

Dear friends

I hope you are keeping well. Once again, I'm writing on a Sunday morning with a link to some worship and a reflection for us to share in at home. The link to the YouTube video is below and the text of both the worship and the reflection is attached. The reflection can also be heard on our "Dial a Sermon" line, where anyone can phone 01827 211 125 and listen to that week's talk for the same price as any other local call. If you have friends, neighbours or family without internet access, please do pass this number on to them.

<https://youtu.be/6x8BnX3W4b8>

I just want to write a quick word about the opening up of church buildings, to make clear (or as clear as we can be at this stage!) what the situation is for our group of churches. You may have heard that the government has announced that places of worship may reopen from this weekend for two purposes - supervised individual prayer and for small scale family funerals. In each case that is subject to arrangements being in place to ensure safety and social distancing, and the decision as to when and whether to reopen for these purposes is a matter for local churches to determine. The Bishops and Archdeacons have made very clear we are not under any pressure to do so if it would not be possible or advisable where we are. Public worship, including baptisms and weddings, are still not allowed and no timescale has been announced for when they will be.

The churchwardens and I are in agreement that opening for private prayer is not practicable here, and because for the most part our buildings were not usually open for that outside service times anyway I don't think there would be a widespread expectation that we should now. Funerals are a different matter; until now, funeral services have either been at a crematorium or at the graveside only in case of burials. Although the churches at Baxterley, Wood End and Hurley are too small and constricted in layout to allow funerals safely to take place under the current requirements, at Kingsbury and Merevale that will be possible with suitable preparation, including prior cleaning, signage and provision of hand gel. No church funerals are currently planned, but from 6th July onwards we are intending to make Kingsbury and Merevale available for funerals with limited numbers, prior to burial in any of the churchyards in the parishes.

For the wider question of reopening for worship, when we are permitted to do so, I will be formally consulting not just with the wardens but also the PCC members - but I would very much like to hear as many voices on the subject as possible, so that we can move forward in a way in which as many as possible feel comfortable. As ever, safety will be paramount, and nobody should feel under any pressure to come into the buildings if they do not feel that is right for them. I am clear that we shall be continuing with making as much provision as possible for those who worship at home even after public worship in the buildings resumes. So do please share with me any thoughts, concerns and ideas.

One of those ways of worshipping and meeting whilst separated physically has been our Zoom gatherings for coffee and chat and for compline. Chat is on a Thursday morning at 10.30am for about half an hour, and Compline on Tuesdays at 8pm - the codes are I think the same as on last week's email, but let me know if you want more information about that.

Finally, for your prayers, do please remember Revd Louise Shaw, who is to be licensed as our full-time Area Dean (via Zoom by Bishop Anne) on Tuesday of this week at 7pm.

As we remember those who have died, and pray for the bereaved, please hold in your prayers those for whom funerals are taking place over the next few days:  
David Charles Legg (Tuesday 16 June at Sutton Coldfield Crematorium at 1.30pm)  
Baby Daisy-May Newcombe (Wednesday 17 June at Oaston Road cemetery at 10.30am)

Doreen Squires (Monday 22 June at Nuneaton Crematorium at 11.45am)

Annie Bailey (Friday 26 June at Sutton Coldfield at 1pm)

Lynne Dow (Wednesday 1 July at Sutton Coldfield at 12 noon)

We pray of course for all who are sick - because of the very public nature of online communications at present, we are not issuing a list of names of those to pray for, but please pray by name for those you know, and all are held in God's presence. Thank you for your prayers for my daughter Debbie following what I wrote last week. Although she came home from George Eliot last Sunday, she then unfortunately had to be readmitted during the week, so I am grateful for your continuing prayers for her and of course for all.

With very best wishes

John

Revd Dr John White

Priest in Charge of Kingsbury, Baxterley with Hurley and Wood End and Merevale with Bentley

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## **Worship for Trinity 1 (*Proper 6*) 14-6-20**

Welcome in the name of Christ.  
God's grace, mercy and peace be with you all.

God of our days and years,  
We set this time apart for you.  
Form us in the likeness of Christ  
So that our lives may glorify you.  
**Amen**

### **Confession**

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world  
And knows our every word and deed.  
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord  
And confess our sins in penitence and faith.

**Lord our God,  
In our sin we have avoided your call.:  
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,  
Like the dew that goes away early.  
Have mercy on us;  
deliver us from judgement;  
bind up our wounds and revive us;  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the God of love  
bring us back to himself,  
forgive us our sins,  
and assure us of his eternal love  
In Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Collect for Trinity 1**

God of truth,  
help us to keep your law of love  
and to walk in ways of wisdom,  
that we may find true life  
in Jesus Christ your Son. **Amen.**

### **Readings**

Romans 5. 1-8

Matthew 9. 35 – 10. 8

### **Reflection**

## Reflection for Trinity 1

Romans 5.1-8 Matthew 9.35 – 10.8

Have you ever had one of those weeks when you've just thought, "Oh, please! Could we just have a little bit of good news for a change?" I suspect for many people, across the country and around the world, the whole of 2020 has felt a bit like that. With the coronavirus pandemic especially, but by no means only that, there is so much that is not the way we wanted things to be. It has been tough, and it takes its toll.

Living in a world where all is not as it should be makes people hungry for good news. The phrase "good news" appears twice in our Gospel reading today. Jesus, we are told, went about the cities and villages "proclaiming the good news of the kingdom". He then appoints twelve disciples to share in the same task, sending them out with the instruction, "As you go, proclaim the good news."

The very word "gospel" means "good news", and so being bearers of good news goes to the very heart of our calling as Christians and as the church. As the hymn puts it, "We have a gospel to proclaim, good news for all throughout the earth; the gospel of a Saviour's name: we sing his glory, tell his worth."

So what is the message that we have to share with a world that is so ready for some good news? Matthew describes it as the "good news of the kingdom"; but of course that phrase may just leave us wondering "well, what does he mean by 'kingdom'?" The kingdom of God, or kingdom of heaven, in Jesus' teaching was not a place or country, like the United Kingdom, but rather a state of affairs, where God rules, and the world has become the kind of world that God intended it to be. There was a theologian called Hans Küng who once described the Kingdom of God as "creation healed". The good news that Jesus came to bring, and that he has entrusted to his followers, is that God is putting the world to rights. God is healing creation. And that is why Jesus and his disciples don't just bring a message in words, but the good news of the kingdom is shown in acts of healing, as the sick are made well and the burdened and oppressed set free.

The good news of the kingdom is good news of creation healed; and so part of receiving that good news is accepting our need of healing. The natural world needs healing. Humanity needs healing. Our country and our communities need healing. And as individuals, we need healing. Whether we think of ourselves as healthy or as sick, we all need to be healed, to be restored, to be made whole as the people God has created and called us to be. And the good news that we have as Christians is that in and through the life and death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth we have that healing. That may or may not be experienced through being made physically well; we are creatures of flesh and blood, and our earthly bodies don't last for ever; but the ultimate healing of the kingdom is ours in Christ.

St Paul, in today's other reading, declares that same good news, in different words, as he writes, "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; and having peace with God enables us to be at peace with ourselves, at peace with others, and at peace with the universe. This is not peace as just the absence of war or hostility; it is the deep, true peace of being at one with our Maker, our Redeemer, our Sustainer; it is Shalom, the peace of the kingdom. It is good news, and heaven knows, the world needs good news right now.

## **Creed**

Let us declare our faith in God

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

## **Prayers**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **Closing Prayer**

Eternal God,  
our beginning and our end,  
accompany us in this day's journey.  
Dawn on our darkness,  
open our eyes to praise you for your creation  
and to see the work you set before us today.  
Take us and use us to bring to others  
the new life you give in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

#### **Blessing**

The love of the Lord Jesus  
draw you to himself,  
the power of the Lord Jesus  
strengthen you in his service,  
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts  
and the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**