

Morning everyone

Just a quick email today, to accompany the worship and reflection for this the Sixth Sunday after Trinity. It is shared here in the usual format, but of course today is a very different day, as we resume also holding worship in the church buildings. I hope to see some of you at Merevale at 11am or Baxterley at 4.30. If you are planning to come to one of those services, then I suggest not watching or reading the attached, at least until you've got home, as the same reflection and prayers are in the youtube service as will be read live in church.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyZDdNBrBXk&feature=youtu.be>



[Worship and Reflection for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyZDdNBrBXk&feature=youtu.be)

A short act of worship for the sixth Sunday after Trinity, from the Kingsbury and Baxterley Group of Parishes, with a reflection by Revd John White on the Gospel Reading, Matthew 13.24-30 and 36-43.

www.youtube.com

We will not be resuming a printed newsletter for a little while, but a digital version is available each week via the parish website (www.kingbaxgroup.org.uk) and services and notices are also posted on the facebook page.

I look forward to seeing some of you a little later, this week or next at Kingsbury at 11am or at Wood End on Wednesday at 9.30am, but please be assured that whether you are worshipping at home or in church you are equally part of our church community in the Kingsbury and Baxterley group of parishes.

With prayers and best wishes

John

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Worship for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you

Confession

We come to God,
to ask his forgiveness and peace.

**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.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Gloria

Collect

Creator God,
you made us all in your image;
may we discern you in all that we see,
and serve you in all that we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 44.6-8

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43

Reflection

I don't always give my sermons a title, but I have today. And the title is: "Seriously bad tips for gardeners: Part 2".

And I say "Part 2" because Part 1 was last week, when we were reflecting on the parable of the sower, or, as I called it then, "the parable of the wasteful farmer". Never mind about exactly where the seed lands. Chuck it anywhere – on the footpath, on the rocks, amongst the brambles – some is bound to end up where it should, on the good soil, where it will germinate and thrive and be fruitful. Not the kind of advice of which Monty Don or Alan Titchmarsh are likely to approve.

And so today, "seriously bad tips for gardeners, part 2", and another story that Jesus told, this one often called the parable of the wheat and the tares. The advice this time? Don't bother about weeding. It's a waste of time, and it's just going to cause more harm than good. So you've got stuff growing where it shouldn't be, in amongst the flowers and the vegetables? Forget it. You can always sort it out later, at the end of the season.

I am reminded of a radio interview I heard with Terry Waite, the one time foreign envoy for the Archbishop of Canterbury, where he was asked, for some reason, about gardening. He admitted to not being much of a gardener. His strategy, he said, was to stand back and let the plants fight it out for themselves. The problem with that, of course, is that the weeds will always win.

But as with last week's parable, so this week, Jesus is not seeking to give helpful, practical advice on gardening or farming. The parables are using the agricultural and horticultural metaphors to talk about the Kingdom of God. So, if taken literally, these are seriously bad gardening tips, maybe that highlights the fact that God's Kingdom works and grows in very different ways from our day to day human activities. Let the weeds grow alongside the wheat; they will be separated at the harvest. It is a parable about judgement; and in particular about when judgement happens and by whom.

Jesus is cautioning against the tendency of people (and religious people especially) to take upon themselves a role that belongs to God, and to God alone. It is not for us to judge one another. God is judge, and we can and we must leave that act of judging to God to do in God's own time. The history of the church is full of examples of where zealous leaders have sought to create a pure church, purged of heretics, or the half-hearted, or of people who just don't match up to the standards of behaviour that others have decreed to be necessary. Those who don't behave, or believe, or belong, in the way that the leaders demand are made to feel unwelcome or even deliberately cast out. And when the church acts like that, can it any longer be called the Church of Jesus Christ, who sat and ate with sinners and tax-collectors, and welcomed the outsider and the lost?

The trouble with trying to sort out the wheat and the weeds is not only that in uprooting one we will disturb the other; it is that we are just not equipped to tell the difference between one and the other. That weed that we thought was dangerous and worthless may be just be the most precious plant in the garden.

So let's leave weeding to the gardeners who know what they're doing; and let us leave judging others to the God who is the loving, all-knowing, Judge of all.

Prayers of intercession

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water;
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

God the Father,
who has given to his Son the name above every name,
strengthen you to proclaim Christ as Lord;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.