

REFLECTIONS

Talents, skills, gifts, money and what do we do with these treasures we have? How do we order our lives in the context of our faith, our hopes etc?

Today's Gospel is a dramatic and rather stark story with a drastic medieval type ending. As one Bible commentator says, 'Another stirring of discomfort here, as we feel for the unfortunate who was given one talent, and managed to be deprived even of that. At the same time, of course, it has to be said that his response to his master was not the most diplomatic that he could have chosen. A great deal is evidently expected of disciples who live in the end-time.'

I suppose it all comes down to our priorities. Despite all the years, revolutions, patterns of thinking, changes in life styles and expectations and cultures that separate us from that 'biblical world', things don't change very much, especially with regards to human behaviour. 'Therefore encourage one another' is the message that Paul gives to the church people of Thessalonica, a message that also comes to us here in 2020, and encouragement is something that so many people inside and outside the church need. We have a lot of good things to share, 'talents' that must not be buried.

With love and prayers in these stormy days,

Chris Bishop

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES ONLINE

There are no services in any of our churches this week due to the latest government restrictions. The following services are available across the team - full details on the website and the email bulletin.

SUNDAY

9.15am Holy Communion (Zoom) President: John Saxon

9.30am Holy Communion (Zoom) President: Paula Griffiths
Preacher: Caroline Currer

10.00am Iona Morning Prayer (Zoom) Leader: Alex Jeewan

10.00am St Mary's Family Service (Zoom)
Leader: Matt Williamson Talk: Tracey Nicholls

The 9.30am Holy Communion and the 10.00am Family Service have new zoom codes. Please look at the email bulletin or, if joining by telephone, contact Judith on 01799 525041 for details

TUESDAY

5.00pm Evening Prayer (Zoom) Leader: Marisa Baltrock

WEDNESDAY

9.30am Holy Communion (Zoom) President: Angela Want

AMENDED PARISH OFFICE HOURS

The Parish Administrator is available by phone or email on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

9.30am - 12noon, but no longer on a Tuesday.

The office is not currently open to personal callers.

Post Communion (cont'd from front page)

Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament you give substance to our hope: bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

See St Mary's Church, SW, website at www.stmaryssafronwalden.org to find out more.

Please 'Like' our Facebook page so we reach more people! Click on the link on our website, or go to: www.facebook.com/saintmaryschurchsafronwalden

The Grapevine

COVERING THE PARISHES OF SAFFRON WALDEN,
WIMBISH, DEBDEN, ASHDON AND HADSTOCK.

Second Sunday before Advent
15th November 2020

Collect

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Gospel: Matthew 25.14-30

Jesus said to his disciples, 'The kingdom of heaven is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

(Cont'd on back page)



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Churches Together Prayer Cycle: In November please pray for: **All Saints, Ashdon, Wimbish and Debden Schools**

The family and friends of those who have died recently:

Revd. Tim Hardingham, Anthony Hedger, William Bentley, Audrey Peasgood

As a church and as a team we are heartbroken at the news of Tim's death. He was a wonderful priest, teacher, father, friend and colleague. Tim was a true gentleman or gentle man, who was wise beyond words. He was often quietly spoken but when he spoke you knew you had to listen, because wisdom was on the way. He will be missed greatly. *Alex*

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

I can't remember whether it was on this Sunday years ago when, to get a message across, I gave my congregation simple little lapel badges with the word '**LERT**' on them, the idea being that, if we wore them and someone asked what it meant, we would reply, '**I am a lert 'cause the church needs lerts.**' After you have groaned, I can say that the word 'alert' is very much evident in both the readings set for today.

There is a Chinese proverb that says '*be not afraid of growing slowly, be afraid only of standing still*'. The Epistle and Gospel are all to do with movement, spiritual growth, for this was the time when the church was growing in numbers amidst all the challenges and dangers that it was facing.

I like simple stories and pictures that make profound impressions, just like so many of the parables did and, when life gets difficult, stories can help, especially if they are drawn from life. In these difficult times, there is a Breton Sailor's prayer that comes from that sea going community, which says * '*Protect me Lord, my little ship is so small and your sea is so vast*'. With the same imagery in mind, it has been said that no ship was ever built for a harbour. We know that, when the weather gets rough, the ship can find protection and safety in the calm of the harbour, but there comes a time when it has to leave the harbour, even when the sea may not be that calm, and the voyage must continue.

That analogy has always been true of the Christian way of life. However, at the moment, we are unable to enjoy the harbour of our churches while the Covid storm rages, but, hopefully, as a community, because of our strength, we are not 'all at sea!'

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

With love and prayers

Chris Bishop

* Protegez-moi, mon Seigneur, mon navire est si petit et votre mer est si grande.

Protect me Lord, my little ship is so small and your sea is so vast.

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

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| Mon 16th | Morning Psalm 47 & Revelation 10 Evening Psalm 71 |
| Tue 17th | Morning Psalm 52 & Revelation 11:1-14 Evening Psalm 67 & Matthew 7:13-end |
| Wed 18th | Morning Psalm 56 & Revelation 11:15-end Evening Psalm 73 |
| Thurs 19th | Morning Psalm 62 & Revelation 12 Evening Psalm 76 |
| Fri 20th | Morning Psalm 63 & Revelation 13:1-10 Evening Psalm 77 |
| Sat 21st | Morning Psalm 78:1-39 & Revelation 13:11-end Evening Psalm 78:40-end |

NEWS

Appointment of Team Rector

We are delighted to announce the appointment of our new Team Rector, Revd. Jeremy Trew.

Jeremy is currently the vicar of St Gregory's, Seaton and St Michael's Beer in Devon. He and his wife, Alison, will be moving to Saffron Walden in the spring and he will be formally welcomed to start his ministry at a service at St Mary's in early March.

You can find a letter from Jeremy and some photos on our website. Please pray for him and his family as they prepare to leave their current parishes.

There will be NO SERVICES IN CHURCH during the period of lockdown - however we will continue to provide services online and accessible by telephone.

ONLINE SERVICES are listed on the back page. Full joining details are available on the weekly email bulletin and on the website. Please email Dawn if you would like to be added to the bulletin distribution list.

LIVE WORSHIP by phone - you don't need a computer or tablet to join our services from home. If you would like to know more please contact Judith Hasler on 525041 or John Saxon on 541619.

PRIVATE PRAYER During this period of lockdown, St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden, is open on Wednesdays and Sundays between 2pm and 4pm. All Saints, Ashdon, is open every day. St Botolph's, Hadstock is open on Wednesdays between 1pm and 3pm.

AN ADVENT STUDY COURSE/DISCUSSION GROUP on zoom is being planned for anyone who would be interested. This would be for one hour a week over a four week period. To help planning, please could you contact Caroline (preferably by e-mail at c.currer@btinternet.com; deadline extended to 17th November) if you would be interested in taking part, and including any constraints you may have in relation to timing. Once we have some idea of potential numbers, she will be in touch with details of the topic and proposed date or dates.

BRIGHTEN YOUR CHRISTMAS! In order to support St Mary's as there's no church fair this year, I'm taking orders for a limited number of Crackers at £2 each (as last year). Please email me with your order - dd.hoy@ntlworld.com - telling me how many crackers and numbers for male/female you need. Orders by the end of November please. *Diana Hoy*

IT'S TOO IMPORTANT NOT TO SEND A SHOEBOX. This year due to COVID-19 restrictions it has been difficult to collect filled shoeboxes for vulnerable children across the world. However, you can still send a shoebox by going online and choosing what gifts you would like Operation Christmas child to put in the box for you! Have fun! Go to shoeboxonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk or for help to do this, phone Mike and Judith Felgate 01799 524747.

A Date for your diaries; The Prayer team are preparing **A QUIET MORNING ON ZOOM FOR SATURDAY 28TH NOVEMBER** between 10 - 12 noon. More details will follow but do put it in your diary. *Sue Walker*

PLEASE ACCEPT MY APOLOGIES that there was no sound on Zoom for the Remembrance Service last Sunday due to technical problems. Normal service from the church will be resumed on 22nd November. *Steve Hasler*

MINISTRY TEAM

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