



**THIS SUNDAY**

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021**

**THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

***Although we are now back in church each Sunday for worship we will continue to provide some form of online worship for those who for whatever reason, cannot attend in person.***

***This Sunday John and Marilyn will be leading a 10am Holy Communion Service at St Michael's in the Knap, Hilperton.***

***The theme of the service is "I am the true vine". If you would like to attend the service and haven't already booked a place, please contact Michael Gamble by the end of Saturday.***

***The service is going to be filmed and will be available to watch online on Sunday afternoon together with all our other recorded services at.....***

**[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS6\\_E8D47JK0aDFP89UvBrQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS6_E8D47JK0aDFP89UvBrQ)**

## **The Collect**

Risen Christ,  
your wounds declare your love for the world  
and the wonder of your risen life:  
give us compassion and courage  
to risk ourselves for those we serve,  
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## **The First Reading: Acts 8.26-end**

<sup>26</sup>As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, “Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.” <sup>27</sup>So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup>and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

<sup>29</sup>The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.”

<sup>30</sup>Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

<sup>31</sup>The man replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.

<sup>32</sup>The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter.  
And as a lamb is silent before the shearers,  
he did not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup>He was humiliated and received no justice.  
Who can speak of his descendants?  
For his life was taken from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?” <sup>35</sup>So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.

<sup>36</sup>As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptised?” <sup>38</sup>He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptised him.

<sup>39</sup>When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way until he came to Caesarea.

### **The Gospel: John 15.1-8**

**15** Jesus said “I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup>He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. <sup>3</sup>You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. <sup>4</sup>Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

<sup>5</sup>“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. <sup>7</sup>But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! <sup>8</sup>When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

## **The Post Communion Prayer**

Eternal God,  
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:  
grant us to walk in his way,  
to rejoice in his truth,  
and to share his risen life;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen

## **This Week's Reflection by John**

Last week we thought about how Jesus is The Good Shepherd and today we have another of Jesus' "I am" sayings, sayings in which he teaches important truths about his calling and about the nature of God using everyday images. In today's Gospel Jesus uses the image of tending vines to show his relationship with Father, and his relationship with the community of faith. Of course vines were, and indeed still are, commonplace throughout the Mediterranean.

In this image, the Father is the husbandman, or vine grower, Jesus is the True Vine and the community of Jesus' followers are the branches. The image is one of interdependence – for "good fruit" to grow the gardener, the vine and the branches are all essential.

Jesus is the "true Vine" because he comes from the Father, the Vine Grower, and he is fully obedient to the Father's will- and committed to the Father's purposes. The branches – the Christian community, will "bear much fruit" if they abide in Jesus. To abide in Jesus means resting in his presence so we can discern and be obedient to his call.

Vines, like many plants, require careful pruning if they are to produce good fruit. Without pruning they will produce lots of shoots but small grapes of poor quality.

Our life as a Christian Community bears good fruit when each member, in other words each branch of the vine, is rooted in a desire to understand and follow God's will. Jesus spoke of how his followers had already been pruned and purified through listening to Jesus' teaching and following him.

The last year has been difficult for all of us, but within the pain and trauma I sense that the Canalside Christian community is undergoing a form of spiritual and practical pruning, which, although painful, I believe and trust will ultimately be fruitful.

We will never take our fellowship or any aspect of our worship, perhaps particularly receiving Communion, for granted again. Many of our long established ways of doing things have had to stop and that has been, and remains, deeply painful. But despite the pain we have learned new ways of doing things in the past months. While longing to be together, people have said how much they have appreciated the creativity of our online services and online ministry to schools and there is a strong desire for online ministry to continue.

Some people have said to me that the extra time and space given to them through the shutdown of so many activities has given them more space and time, and that has helped them grow closer to God. That is a powerful reminder that Jesus said that each branch of the vine has to remain grafted to the centre.

I think that the world we live in means that it can be challenging to be grafted to the centre, in other words making sure that everything we do is rooted in our Christian faith and desire to follow Jesus. This is because our society has, throughout my life, become ever busier: our lives can be driven by the rush to do things faster. The internet and social media, while enabling us to worship and remain connected even in a pandemic, also bombards us with information.

Yet ever since Elijah heard God speak to him through a still small voice rather than through earthquake and fire, those seeking God have discerned God's presence and will through being quiet with God. Jesus frequently withdrew from the crowds to spend time with the Father and to discern the Father's will. In John 6, when Jesus spoke of how he is the bread of life; he said,

*"I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will."*

As many of you know I am active by nature; I don't always find it easy to be still with God. I do, however, know it is important if I am to be a faithful follower of Jesus and discern his will.

I have found the daily prayer resource offered by the 24/7 prayer movement really helpful to me; especially the Lectio 365 prayer app I have downloaded to my smartphone:

<https://www.24-7prayer.com/helpmepray>

The Church of England also provides daily prayer resources:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

We can be confident that as our lives are grafted to Jesus, the true vine, we will, through the Holy Spirit, become more attentive to God and alert to God's will.

In today's reading from Acts 8 we heard how Philip was alert to God's call to meet with the Ethiopian Court official. Because of this he was able to lead him to Christian faith and to Baptism.

I wonder how the Lord will call us to serve as we emerge from the pandemic? We have seen good fruit develop even in the times of

darkness. When we are faithful we can be confident that our lives will bear good fruit and that we will be a blessing to others and the communities and world we serve. We need to have confidence in Jesus' promise: -

*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!*

Although there will be times when we will struggle to understand why our prayers are not answered in the ways we wanted or hoped for, we **will** see the power of God at work.



**It's Christian Aid Week from 10 – 16 May** and this year the focus is on the climate crisis.

This climate crisis hurts us all but people living in poverty fight the worst of it every day. From drought to flooding, climate change robs people of control over their lives. Extreme weather means people are struggling to survive without a reliable source of water. Also, the Coronavirus pandemic has made it critical for people to be able to access water and soap for vital hand washing.

Sadly for a second year we can't hold any fundraising events to support Christian Aid Week, but I encourage you to look at the website <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week> and donate if you can. If you would like to give but don't have access the internet, do get in touch with me and I will make sure your donation is sent to Christian Aid.

Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live. A reliable source of water will help families withstand long drought or relentless rainstorms. Every gift can help to change lives.

Anne Rees (01225 764365)



**Thy Kingdom Come** is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus. This year the dates are 13<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

- *Deepen their own relationship with Jesus Christ*
- *Pray for 5 friends or family to come to faith in Jesus*
- *Pray for the empowerment of the Spirit, that we would be effective in our witness*

For more information and resources, click on <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/> Anne Rees

### **Prayer trees available during Easter Season**

Prayer trees have been set up at St. Michael's, St. Mary Magdalen and St. George's churches, cards are available in the church porch for you

to use to write your prayers, (please provide your own pen), or you may wish to write a prayer on a card at home and bring it to tie to one of the trees.

## Prayer Requests

It is important that we pray for all those who seek our support, especially at this time. Please let Michael know of anyone who particularly needs our prayers. Do ensure that you have their permission.

### ***This week we pray for...***

Andrew Margetts  
Barbara & David  
Beryl Curtis  
Chris Brown  
Christian & Family  
Colin Jackson  
Collette Miyagawa  
David Franklin  
Deanna and Family  
Doreen  
Doris and Arthur  
Walker  
Dylan & Family  
Elizabeth  
Emelia



*St Michael's, Hilperton*

Hannah, Ash &  
Oliver  
Jacqui Clark  
Jacqui Fudge  
James Vincent  
Janet Blake  
Jess Humphries  
Lilly & Phil  
Michael & Clem  
Mike Aldridge  
Ottie  
Pat & Stan  
Thompson  
Pauline Burbidge  
Phyl Brown  
Rosa Light  
Sophia & Family

- We pray for all those who mourn but particularly at this time for Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family, and for the families of Guy Tadman and Brenda Moore.
- We thank you Lord for the ministry of Bishop Nicholas as he prepares for retirement in July and pray for the Dean of Salisbury and all those who now are at the point of considering

- nominations as they prepare to appoint our next Bishop.
- We pray for all those considering being nominated for election to Diocesan Synod.
  - We also pray for the local and Police and Crime Commissioner elections on Thursday.
  - Let us thank God for the continuation of the vaccination programme and the ray of hope it brings to all our lives.
  - We continue to pray for all the staff, pupils, parents and governors of our 3 schools.
  - Please pray for all those grieving at this time around the World for all those who have died from the Coronavirus.
  - Lord we bring before you all those suffering from the effects of Coronavirus in any way and thank you for the NHS, scientists, health professionals, politicians and key workers working so hard to help us through the crisis.

## **Annual Parochial Church Meetings**

Many thanks to everyone who joined the online APCM for Semington last Sunday. As with Hilperton and Staverton the week before, it was good to reflect on our ministry in the last year, both with sadness for those things we have missed and thankfulness for the new ministries we have been able to offer and new skills we have learnt. It was good, too, to thank our church officers and others who have given so much of themselves. Particular thanks to David Wildsmith who continues as Churchwarden and Jack Woodward who continues as PCC Secretary and Treasurer and to Pam and Bev who support them so well.

John Rees

## **Welcome Team at St Michael's**

If you would be willing to join the Welcome Team at St Michael's it really would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Sandra Harding for more details. 753958 or [sharding958@btinternet.com](mailto:sharding958@btinternet.com)

## **Foodbanks Update**

Trowbridge: Bill thanks everyone for the items of food and toiletries for Storehouse. He collects from the church porches on Tuesday & Thursday mornings & takes directly to Storehouse where they are gratefully received. The request from Storehouse for the coming weeks is for **Sugar, Squash, Tinned meats, Curries and any spicy food, Long life milk and Cooking sauces**

On Wednesdays Storehouse provide a Soup Kitchen from 1-2pm *“Come on down for smiles and food to fill hungry tummies”*

Melksham: is particularly requesting **tinned soup, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, UHT milk, squash, and sugar** this week.

Please continue to support the work of our local foodbanks. EVERY donation makes a difference. If you would like to support Trowbridge Storehouse regularly or give a one off donation, please follow the link below and select storehouse.

<https://westwiltsvineyard.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/zk54op3a>

Items for our local foodbanks can be left in our church porches, the Somerset Arms & in local supermarkets.

## **Support beyond Lockdown**

If you need support or are aware of others who may need support, please contact one of our Churchwardens, John, Joy or Michael. Similarly let us know if you are able to offer shopping or other help – and thank you to those who have already offered this. If you would like someone to pray with you or for you, or if you would like to speak with someone, please do not hesitate to contact John or Joy.

# BENEFICE DIARY 2021



The  
Canalside  
Parishes

## M A Y

Date / Time		Event details		Location
M	3 <sup>rd</sup>	BANK HOLIDAY		
Tu	4th	0930	Hilperton/Staverton Morning Prayer <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88326941179">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88326941179</a>	Online
W	5th	1000	Online Communion and Coffee <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86833181830">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86833181830</a>	Online
Th	6th	POLLING DAY FOR WILTSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER and ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS TO WILTSHIRE COUNCIL		
		0915	Semington Morning Prayer <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84008141990">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84008141990</a>	Online
		1000 1200	Private Prayer	St Michael's
Su	9th	THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER		
		<i>If you haven't already done so please contact Michael to book places for the following service</i>		
		1000	Celtic Morning Worship	St Michael's

Find details on our Facebook page & our website:

[www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk](http://www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk)

**BENEFICE CONTACTS:**

Rector: Rev John Rees 01225 764365 [canalsidirector@gmail.com](mailto:canalsidirector@gmail.com)

Curate: Rev Joy Albone 07931638524 [canalsidecurate@gmail.com](mailto:canalsidecurate@gmail.com)

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The Canalside Parishes