

Dear All

I hope you are enjoying the summer, with its ups and downs – weather-wise, football-wise!.... And I hope that as Covid restrictions are due to ease, we can enjoy some of the freedom it will bring, while keeping safe. However things are for us in our daily lives, it is reassuring to know that we are journeying together with a God who cares for our every need in all of the ups and downs of life.

This coming Sunday, 18th July, Bishop Tim Ellis will lead the 10am service at St. John's and baptise one-year old Finley Salvanos. Please remember Finley in your prayers at this special time in his life.

Booking essential still!!! As we are still under Covid restrictions until 19th July, we need to book people in for the 18th July service so please contact the church office. **Importantly**, if you have a 'regular booking' and cannot attend that day, please also let Bev know. The service will also be broadcast on Zoom, as usual.

The Litany of Reconciliation will be held at St. John's at 12 noon on Thursday 15th July. All are welcome to this short service of prayer for peace and reconciliation outside by the War Memorial.

Please hold in your prayers David and Gail Crosby this week and especially on Thursday 15th July at the funeral and thanksgiving for the life of their son Gregory at Holy Trinity.

St. John's and Holy Trinity Churches are both now open on weekdays for private prayer. Food Bank boxes can be found at the back of both churches (no longer in the vicarage porch) so any donations can be dropped off at either church.

We are grateful to the visiting clergy who are helping lead our services. On 25th July, we look forward to welcoming Rev'd Matt Wood, Curate at St. John's Ranmoor, to preach and preside at Holy Trinity at 10am.

The process to appoint a new priest-in-charge is ongoing and we had some helpful information at the 28th June PCC meeting when two associate archdeacons, Chris Stebbing and Ian Parkinson talked us through the process. More information is given in Angie's sermon (attached).

As we are able to look forward to holidays, I hope you will be able to plan some time to be away and relax. We will give more information about services during August in the next newsletter.

Thank you from Peter ... Peter was overwhelmed by the generosity of his farewell gift and the cards and good wishes he received from many people and says 'Thank you' to all. We wish him and Joan well as they will soon be leaving the vicarage and moving to their new home.

Love and best wishes,
Angie

Trinity 5 4 July 2021 10 am at St. John's

*Readings: Ezekiel 2.1-5; 2 Corinthians 12.2-10;
Mark 6.1-13*

At the PCC meeting held last Monday evening in the 94 Room here, the new Associate Archdeacon Chris Stebbing talked us through what needs to happen in the coming weeks and months to appoint a new priest in this parish.

It seems to me that today's readings have something to say to us as part of that process, in the thinking that we will need to do to put together a good parish profile. The parish profile is done to explain to a potential new priest what our parish is like so that we can hopefully appeal to a priest who will be a good fit here, for our mutual benefit.

It seems to me that two relevant and related themes come in the Old Testament reading from Ezekiel and the Gospel reading from Mark: *prophets and calling*.

Prophets – “they shall know that a prophet (Ezekiel) has been among them (v.5); Jesus, speaking of himself, says “Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town ...” (Mark 6.4)

Calling – *Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel ... (Ezekiel 2.3)*
(Jesus) called the twelve and began to send them out, two by two ... (Mark 6.7)

Some questions:

What do we mean by prophets and 'prophecy'?

What do we mean by 'calling'?

How does this relate to us at this time in the life of this parish?

On Prophecy – On Saturday morning, I heard someone on Radio 4 being asked to predict the outcome of the England v Ukraine football match. She said 3-0 to England, or a cheeky 4. As it turns out, she was right!

This is *not* what prophecy is – predicting the future.

A prophet is defined as “someone who speaks on God's behalf”.

Why is this needed? In the Old Testament, following the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses, the people are so overwhelmed by God speaking directly to them, they ask for this to continue through Moses. Then Ezekiel is then raised up to continue this work, speaking on God's behalf, when Moses is no longer around. I believe that ultimately, this is all about God showing his love for us and the world – helping us be people who love and care for each other and the world we live in.

In the New Testament, this changes. God is no longer a distant God who speaks to people indirectly through others. The sort of relationship that Jesus has with God as Father is opened to all believers – so they can hear from him directly. However, I wonder if to some extent, this makes us all potential prophets to one another in a general sense – seeing characteristics of the love of God in each other?

Calling – In the Old Testament, you may be familiar with the calling of Samuel – literally, he heard the voice of God calling to him as a young boy.

We probably have a better idea of the meaning of calling as we use it in our everyday language. We speak of someone's calling, or 'vocation' - what they feel passionate about; what their gifts are, e.g. a calling to be a vet or dancer or artist or nurse or gardener or administrator or carer ... or many other things.

Our Old Testament and Gospel reading give examples of how the two themes – prophecy and calling - are related.

Chapter 1 of Ezekiel describes an amazing vision of the glory of God. Then Ezekiel hears a voice speaking to him. "Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me ..." (v.3)

This is Ezekiel's *calling*.

'You shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord God."' (v.4). Ezekiel is to speak on God's behalf. He is *called* to be a *prophet*.

In the Gospel reading, firstly we hear that Jesus is teaching in the synagogue. He is fulfilling his '*calling*' by explaining the word of God with great wisdom – a living word, speaking on God's behalf both by his words and his actions in healing the sick. In doing this, he implies that he is seen as a *prophet* (not without honour except in their home town), called to this ministry.

Then he *calls* the twelve – the disciples – to do the same. To go about, entering people's houses. "So they went out and *proclaimed that all should repent* (so, speaking on God's behalf). They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them." (vv. 12,13).

How does this relate to us at this time in the life of this parish?

At the PCC meeting, the visiting archdeacons Chris and Ian explained what will happen over the next few months.

At a PCC meeting at the end of August, we will choose two representatives to be part of the process. We will also provide a draft job profile, which will include a description of our parish. This is where the idea of 'calling' is relevant. This process of describing our parish realistically and accurately will involve us looking at ourselves and explaining what we are like – this will include physical things like our buildings, the make-up of the parish in terms of geography and the location of our churches, our halls, the vicarage, schools, businesses and care homes. It also needs to include what we think is our *calling* as a congregation – our worship, ethos, gifts and activities that we feel are a part of us and we care about. In thinking about this, I realise we have a lot of valuable 'assets', both in our worshipping life and in our outward-looking activities. We have our unique calling as a parish, based on the people in it, who we are. Look at the wisdom and experience in the members of our church – active and retired professionals from the fields of law, education, business; gifts of caring, welcoming and music; interests in charitable giving, peace and reconciliation; openness and flexibility that make us inclusive, with good links to our community through our (usually!) much-used halls and much-appreciated parish magazine TRIO. Through these things we can share our Christian ethos with our local community.

So, interesting times ahead as we identify and articulate our calling as a parish, that we may continue to be the body of Christ in this place and to be as effective as possible in speaking on God's behalf and sharing his love for all. AMEN