



St Peter's Parish

e-newsletter

1st July 2020

www.stpeterrealing.org.uk

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

On leaving church one Sunday, many years ago, I was stopped in the street by a local who said, “You Christians make me sick! You always look happy.” What a witness I thought. If others can see the joy of God in us and identify us as Christian. I have thought about that encounter often and wondered how it affected the person who approached me. I am never quite sure if their comment was one of jealousy, frustration, whether it was a criticism or just a genuine observation. I have always hoped it was not a negative response, though part of me has never been sure.

It is possible with some of the fruits of the spirit that we can come over rather other worldly. Somewhat separated from the real world of our neighbour. Our message and the story we use for that message can seem to some rather fairy tale-ish or farfetched. As such my observer might be forgiven for thinking my response to the world was one of separation and that my faith took me somewhere else other than the harsh realities of this world.

If that is the case, then that is sad because the Christian faith is very much embedded in this world. Our Saviour came into this world to save sinners, to save you and me and my observer. Jesus did not want to take us out of the world but to change the world for the better. He reminded us for example that the poor will always be with us; that they then become our responsibility to care for, to love and where possible to heal. His healing ministry reminds us of the importance of bringing healing and wholeness into the broken world of today. Joy, as a fruit of the spirit is about the joy of knowing God walks with us in this world, that heaven has come down to earth and all barriers have been broken down, even the barrier of sin and death. The joy in which we are called to live is brought about by redemption, the fact that we are forgiven; and we all need forgiveness. In this week's Gospel reading Jesus calls everyone who is burdened to him so that he can give us a lighter yoke, one that is easy to bear. This yoke is one of love and forgiveness, so why would not we look happy and joyful.

We might ask, at this point, where this comes from? How can I feel joyful, live in goodness offer forgiveness, kindness, peace and self-control? Part of the answer to that question comes in next week's letter. But part begins here and now by asking Jesus into your lives. For all these gifts are given by Jesus and are shared through Jesus. We cannot do all these things on our own and if we think we can we are deluded. We are part of broken humanity where sin can get in and bring us down. But with Christ in our lives nothing can prevail, we can live in joy that is recognised by others.

Fr David

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Mass on Sunday 5th July

You will have read in the press that as from 4th July churches may open for public worship. At St Peters we have been working for a couple of weeks towards this. Planning everything we can think of that needs covering and preparing risk assessments.

With the publishing of the Government and Church of England guidelines this week we think we are ready to open for worship. To do so safely we will need your help. First and foremost, we will need your prayers. Whatever we do in our lives we should couch those decisions and actions in prayer.



We also need you to be understanding. We will still have to follow social distancing regulations, follow hygiene practices and be very aware of each other and each other's needs. We may not be able to sit in our usual seat; we will have to follow the guidance and directives of the Churchwardens and Welcomers. We will not be able to sing or exchange the Peace.

The order of service will be sent out with the Zoom invitation. We are continuing with Zoom, now Zooming the service from Church. The order of service is there for those who choose to stay at home. It is also there if you wish either to print your own copy or to download the order onto your digital device. You will then be able to use your own copy during the service; this is advised. There will be copies available in church if you are unable to do either of these things.

If you are uncertain about attending church or in an 'at risk' category it is fine to stay away. Use the Zoom service. That is what it is there for. If you feel poorly stay away. Protect others.

Things will be different and may be a little uncomfortable at first. As we iron out the creases and relax into this new routine, I am sure we will see God is always with us.

We are open ~ Can You Help?

Being open is becoming an increasingly important witness to God's presence in our community. We can only be open with your help. We need more church sitters. Please, offer what time you can, as often as you can so that we can keep the doors of St Peters open for others to find comfort and peace in prayer and quiet. Let Fr David know if you can help.



Testing in these testing times.

We are being told testing and tracing is going to be vital for this next stage in our community's release from lock down. We have been asked to make sure you know how to get tested if necessary. Firstly, it is necessary if you think you are coming down with the condition no matter how mild the symptoms may be. Advice on getting tested can be found on the Government website (www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested) or the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus>). Call 111 for further advice or check with your GP. This is important and could save lives.

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Stewardship and Giving



For this morning's New Testament reading we had the passage from Luke 16.1-18, the story of the dishonest steward. The dishonest steward is caught out by his boss and threatened with the sack. The steward recognises he cannot dig ditches and is too proud to beg. So, he goes to his master's debtors and suggests they reduce the size of the bill they owe on their records, so they pay less to the master. When the master finds out he praises the steward for being so shrewd.

This story has always bothered me. The premise seems to have been that as the steward had substantially reduced what the debtors owed to the master then the steward would be welcomed into the homes of his masters debtors in grateful thanks for the vast amounts of money he had saved them. Why then is the master praising the steward? Surely the master would be more miffed at losing yet more wealth.

We do not know what happened to the steward next which does not help our understanding. Its possible that Jesus means the master was also a bit of a wheeler-dealer and recognised the cleverness of his steward. Jesus does go on to say, "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and those who are dishonest in very little is dishonest also in much.", one might recognise the other and appreciate their skills even if their skills are not ones to be admired.

It is possible the steward, having seen the error of his ways had the bills rewritten to relinquish his 'little extra'. The final bills being what the debtors actually owed rather than the stewards fiddled extra.

How we manage material wealth reflects something of our understanding of our relationship to God and society. The steward, I guess, was not a man of God and if he was he was not very faithful. To abuse position, power and authority for you own personal gain is not to act as a good steward of your resources. Stewardship is a central pillar of our life of faith and our encounter with God. To be good stewards is to understand everything we have comes from God, is ours to look after and use for the building up of the kingdom of God. As soon as we miss that connection, so the gates are opened for us to abuse our stewardship. Who is it we serve, God or wealth...it is a tricky question on occasion?

Fr David

P.S. As we open for worship we are being encouraged to pay our regular stewardship via BAC transfer and Standing Order. We are not taking cash collections. We will have a card reader for contactless payments. The difficulty with this is a potential loss of income. Some members still prefer to pay using cash. Please do consider if this is really necessary and help us to stay afloat. Money is still very tight and moving back into church, maintaining zoom and improving our Wi-Fi provision is incurring costs. You can use the Parish Bank Details below to make your regular offering:

Bank: HSBC

Account Name: Parochial Church Council of St Peters Ealing Parish

Account Number: 60377082 Sort Code: 40 11 58

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Finding Your Way Round Your Bible: Letters I

We now reach a section in our Bible bookshop that you will not find in many bookshops on the modern High Street. Collections of letters are not big sellers these days. In the past, writing a letter was the main way not just of corresponding with other people but of communicating ideas more generally.

In pre-literate societies, hearing a letter being read was like listening to the news or receiving instructions. Writing letters developed into an art form with increasingly complex etiquette and conventions. The novels that we have now on our fiction shelves began in England in the form of epistolary novels – letters by and between characters. The reason for this is a very interesting one. Before the end of the 18th writers did not show the interior lives of fictional characters. They would not write “Emily thought about all the problems she had caused to her friends by her actions and felt sorry and ashamed etc.” Instead novels would contain a letter from Emily explaining in her own words how sorry she was to her friends. The jump in being able to write inner thoughts is one of the big leaps in literature and in human self-awareness.

The Letters section in our New Testament contains the thoughts, arguments and instructions – with a little bit of autobiography - of the letter writers who formed the early church and spread the Good News across the world. The chief of these letter writers both by number and impact is Paul. Of the 20 letters in our New Testament 13 are attributed to Paul. (NB some, as we will see later, were written to congregations e.g. Paul’s letter to the Galatians, some to individuals e.g. Paul’s letters to Timothy, and one to a whole group of people, Paul’s letter to the Hebrews*)

*Many commentators now question whether this was written by Paul.

Why did Paul write these letters?

Last time, we read in Acts of Saul/Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus and caught a glimpse of his missionary journeys across the Near East, Asia Minor, Greece and finally Rome. On these journeys he met young Christian communities – churches – and encouraged them in their following of The Way, as Christianity was called at that time. He kept in touch with them – answering their letters to him, which have not survived but whose contents we can sometimes guess at from Paul’s replies. He offers them guidance and consolation, but also quite a lot of correction and admonishment for things that are going awry.

Paul does not write his letters as fully worked-out theological treatises (with one great exception, which we shall look at later). Paul writes to reinforce general teaching on the faith and to give specific responses to some of the immediate problems of individual church communities.

What do they offer us today?

Without Paul and his letters, it is hard to imagine that Christianity would have survived the 1st century or moved beyond Jerusalem. The call of Paul by Christ and the living out of Christ’s call in Paul’s life brought the Good News to the world. It is Paul who grasps more firmly even than Peter that non-Jews should be able to follow Christ without first becoming Jews. In the letters there is a lot about Gentile circumcision and dietary laws. This is not a side-issue but central to the understanding of Christ’s message. Christ is the fulfilment and completion of the Law. Life in him is no longer bound by legal requirements but freed by grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Without this understanding we would not be at St Peter’s today.

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The letters also offer us words of great encouragement as we follow in Christ's Way today. Paul has eternal insights into the love of God and the troubles of the human condition.

The Order of the Letters

This is where we are going to be a dextrous with our Bibles in our hands and busy in our bookshop. After the book of Acts we find Paul's letter to the Romans and then all of his letters, ending with his letter to the Hebrews. But this is not the order he wrote them, and although this looks a bit heavy, I am including a table below that sets out the actual order and some more things to help us travel with Paul, including dates and where the accounts of his missionary journeys to these churches are in Acts. So, brace yourselves and your fingers for some darting about:

Missionary Journey	Acts ref.	Letter to:	Where is it?	Where did Paul write it?	Date AD
After 1 st Journey	Ch.13-14	Galatians	Galatia (Southern Turkey)	Antioch	Late 48
During 2 nd Journey	Ch. 15v36 – 18 v 22	1Thessalonians	Thessalonica (Northern Greece)	Corinth	51
“	“	2Thessalonians	“	“	52
During 3 rd Journey	Ch. 19 v1 - 21 v 17	1 Corinthians	Corinth (Southern Greece)	Ephesus	53/54
“	“	2 Corinthians (Ch 1-9)	“	Philippi	55
“	“	2 Corinthians (Ch 10-13)	“	Western Macedonia	56
“	“	1 Timothy	Church in Ephesus (Western Turkey)	Illyricum	56
“	“	Titus	Church in Crete (Southern Aegean)	Illyricum	56
“	“	Romans	Rome	Corinth	57
During Imprisonment in Rome	Ch. 28 vv 30-31	2 Timothy	Ephesus	Rome	60
“		Colossians	Colossae (Southern Turkey)	“	61/62
“		Philemon	Church in Colossae	“	61/62
“		Ephesians	Ephesus	“	61/62
“		Philippians	Philippi (Northern Greece)	““	

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I also recommend having a map to hand of Paul's journeys such as this one: <https://travelatelier.com/blog/saint-paul-life-missionary-journeys/> to have the most fun with this.

This week we shall just look at the letters Paul wrote after his first and during his second missionary journeys, to the churches in Galatia and Thessalonica.

Raging in these churches at this time were questions of:

AUTHORITY – who is Paul to tell us what to do?

“PROCESS” – how does salvation work and what does it mean to how I live now?

SECOND COMING – when will Jesus come again and what do I do while I am waiting?

These are key issues for all the churches, and we shall meet them many times again as we get to know the early church through Paul's letters.

Letter to the Galatians

Thought to be even earlier than Mark's Gospel, this is the first Christian writing and, in his letter, Paul seeks to combat critics who are saying that Paul has no authority. These critics are “Judaizers” who are trying to persuade Gentile Christians that they must become Jews. To get a flavour of some of the arguments have a look at the following:

- Chapter 2 verses 11- 14: Paul corrects Peter.
- Chapter 2 verses 15 – 21: Grace not law – Faith not works.
- Chapter 5 verses 22 – 25: The fruits of the Spirit and how to live now.
- Chapter 6 verse 11-18: Paul's practice was to dictate his letters but here he signs off in his own hand -defending the Gospel and changing the world.

First Letter to the Thessalonians

This letter encourages new converts to Christianity and addresses some questions about Christ's Second Coming. Notice also the warmer tone of this letter – Paul is happier with the Thessalonians than he is with the Galatians!

- Chapter 4 verses 1 -12: How to live now.
- Chapter 5 verses 1 -11: The Second Coming “a thief in the night.”

Second Letter to the Thessalonians

It seems that someone has been spreading a false message that Christ has already returned and this has confused and upset the young congregation at Thessalonica. Paul seeks to squash the rumour and to share some teaching on the Second Coming.

- Chapter 2 verses 1 -12: Do not be deceived!
- Chapter 2 verses 6 – 13: Keep building the Kingdom!

Next time we shall look at the structure and pattern of Paul's letters and accompany him on his third journey.

Susan Peatfield

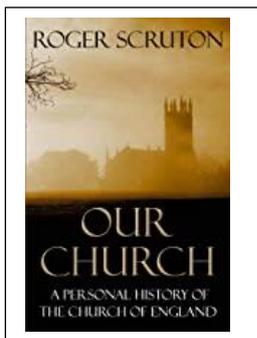
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WLL Community Shopping Service.



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.



Book Review

Our Church A Personal History of the Church of England by Roger Scruton published by Authentic Books 2013

On those rare occasions when I get asked about my religion I tend to answer with “Christian”, which is usually followed by the request to specify denomination, to which I answer “Anglican”. When I am then asked to explain what it means to me I simply state: The Book of Common Prayer, the Authorised version of the Bible, the grand architecture of English cathedrals, hymns and the village church.

The village church is indeed the best witness to the great and most clever accomplishment of the first Church of England; the compromise between the two extreme parties in the 16th and 17th centuries. Indeed, you can see it in the architecture itself, the Catholic exterior and the Protestant, sometimes almost Puritan, interior.

These places have been consecrated by people going in and praying for hundreds of years. Every single Englishman, wherever he lives, will fall within the boundaries of a parish church which for generations and generations has accompanied the people in their rites of passage. They have been a draw to non-believers too. How many people driving through our beautiful countryside pull over when they see one of these buildings and lay a timid hand on the door brass and, with a doubting push, let themselves be welcomed by the semi-darkness cut only by the light coming in through the stained glass; the curious smell of the flowers that might be about to go off, left there from the Sunday service; the dust, the wood and, as Philip Larkin says in his poem Church Going, the “tense, musty unignorable silence, brewed God knows how long”. As the passer-by absorbs all this, he knows that the building is part of the fabric of this country and its faith.

And yet most of these buildings lie empty throughout the week and half empty on Sundays.

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The Church of England has been described as having lost all relevance and it seems to have painted itself into a corner of “damned if it does, damned if it doesn’t”; its leaders are often worryingly silent.

If we add to this the constant drive to secularisation pushed forward by all the institutions of this country, we have a big recipe for disaster.

It is not surprising that the Church tried to change some of its characteristics to try and attract more people, especially the young. It has done so with new modern translations of the Bible and a new liturgy. I believe this attempt has failed. Indeed, most young people are seen taking part to Evensong in cathedrals that still hold these ancient services by adhering to the Prayer Book and The King James Bible. Instead, I see this as an attack on Cranmer’s doctrine of repentance. Many in the CofE are extremely hostile to the 1662 prayer book, and what they see as the excessively penitent nature of the confessions at Evensong and Holy Communion. Indeed, one vicar once told me, in no uncertain terms, that he hated Cranmer’s doctrine. Do we go to church because we are sinners asking for God’s forgiveness or to pat ourselves in the back for being people of God? I leave you to ponder on that.

I find it almost impossible to meet people that openly agree with me, so in the past few years I have been trying to read many books and articles from people who do, in order to see whether we share the same sadness.

I think “Our Church” by Roger Scruton is such a book. He goes about it by telling the story of how he got into the Church and what it means to him. If you completely disagree with what I have said so far, this should make for a very interesting read and I urge you to give it a go.

I leave you with a collect from the Prayer Book and a passage from the preface to the King James Bible in the hope that they can open a window into their beauty.

O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water, even as Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks of Laban were watered [Gen.29:10].

Daniel Spagnolo

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.

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Contemplative Prayer Gathering.

Contemplative Prayer Gathering - a step towards heaven. There are times when we have had enough of words. We have been reading them all day on our screens or in reports. Words make noise and sometimes we have just had enough noise and need peace. Contemplative prayer helps us find a space where we can be quiet and focused. In the silence we can hear God. Not as another noise but as silence. Elijah meets God at Horeb in the sheer silence (1Kings 19.11-12). Sometimes it is good to be speechless before God. Contemplative Prayer can bring silence and peace into our lives. As silence is not a natural part of who we are it takes a little practice and it is better to practice in company. Come and join us on Wednesdays at 5pm.



Thank you for continuing to support ealing foodbank with food donations. During covid19, we have made 1000 deliveries to families in need. Thank you for your help to make this possible! Please find our July shopping list below:

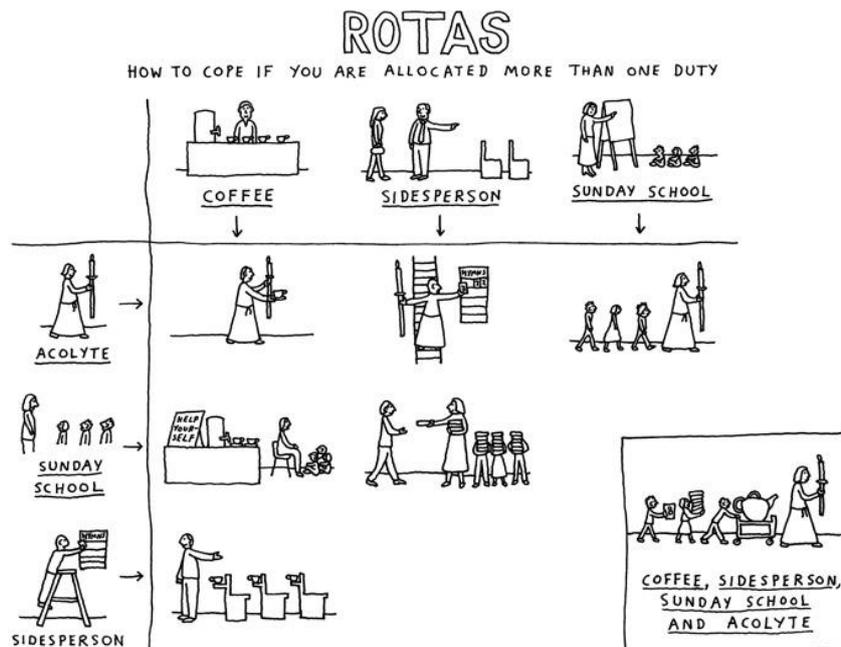
Savoury biscuits/crackers; Tinned fruit & vegetables; Peanut butter; Ketchup & mayo; Baked beans; Cooking oil – 250ml or 500ml or 1litre; Feminine hygiene – towels are more popular than tampons; Shower gel/hand wash/bars of soap; Shaving foam & razors; Nappies - sizes 2 and 6

We have got plenty of:

Pasta; Meat; Fish; Uht milk

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

Dave Walker Cartoon



CartoonChurch.com

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Prayer requests:

Please pray for:

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

Madeleine Anthony; baby Peter Spagnolo; Marlene Sladen

Recently deceased: Gerald Reddington (priest)

Parish Family: Moira & Shahid Babary; Simon, Robina, Alice & Henry

Baker; Sue Barr; Christine, Trevor & Claire Bates; June Blake.

(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.

Worship this week:

Sunday 5th July – Trinity 4

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

10.00am Parish Mass (Church & Zoom)

5.30pm Evening Prayer (via Zoom)

Monday – Friday

9am Morning Prayer (Church)

Monday-Tuesday, Thursday – Friday

5pm Evening Prayer (Church)

Wednesday

5pm Contemplative Prayer (Church)

Tuesday & Thursday

9.30pm Compline (via Zoom)

Sunday 12th July – Trinity 5

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

10.00am Parish Mass (Church & Zoom)

5.30pm Evening 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 may also want to use the Daily Prayer app, downloadable from your app store or find it via the Church of England website (www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer)



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