more. Brilliant. Here's to lots of us offering a little.

In the afternoon, I watched live via Facebook the 4th service of the ordination of Deacons and it was a real privilege to be able to be involved in this way. We continue to pray for all those who were ordained Deacon over the weekend.

Weekly Morning Prayer

Mon	9.00am	- Ipplepen
Tues	9.00am	- Woodland
Wed	9.00am	- Broadhempston
Thurs	9.00am	- Denbury

Services and Diary Dates

Sun 20 th	9.30am	Holy Communion	- Denbury
	11.00am	Holy Communion	- Ipplepen
Wed 23 rd	7.00pm	APCM	- Woodland
Sun 27 th	9.30am	Holy Communion	- Woodland
	9.30am	Thanksgiving Service	- Denbury
	10.00am	Pet Service	- Ipplepen
	11.00am	Pet Service	- Broadhempston
Wed 30 th	5.00pm	APCM	- Denbury
Sun 4 th Oct	9.30 am	Holy Communion	- Denbury
	11.00 am	Holy Communion	- Ipplepen
Mon 12 th Oct	7.00pm	APCM	- Ipplepen
Wed 14 th Oct	7.00pm	APCM & PCC meeting	- Broadhempston

Readings

	This week	Next week
Readings for this Sunday:	First Reading Exodus 16: 2-15	Exodus 17: 1-7
	Psalm 105: 1-6, 37-end	78: 1-4, 12-16
	Second Reading Philippians 1: 21-end	Philippians 2: 1-13
	Gospel Matthew 20: 1-16	Matthew 21: 23-32
Readings for the week ahead:	Mon 21 st Matthew 9:9-13	
	Tue 22 nd Luke: 8.19–21	
	Wed 23 rd Luke: 9.1–6	
	Thurs 24 th Luke: 9.7–9	
	Fri 25 th Luke: 9.18–22	
	Sat 26 th Luke: 9.43b–45	

They can also be viewed/downloaded from <https://bible.oremus.org/>

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Notices and Forward Look

Services: Harvest Festivals will be taking place on 11th October focusing on Creation and our care of it. Then on 18th and 25th we are focusing on gifts and stewardship. Lots of wonderful guest preachers at these services so look out.

Meetings: APCM meetings arranged – see above

Social and community events: St Andrew's Church Hall is now open again. The latest issue of the Beacon will be out soon – a bumper issue.

In memoriam: The interment of John Eastleigh's ashes is to take place in St Andrew's churchyard at 12 noon on 21st September.

The Funeral of Mrs Nora Dennis is being held at St Andrew's Ipplepen on 22nd September at 11am.

Weddings: We continue to pray for Anthony and Helen married at Ipplepen on Saturday 5th September.

Baptisms: We pray for Magnus Barber and his family baptised at Denbury in August and Imogen Vickerstaff and her family preparing for baptism in Ipplepen at the end of October.

Coronavirus: Worship does not come under the rule of 6 introduced this week so continues unaffected by this ruling. We continue to wear masks, social distance and wash and sanitise hands. The specific restrictions for occasional offices continue to apply e.g. limited to 30 people.

Diocese/Deanery: Our Deanery is growing to include some of Morton Deanery – formal consultation will be happening soon.

Thoughts for prayer: We continue to pray for those ordained Deacons last weekend in Exeter Cathedral.



Reflection by Steve Sheldon

Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16
Sunday 20th September 2020

In his letter to the church gathered in Philippi Paul wrote that he knew that they were **“standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel.”** [Philippians 1:27]

This is all about Church Unity, something, as a former Chair of Christians Together, in which I’ve always been interested. In the secular world groups, communities, tribes and nations unite together three ways:

1) Diverse people are pulled in and held together by the more powerful internal forces in the area, the strongest dragging in the weakest. One example is Spain which saw the merging of several kingdoms through the dominating force of one of their number. It was forcibly held together and Unity was maintained through the imposed use of a single language and religion. 500 years on, the stresses and strains of that forced unity are showing cracks and Spain is experiencing a time of tribal disunity.

2) External forces are sometimes applied to neighbouring communities to compel an artificial Unity. Two recent examples are Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia which were made up of diverse communities pushed together for the convenience of other stronger communities outside. With that pressure now removed, both of those countries have acrimoniously fallen apart.

3) Then there are federations, voluntary associations where several weaker diverse communities band together in mutual self interest in order to protect themselves from stronger external forces. The 12 Tribes of Israel, the 13 American colonies, and the Federation of Poland & Lithuania are historical examples.

This 3rd method is one way we can look at Christian Unity. Christian Unity is an often misunderstood term, abused and exploited by those who would oppose us to show how disunited we seem to be to them. As if we had ever been ‘united’ in a secular way. From the time of the apostles and St Paul there have been disputes, schisms, confusions, narrow exclusive understandings of orthodoxy, and exploitation by those who would use it as a cover for their own agenda. The media gleefully point fingers at the ‘Church’ and ‘Religion’, seeking not really to tear us down, but just to make money while appearing to tear us down. Knocking the Church sells papers. Most of the journalists who even bother to write on the subject of ‘Church Unity’ haven’t the least understanding of the issues involved or the various arguments that they scatter about like so much cannon fire.

But that’s not us. I hope we have a better understanding of Christian Unity and its purpose. You see, Unity *has* a purpose. Jesus prayed that we, the Church, may be one with each other, and that we may be one with God. One big happy family. But there is a **purpose** for that. Jesus prayed that we may be one so that the world will believe in him and the One who sent him. He prayed that we would be united **in order that** all the nations of the world would know about the love he has for them.

There is a **purpose** to Christian Unity! It is the primary purpose of the Church now and always: that the people of the world, who do not know God, may know that God loves them.

The purpose of Christian Unity is that the people of the world may know that God loves them. We are not meant to conform to the world, but transform it by God’s loving grace.

Over the centuries we have dressed the Church up in a variety of outfits; created distractions and diversions; distorted, contorted, deviated, abused and perverted this simple truth about God, Jesus and the Church. We, whom Jesus calls glorious, are to tell the world that they are loved.

Jesus gathered together a bunch of diverse individuals, men and women, and their friends and families who followed him around, hanging on his every word. Some stayed the course, some fell by the wayside. In the end there were just these 11 blokes from different backgrounds, different life experiences, different educations, different personalities. But *no matter their differences*, Jesus prayed that they would be one body, and that they be given the glory of God to share with the world, with all the nations.

And out into the world they went, to different places spreading the word in their different unique ways. The world is a big place. Everywhere is different. Different languages, different geographies, different cultures and histories, different appearances. The Church quickly had to learn how to be flexible, adaptable to a myriad of environments.

And over the ensuing 2000 years very different religious expressions have developed: the *way* we express our love for God, the *places* we do it in, the *language* we do it in, the *music* we do or do not do it in. And then there are the fine details of how we understand what it is that we are doing. And yet, and yet, even still, *we are one*, united in mind, heart and spirit. *We are The Church.* There is only One United Church, called forth by God, loved and glorified and given the task of telling the world about God’s love: because we are one with God, one with Jesus and one with each other. Not through anything we’ve done, but by the will and desire and actions of God. We are one, every last one of us, regardless of our creeds and liturgy and music and language. We are one.

One aspect of a voluntary association is how it relates to those not in the group. Groups are either introvert or extrovert. Some groups agree to withdraw from the outside world and its corrupting influences, while others look outward, seeking to reform, to transform the world, to save it from itself. Some Christian bodies are introvert, draw boundaries, lines in the sand that define their exclusiveness, and keep themselves to themselves. I would suggest this goes against Jesus’ desire that we all work together through our diversity in pursuit of our common goal of showing and sharing God’s love with the world.

The one spirit and one mind that we find in community together is always greater than the sum of our individual hearts. Unity of hearts and minds and spirits creates a greater diversity of grace than a single mind can do or conceive of.

Paul wrote to the community in Corinth that thus united, we are a ‘new creation’, that the Resurrection of Jesus has renewed and refreshed the whole of Creation, releasing a huge wave of energy and innovation into what was initially a small and insignificant movement. *We are that movement today*, and we need to capture and maintain that Easter energy, use it to transform the world by singing about God’s love, and then passing it on.

“I will sing about your love, I will magnify your name. I will be glad and rejoice in you, I will praise you again. Praise the Lord, lift your voices high. Praise the Lord, tell them he’s alive. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.”