

17th May 2009

6th Sunday Of Easter

St. MARY'S

Newsletter



This Morning's Worship

10.30am Parish Communion	Readings	Veronica
	Drinks	Dolly
	Communion Assistants	Margaret A & Penny
	Prayers	Maureen
	Music	Steve, Veronica, Jess
	Steward	Margaret A

Collect For Easter 6

God our redeemer,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to
eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

KARIBU! Music For Justice

African Musicians from the Churches in Sharrow will be performing in solidarity with Humanité Nouvelle, an organisation that works with street children in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo **this Friday 22nd May**. "Karibu," an African Music evening is happening from **7-9pm** at Highfield Trinity Church on London Road, Sheffield.

Musicians will be performing pieces from countries such as Ghana, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to raise money for Christian Aid. The groups include members of the Hope of Glory Church, the Lions Singers from St Mary's Church, Bramall Lane and the Berean Church. The evening will celebrate the diverse African communities in Sharrow. It will also draw attention to the work of Christian Aid.

Talking about Christian Aid, 'They've given me education for life,' says 18-year-old Nadia Kabula. When her father died, Nadia's family struggled

desperately to make ends meet. But a tailoring course run by Christian Aid partner Humanité Nouvelle in the Democratic Republic of Congo has allowed Nadia to imagine a brighter future – and she hopes one day to open her own business. Meanwhile, Nadia is giving others the chance of a fuller life by passing on her skills and her love of fashion to other young girls in her community.

Sheffield Welcomes Bishop Steven

See a version of his welcoming sermon on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNxezSFRc1A>

Joint statement on political extremism

The following statement has been released by the Bishop, along with other faith leaders in Sheffield:

As leaders of faith communities in South Yorkshire, we affirm the values of unity, tolerance and mutual respect, which have always helped people from different backgrounds to live together.

We are deeply concerned at the activity of racist and fascist groups such as the British National Party, which use people's fears to stir up race hate. We reject their demonisation of Muslims, and their claim to speak for Christians, as an affront to all our religions and beliefs and a danger to the unity of the whole community.

On 4 June, the people of Yorkshire and the Humber will choose our representatives in the European Parliament. The regional voting system means that every vote counts, wherever it is cast. A high turnout will help prevent candidates on extremist platforms from winning seats.

So we urge the overwhelming majority to turn out and vote, and give a clear message that extremism and hatred are not welcome here.

USE YOUR VOTE!

This newsletter is available on the internet at <http://www.stmarys-church.co.uk/>
To submit news or to receive emails when this newsletter is updated, steve tozer-loft 258 4382
steve@tozer-loft.fsnet.co.uk



Vicar: Julian Sullivan 0114 272 4987

The Bishops Letter

This letter is adapted from Bishop Steven's sermon at the Welcome Eucharists. For the full text of the sermon please go to www.sheffield.anglican.org

A Fruitful Church

The world around us is obsessed with targets and with measurement and with growth. Everything has to be bigger and better than it was last year and the year before. A few years ago we simply measured profit in companies. Now we measure everything. You name it and there is a statistic for it. Schools and hospitals and social services and just about every other place in public life have ways of measuring things. Failure and success are a matter of evidence of numbers more than ever before.

Jesus does not use these words success and failure of his church. I think he would have some hard things to say to a culture which tries to measure everything and which sometimes expects people to produce more and more with less and less. I think he might have some hard things to say to a bishop or a diocese which fell into the same trap.

Instead of the language of failure and success, Jesus gives us the language of fruitfulness. God is like a gardener or a vine dresser (John 15). God has not called us as a church to be successful. But the Lord does call us to be fruitful. God does not come round once a year like a school inspector or a tax man to see how successful we have been or how much profit we have turned. God is not the occasional visitor to his garden. He is with us every day – not to assess how we are doing but like a skilled and gentle gardener, a vine grower, planting, weeding and pruning to help us to be more fruitful.

Success in the world's terms is something which always has to be visible. Fruit, in the way Jesus intends it, is a much more seasonal thing. You can't always find the evidence. There are resting times as well as growing times. But if just one condition is met, it will be there.

How can we tell what this fruit is? What does Jesus mean?

I think fruit means at least three different things in the Bible. First and foremost it means public justice and right living. The picture behind Jesus picture is in Isaiah 5 where God plants a vineyard. According to Isaiah, when God comes to visit his vineyard Israel he looks for the fruit of righteousness and justice.

When God looks on our church today, the fruit he is looking for is about working for the common good, supporting the weak, welcoming the stranger,

working for a better society, strengthening family life, caring for the lonely and the afraid, the list is almost endless.

Second, the fruit Jesus looks for is producing Christian people who are people of character. People like Jesus. People who over time demonstrate what the bible calls the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives: love and joy and peace, patience, kindness and goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. A fruitful church is a church where people are growing in that kind of quality. Sometimes that fruit comes through difficult experiences as well as good ones, through patient pastoral care, through good habits of faithful prayer and worship. We grow together into the likeness of Christ.

And the third kind of fruit we bear is a steady and gradual increase in the number of disciples. You can't always see it in every local church, of course. Churches have good seasons and harder seasons. But it should be evident in the life of the diocese as a whole. In Matthews gospel this is called a harvest for the kingdom of God. A different kind of fruit. In Luke's gospel it's likened to a great catch of fish – again a different sort of harvest. But the sense in the gospels is clear. We are to pray and to work towards growing the church itself – every branch of the vine – as people come to faith both as children and as adults.

So how do we bear fruit as a church? What's the secret?

If you read John 15 carefully (and I hope you will) you will discover that bearing fruit in the Christian life is not about using the latest techniques or wealth or importance. Only one thing is important for a branch of the vine to be fruitful. Just one thing. Without that one thing then there will be no fruit at all. When that one thing is in place, there will be much fruit.

So what then is the key to being able to change the world, to Christian character and to a harvest of disciples?

I will leave you, if I may, to look up the answer for yourself. It's life changing.

+Steven

Next Sunday – 24th May

10.30am Parish Communion

People with jobs to do next Sunday: Maureen (readings); Margaret A (drinks); Andy C & Kate K (communion assistants); Doreen & Joan (stewards); Jon, Veronica, Jess (music)

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