



St Peter's Parish

e-newsletter

17th June 2020

www.stpeterrealing.org.uk

The Vicar's Letter Fruits of the Spirit – gentleness (Galatians 5.22-23)

In the context of faith, gentleness can be another one of those words easily misconstrued. On occasion, when in a negotiating situation, I have been accused of not acting as a Christian. The first time that happened I was just marked. How dare the opposing side use that kind of tactic? On reflection I wonder if such comments come from a misunderstanding of the nature of the Christian life and faith.

The world has a way of approaching life that often can be aggressive even violent. We go to war, we can choose economic expediency over human welfare, we can choose 'me' over 'you'. Yet the way of Christianity, as with other world faiths, is not the way of the world. One might want to ask about the many wars this Christian country has engaged in, the effects of empire we are discussing through the Black Lives Matter movement often carried out in the name of God or salvation through Jesus. How can Christians argue their way is not the way of the world when so much in the world has been done in the name of Christianity?

Being a Christian does not mean the world can treat you like a doormat. There is much in the Bible, for us particularly in the New Testament, that encourages us to stand up for ourselves and our faith. Yet that faith to which we are called does not dance to the tune of the world. Where the rule of tooth and claw is ranked high Christianity stands for a different world, one where care of others, looking to the 'us' rather than the 'me' stands proud. To be gentle then is not to be walked over or taken for granted. Gentleness as a fruit of the spirit reflects how God's love in the world should be shared and experienced. Gentleness challenges the believer too. Our natural instinct is one of survival and self-preservation. Christ calls us to love our neighbour. In the story of the Good Samaritan the victim is cared for by the stranger. The stranger goes out of their way to make the victim safe and to bring healing. The Samaritan does not let himself be abused or taken advantage of. His gentleness brings relief and witnesses to his good character and understanding of the world as it should be, even as he experiences it.

Gentleness comes from strength; strength of faith and character, grounded in our love of God and desire to follow the way of Christ; to become more Christlike as we are encouraged to do through the good news of Jesus. In our faith, these things come together to create a framework through which we engage with the world, through which we challenge ourselves and how we live in the world, for although earlier I had suggested Christ calls us to a different world, that world is here and now and challenges the accepted world view to be a better and stronger world living in the light and obedience of Christ today.

Fr David

Contact Information: The parish office is closed. Lesley, our administrator, has been furloughed. Fr David can be contacted: 020 8997 1620; 07976905294; david.neno@london.anglican.org

We are open ~ Can You Help?

On Wednesday this week, for the first time since mid-March, St Peter's was open for private prayer. It was great that on our first day we could open at 9am and not close until 4pm. As we should supervise opening, this was dependent upon the generosity of volunteers. Our plan is first to open for regular periods of time, starting with 9am until 2pm if possible, 12 noon as a minimum. All of this is dependent on volunteers. Can you help? The more we have the longer we can open for. The church sitters, we are calling them Welcomers as an extension of our Welcoming programme, do not have much to do. The doors are open, there is a one-way system which should be monitored. A note is taken of the numbers of people who visit in your shift, no names. And touch points should be wiped down on a regular basis with cleanser provided. It is not difficult and if nothing else gives you a bit of time to catch up on your reading. If you can help, please let Fr David know.



Stewardship and Giving



Stewardship is a way of life management. In the Christian life nothing is out of bounds. Everything we do, everything we own is part of our faith, reflects faith. Nothing is out of bounds. It is why, when we run Stewardship Programmes we often reflect on the balance between talents or skills, time and finance. The church for one, like everyone and everything else cannot function without money. It is important however that money is held in a proper moral and ethical frame and does not become a driving force for who or what we are. Talents or skills or some might want to say gifts are God given with which we are to glorify God. As a manager of an office, a Christian should use their gifts or skills or talents of organisation and planning to help that office run as smoothly as possible. They should also use those gifts for the smooth and orderly proclamation of the gospel and the running of their faith community. At this point time enters the equation. To varying degrees, we all have some time we can give to the glory of God. We also should balance that with time for our family, our friends, our work and ourselves. Time is not limitless and for some of us in busy positions free time is a rare commodity. We may wish to use our money to assist in the mission and ministry of the church where our time is unable to. Gifts, time and money become then a trinitarian tracery, each working with each other through which we work constantly to promote our faith.

Each week, at the bottom of this article we have published the parish bank details so that you might be able to support the work of the church financially by reviewing your giving hopefully with the idea of increasing your offering. What it is more difficult to do is help you give in such a way, of your gifts/skills and time; that is down to you. To prayerfully reflect on how you might be able to use your gifts and time to further God's kingdom and promote the Good News of Jesus, to say yes to the call of God on your life, in what ever way that call comes.

Fr David

Bank: HSBC

Account Name: Parochial Church Council of St Peters Ealing Parish

Account Number: 60377082 Sort Code: 40 11 58

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WLL Community Shopping Service.

As time goes on and we become clearer of the more permanent place COVID19 seems to be having in society it is quite possible this service will be needed for a while longer. As Government plans for virus tracking and localised isolation are uncovered so flexible and serviceable systems for support in the community are going to be needed. That means being prepared to be available and not always being needed. We are then going to continue to need volunteers to support the community with shopping, a chat on the phone or the collection of prescriptions. We are working out what this might mean. Until that is sorted Margaret Joachim is co-ordinating this shopping service. We could do with your help. If you would like to help, if you know someone who could do with some help or indeed if you yourself need help then get in touch. The phone number to use is 07595 911178.

Please also note the new Ealing Borough website: <https://ealingtogether.org/> Loads of information help and advice is there.

Finding Your Way Round Your Bible: Gospels 2

Last week we spent time with Matthew, Mark and Luke, the so-called Synoptic “same-seeing” Gospels, this week we spend time with John. If we imagine in our book shop that all the books that have been written about the Gospels take up one whole floor, then we might expect that there are four equal sections. In fact, the shelves devoted to John take up more than all of the other three put together.

There are many reasons for this, including:

- The “mystery” of the author.
- The vision and intention of the author.
- The content and structure of the book.
- The theology of the book.
- The “poetry” of the language.

Traditionally the author of the Gospel of John is identified as John the fisherman, brother of James and son of Zebedee. Brothers whom Jesus calls “sons of thunder” (Mark 3 verse 17) suggesting anger or energy perhaps. In John’s Gospel references are made to “the beloved disciple” and cross-referencing this with the other Gospels it seems clear that this is in fact John himself. (Though there are some that suggest that Lazarus is the “beloved” one – amongst other candidates.)

Endless arguments have arisen, some suggesting that it impossible that the writer would be arrogant enough to describe himself as “beloved”, while others suggest it is in fact a sign of humility. The authorship of John is still contested, as is its date. Those who claim John the disciple as author tend to go for an early dating of John. Those who champion other candidates go for a date much later than the Synoptics. (We can also add into the mix the authorship of the letters of John and the book of Revelation, which we shall come to later.)

From early church times the Gospel writers became associated with the four beasts in the prophecy of Ezekiel (see Ezekiel chapter 1, and when we have chance to look, they are beautifully carved on the high altar at St Peter’s.)

Matthew “a winged man” or angel

Mark: a lion

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Luke: an ox
John: an eagle

Commentators have made much of these connections – the rushing roaring speed of Mark, the more plodding detail of Luke – but for John the image of the eagle does seem very apt. For, whoever wrote it, we certainly have a soaring vision, a birds-eye bigger picture, and some piercing language and insights into the nature of the Godhead.

This takes us to the vision and intention of the author. John is not interested in a straightforward narration of Jesus's life, times and sayings (though neither are the Synoptics, as each has their own focus as we saw last week). John is interested in the worked-out implications of the incarnation. John begins with “the word made flesh” and all that follows is the outworking of that world-changing reality.

There is no account or interest in birth narratives as it is as Son of God in human form that preoccupies John. The encounters that John describes show Jesus giving further emphasis this relationship - “Son of the Father”. Have a look at the following to see what I mean:

John 3 verses 1 -28: The visit of Nicodemus to Jesus (see especially verses 11- 16. Note the pronoun “we” – Jesus as one with God the Father).

John 4 verses 1 -42 The Woman at the Well (see especially verses 23 -26).

John chapter 8: From the Woman caught in Adultery to Jesus's Jewish listeners picking up stones to stone him instead (see especially verses 57 -58).

In this encounter Jesus enrages the Jews by saying (8 verse 58) “Before Abraham was I AM”. “I AM” is the name God the Father gives Himself (Exodus 3 verse 14) and Jesus saying it –as no Jewish person ever would – is extreme blasphemy.

This takes us to the content and structure of the Fourth Gospel. Both the content of John's Gospel (90% of its material is unique to John) and its structure is different to that of the Synoptics. The order of events and ministry journeys differ, as well as different events being described. It is often said that “there are no parables in John.” It is certainly true that they are not described as such, and parables in the Synoptics are not in John, but there are teaching stories and allegories. These are a distinctive mark of John's Gospel and are referred to as the “I am” statements. This is when Jesus makes a complete identification of himself with both a symbol or attribute and with God Himself. We have seen above why saying “I AM” is so powerful.

Have a look at the seven “I AM”s now and – by reading the verses around them - notice in how in some of them there is a teaching “story” also at work:

John 6 verse 53: The Bread of Life*

John 8 verse 12: The Light of the World

John 10 verse 9: The Gate of the Sheep

John 10 verse 11: The Good Shepherd

John 11 verse 25: The Resurrection and the Life*

John 14 verse 6: The Way, the Truth and the Life*

John 15 verse 1: The True Vine

*“Life” rather than “kingdom” is a keyword of John

In this way, the meaning of the parables (often misunderstood even by the disciples in the Synoptics) is made explicit. Jesus IS God incarnate.

Other points of structure to notice are the absence of an account of the Last Supper, other than the foot-washing. (NB there is teaching on both bread and wine elsewhere in John) and the long section of teaching AFTER the Last Supper (chapters 14 - 17).

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This takes us back to the guiding vision of the Gospel – the theology of John. In the washing of the disciples feet Jesus is concerned with how we are to live as Christians, rather than what we are to do.

Have a look at it now:

John 13 verses 1 – 35 (see especially verses 13 – 16 and 34 -35)

And now at this:

John 17 verses 20 -25 (see especially verse 23)

A life of service and love is Jesus's message, but a life of love and service possible only because of our incorporation into the life of God. And this is an incorporation possible only because of the love and total unity of the Father and the Son. The love of God embodied in Jesus and continued in the Spirit of His love in us today.

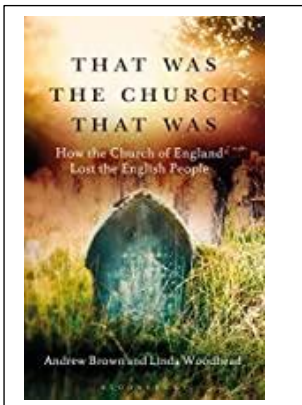
The beauty of this understanding and its expression in John is what makes this for many the most lovely of the Gospels (though certainly not without its warnings and hard sayings). For beauty of language and power of expression the opening chapter of John is peerless in the New Testament:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (John chapter 1 verses 1-2 and 14)

This is the message of John and this belief inspires every verse of his Gospel. Although I could suggest a list of further passages to explore, the best way to get to know him, is to set aside an afternoon and read him – for beauty, for truth –and for life in all its fullness. (John 10 verse 10)

Next time, we will go back into the History section of our bookshop, when we continue Luke's account of the Good News into the Acts of the Apostles.

Susan Peatfield



That Was The Church That Was by Andrew Brown and Linda Woodhead

Published by Bloomsbury Press, 2017

Remember the days when the church was full most Sundays? When to get a seat at Midnight Mass you had to arrive at least an hour before the service? When Songs of Praise was a major player on the Sunday viewing scene? When the assumption was made that you were Church of England?

When Mrs Thatcher came to power in 1979 the Church of England still seemed to be an essential part of Englishness. As the cover of this book says, a seismic shift has taken place since then leading to a loss of more than half of the church's membership and much of its influence. It might be argued that 'religion' has become a dirty word, unfashionable, even a focus of ridicule.

This book explores why. Relentlessly honest and surprisingly entertaining this book tells the story of the disappearance of the Church of England from the centre of public life and asks: How did this happen? Is there a way back?

This should be read by every Anglican. The reader should allow themselves to be challenged and through the writing of the book, the material it offers and the insights it gives ask 'what should we do next?'

Fr David

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Contemplative Prayer Gathering.

Contemplative Prayer Gathering - a step towards heaven. Contemplative prayer is about building a skill, a practice that helps us come even closer to God. Coming closer to God is taking a step nearer to heaven. We are encouraged in this skill development by sharing in a time of contemplative prayer. We practice on our own in our home but come together to share in supportive prayer that encourages us. It is a joy. Come and join us, Wednesdays @ 5pm.



Shops may be open, and Ealing may be getting back to some sense of 'distanced' normal, but the Food Bank is needed more than ever. Please, as you do your shop think about adding a couple of items for those who are struggling. The real fear is that as we come out of this phase of the pandemic loads of

jobs are on the brink of being lost. No income means no food and we fear the Food Bank will be needed even more. So please help as best you can.

Please find our June Shopping List below:

Savoury Biscuits/Crackers; Tinned Fruit & Vegetables; Peanut Butter; Ketchup & Mayo; Vegetable Curry/Chilli – tins; Tinned Meat - beef, lamb, chicken, ham; Baked Beans - YES REALLY!; Shower Gel/Hand Wash/Bars of Soap; Shaving Foam & Razors; Nappies - Sizes 3 & 5

We have got plenty of Pasta, Pulses

This foodbank is run in partnership with local churches, facilitated by Ealing Foodbank. Registered charity number 1156369 | Registered in England and Wales

Prayer requests:

Please pray for:

Suzi; Cicely Pratt; Elaine Dunkley; Keith Win; John Pullan.

Madeleine Anthony; baby Peter Spagnolo

Recently deceased: Michael Mulligan

Those we cannot be with now and who weigh heavy on our hearts.

Carers and health workers; those keeping supplies lines operational

Each other and ourselves.

(if you would like names added to this list please send them to Fr David)

Keep us, good Lord,

under the shadow of your mercy.

Sustain and support the anxious,

be with those who care for the sick,

and lift up all who are brought low;

that we may find comfort

knowing that nothing can separate us from your love

in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.



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Contributions.

A big thank you to those who have already contributed pieces to this newsletter. It is so great (and makes my life easier) to have contributions from our readers. It would be great to have more. Material to me at the email below by Wednesday would be great.

Ring the Archbishop!

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus.

Daily Hope, which is available from today, offers music, prayers, and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

Worship this week:

Sunday 21st June – Trinity 2

09.15am Kids Church for all our younger members (via Zoom)

10.00am Parish Worship (via Zoom)

5.30pm Evening Prayer (via Zoom)

Monday – Friday

9am Morning Prayer (individual prayer)

9.30pm Compline (via Zoom)

Monday-Tuesday, Thursday – Friday

5pm Evening Prayer (individual prayer)

Wednesday

5pm Contemplative Prayer (via Zoom)



You can download Zoom onto your device, or you can call in by phone, dialling the number given in the email. You will also need to have downloaded the Daily Prayer app onto your device or find it via the Church of England website (www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer)

StayActive4Life Exercise Classes via Zoom –

locally based, tried and tested. Possibly other members of the congregation may have attended Aran and Marilin's classes before lockdown, when they were holding their Strength and Balance and Zumba Gold classes in various halls across the Borough.

The classes are continuing very successfully via Zoom (as Germaine and myself can testify!). If anyone would like to join, they would be most welcome.

The classes run every weekday morning. We currently pay £20 for each two-week period, then it is up to you how many classes you join. A new participant would have a free trial class, and Aran is keen to stress that if cost is an issue to please discuss with him, as they do not want anyone to feel priced out of attending.

For further information please contact:

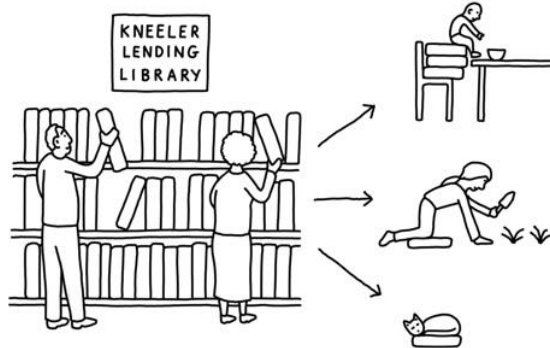
Aran Summers on admin@stayactive4life.co.uk or 07715170207

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THE KNEELERS

HOW THEY ARE BEING USED DURING THE PANDEMIC

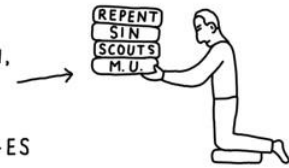
SOME WERE LENT OUT BEFORE THE START OF LOCKDOWN



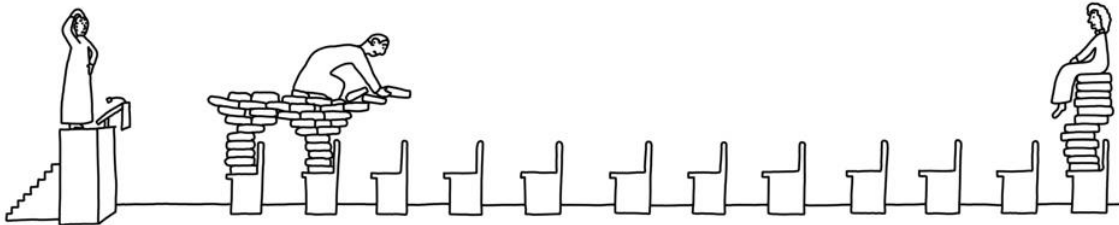
A FEW WERE PILFERED
(VERY TRICKY TO DETECT)



PENITENT KNEELER
THIEF RETURNS STASH,
HAVING BEEN
CONVERTED BY
EMBROIDERED MESSAGES



THE CLERGY USE THE REMAINDER FOR (SOCIALLY-DISTANCED) TEAM-BUILDING EXERCISES



CartoonChurch.com

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