

## **Newsletter St Mary's & St Augustine's Church Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

### **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Trinity**

Sunday Readings: Song of Solomon 2: 8-13; Matthew 25-end

Wednesday's Readings: Psalm 91; Job 39; Romans 15.14-21

### **Reflection by Claire**

I wonder how we will reflect on the Covid Pandemic in years to come, when all of this is a memory? I suspect it will form a timeline, one of those markers in history before and after ... the after when everything is changed. The storm may have passed but after the storm is always with us! I am finding it difficult to plan at the moment. I look at Leicester and think will we also have to go back into lockdown? Certainly, as we begin to plan for loosening restrictions one thing, we can be certain of is that this Pandemic has not gone away and we are going to have to learn to live with this unpredictable storm for some time to come!

Song of Solomon is a Hebrew love song: 'For now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth: the time of singing has come ...' (Song of Solomon 2:11-12). It is a beautiful image of hope and restoration. During morning prayer this week, I read Psalm 137: 'By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept ... Our captors asked us for a song of joy ... but how can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?' Even as restrictions are being lifted, we are still experiencing a 'winter season' and there may yet be a harsh frost as the social and economic cost of this pandemic begin to be realized in full. Somehow, we need to find ways of singing in the harshness of the storm or imagining summer whilst still in the depths of winter. This is not denying the reality of what is happening around us, but it is trying to find a pathway which can help to sustain us. Finding a way of being able to sing songs of joy whilst still being in 'a foreign land'!

There is an overgrown green hedge at the bottom of my garden bordering onto the church yard. It is about 10 feet high and rising! There is a red climbing rose which is thriving amongst all the green. As the rains came this week, I glimpsed the rose and all of her beauty and in doing so understood something of God's love and care for us. God tells us to consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. If God so clothes the grass of the field how much more will he clothe us? (Matt 6: 28-30). The beauty of the rose mirrored back to me how God understands and sees us: He makes us a little lower than the angels and crowns us with glory and honour (Psalm 8. 5); He will rejoice over you with gladness and singing and renew you in his love (Zephaniah 3.17). The rose is blossoming in spite of the Covid storm around us teaching us of a deeper wisdom and beauty.

Matthew encourages us in telling us that God's yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matt 11.30). So often we fail to allow ourselves to be comforted by this. We focus so much on the storm which we can do very little about and overlook the beauty of the single rose. It is the single rose which gives us comfort. Even when we get to 'the other side' of all of this, the after the storm is going to be always with us. We shall be marked by these events and experiences. But the rose will still be present, mimicking something of God's beauty and our own beauty as God sees us and loves us.

### **Collect for this Sunday**

Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus you brought salvation to our wayward world: draw us into harmony with your will, that we may find all things restored in him, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In this vision he showed me a little thing the size of a hazelnut and it was round as a ball. I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and thought, 'What may this be?' And it was generally answered thus: 'It is all that is made'. I marvelled how it might last, for I thought it might suddenly have sunk into nothing because of its littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: 'It lasts and ever shall, for God loves it.'

Julian of Norwich



**Congratulations to Laura, Ashley, Felix and baby Lucas born Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June @ 2.22pm weighing 7lbs 6oz**

### **Notices & Information**

**At St Mary's we are inviting church congregation to an outside picnic and short act of worship. On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July at 12pm. Bring your own food/drink/ picnic chair/ hand sanitiser and remember to socially distance from other households. This is of course weather permitting! We hope to repeat this on August the 16<sup>th</sup>.**

**At St Augustine's we are completing a Risk Assessment of the building and hope to offer some from of worship on a Sunday morning once this is completed but it is unlikely to be every Sunday. We will of course keep you informed of when this is going to be.**

We continue to offer a zoom gathering as a supplement to this worship each Sunday at 11am – the details have been emailed to everyone over the last two weeks and remain the same.

Roots resources this week include two sets of material - prayers and activities for the lectionary readings <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/i-am-looking-for/public-copies/worshipathome5jul>

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