



St Peter's Parish

e-newsletter

25th June 2020

www.stpeterrealing.org.uk

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

It is fortuitous that as we come to 'faithfulness' in our exploration of the fruits of the spirit we come to our celebrations of St Peter. After all, who could be said to be more faithful? He is there at the beginning of Jesus's ministry and he is there at the very end of his ministry on earth. Peter follows him throughout Judea, from Nazareth to Jerusalem. OK, he makes a faux pas or two along the way, he is only human. He declares to everyone his belief that Jesus is the Son of the living God (Matthew 16.13-20; Mark 8.27-30; Luke 9.18-20); then promptly shows he doesn't completely understand what that means by telling Jesus he won't let him fall into the hands of the authorities (Matthew 16.22; Mark 8.32). Peter declares he will go to prison or even die for Jesus (Matthew 26.33; Mark 14.29; Luke 22.33; John 13.37) and yet Peter, when the crunch comes denies Jesus three times before the cock crows.

Yet Jesus declares it is upon Peter that the Church will be built, changing his name from Simon to Peter (Petros/Cephas) and it is to Peter Jesus gives the keys to the Kingdom of God. Peter it is who preaches on the day of Pentecost and leads the Church in Jerusalem as it begins to preach the good news of Jesus and it is because or through Peter that Paul's ministry is eventually blessed as Paul takes the good news of Jesus into the gentile world and revolutionises the Christian Gospel.

Here then is faithfulness. Initially we might wonder if it is a bit about dogged obedience, following the master wherever. But then we begin to see it is about growing and learning. Peter, growing in his knowledge of Jesus and deepening his love for him sees in Jesus the gospel truths lived out and taught, he grapples with what this must mean for us and he makes mistakes in his understanding; mistakes that help us gain a deeper insight into Jesus. Peter listens and learns, he asks questions, gets things wrong and helps us to see Jesus more clearly. Peter's faithfulness kept him close to Jesus even when things were not great, when he was fearful and doubting. Then Peter's faithfulness strengthened him to proclaim Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, not just to the disciples but to the world. This was a faithfulness that took him to Rome and his execution.

The faithfulness required of us will not lead to our martyrdom. I would hope, in Peter we would grapple with the real faithfulness he shows. That we would seek to deepen our relationship with God through Jesus; that we too would proclaim Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God and do so with conviction born of a relationship with God deepened by prayer and a study of scripture, fuelled by love coming from that relationship. Faithfulness in this context is open and honest, encouraged and strengthened by love rooted in the good news of the cross of Good Friday and the empty tomb of Easter Day.

Fr David

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We are open ~ Can You Help?

So, our church has been open for restricted periods for over a week. We are one of a few churches in Ealing Deanery who have opened. We have seen anything from half to a dozen visitors coming to pray and the occasional parishioner popping in to say how pleased they were to see their parish church open. Being open is an important witness to the stability of God's presence amongst us even in times of great difficulty. It is important we keep this going, to do this we really could do with more help. All that is required is that our Welcomers sit in church for a two-hour shift, welcoming our visitors. Once the visitor has left, we wipe down any 'touch points' that may have been touched. This means we do not have to deep clean every time we open the church building and we keep all visitors safe. This will have to be in place for some time and so we could do with a good body of helpers. If you can help, please let Fr David know.



Worship at St Peter's

As we prepare to go to press it looks like we may be able to have our first Parish Mass in fifteen weeks on Sunday 5th July. We are planning to continue with Zooming the service, though we have some technical details to sort and finalise. I am sure there are some of us who will feel cautious about returning to church. Church will not be as we are used to, at least for a while. There is so much to consider.



We have yet to receive the Government and Diocesan guidelines. We have a process in place. We just need to make sure it complies with the authority's advice. As soon as we have anything definite, we will email you.

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



“Give to the Emperor the things that are the Emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s” Luke 20.25

I wonder if you remember the Poll Tax. I was in my first curacy at the time and remember attending rallies and marches against it. I even refused to pay it. When a member of the congregation found out he rebuked me, quoting this very passage. Funny how scripture can be used, some might say abused.

It is not unusual for Jesus to use money and public commerce in his teaching. He is constantly encouraging us to assess our true place in the world by urging us to maintain a healthy, faithful balance between the world and heaven. Hurmmm...I am not sure that is the right way to put it. Jesus sees no divide between the two but encourages us to hold them in the right frame of reference. That reference is the Good News of Jesus which is news of salvation and forgiveness of healing and reconciliation; of love for each of us.

If the balance is not kept what happens? Either we lose touch with the world or with God as one outweighs the other. That is so easy to do. As the cares of life take over, as we allow the busy-ness of our lives to push God to the edges that imbalance becomes all the more real until one day we realise there is a gulf between us and God; we have stopped going to church; we have stopped saying our prayers or reading our Bibles; we have stopped striving to be Christ-like and rather than coming closer to God we have moved further away; we have stopped sharing God’s love in the world and witnessing to the glorious truth that God loves us all.

Stewardship has an important part in holding and redressing that balance by stewarding our time to make sure we have space for God. To make time in our day when we consciously put ourselves in God’s presence as we pray and read our Bibles. To be in a place where we can take the cares of the world and place them at the feet of God, knowing it is in the strength of God that we are able to carry our responsibilities and commitments. Stewardship is about taking the resources with which we are blessed and using them to build up our life of faith. If we do this, then that strength we gain from our life of faith feeds back to the world in which we live. The two become one, interlacing and sharing, each being blessed by the other. It takes time and work. But it is worth it in the end.

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: History 4

When we were in the Gospels we spent a little time thinking about the identity and intentions of the Gospel writers. When it came to Luke we noted that he is thought to be a Gentile (non-Jewish) and to have been a follower of Paul. This last understanding comes not from his Gospel of course, but from the “part two” of what Luke shared with the world: The Acts of the Apostles – or what the disciples did next.

What they did next was the foundation of the Christian Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. Before we look at this it might be useful to think about what kind of book Luke thought he was writing.

I have put it, and us, back in the History section, but only the quickest of browses tells us that this is very different to the time we spent with the Old Testament History shelves. One reason for this is quite simply the passage of time. By the 1st Century AD there was more experience and more examples of historical writing, with very different intentions to the scribes of the 6th Century BC who set out God’s dealings with the Children of Israel. Greek and then Latin writers wrote history – on the whole – from the perspective of great men. The role of the gods was not negligible, but the trajectory and purpose was to record (inflate or pour scorn on) the actions of “names” –Julius Caesar as an obvious example.

These were not straightforward biographies; tales of childhoods or personal lives were included only when they contributed to the main task – establishing the reputation of the man concerned. As with all generalisations this has many exceptions, but I think it is helpful for us as we begin to look at Luke’s history book.

Luke follows two traditions, the establishing of the credentials and reputation of great men (though he and they would be the last to claim it for themselves) and that of showing God at work in his people’s lives. In both of these he is often also simply telling us what happened. It seems very likely that Luke was an eyewitness and companion to Paul. The book begins with a third person narrative “he, they” and then in chapter 16, Luke begins to use the first person “we”. This strongly suggests that he is indeed part of the story. (See Acts 16 verses 10- 18, 20 verse 4 – 21 verse 19 as examples of this.)

Acts recounts the activities of the disciples after the Ascension. Many of these disciples, now called apostles - “ones with a mission” -are mentioned, but often with tantalising

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brief accounts. (This has led to many traditions of what they actually did as apostles, for example that St Thomas was a missionary to India.)

The two chief figures who are drawn more fully by Luke are Peter and Paul. Peter, with Jesus since he was called by him at the side of Lake Galilee. Paul, who first persecuted the young Christian Church and then became its chief evangelist. At the time Luke is writing it seems clear that these two men are already identified as key to the continuing of the Christian story.

Always above and beyond this is the story of God at work. The book of Acts has been called the biography of the Holy Spirit. It is the coming of the Holy Spirit that founds, empowers and guides the new community of faith. Working through the men and women we meet in Acts, it is the Holy Spirit whose activity Luke truly recounts: the greatest Name of all.

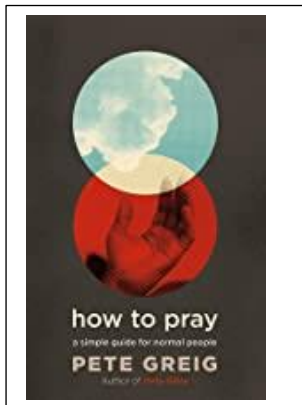
With these two strands in mind let us have a look at some of the key moments in Acts:

- Acts 2 verses 1 – 36: Pentecost –the Coming of the Holy Spirit. (Notice that Peter is the first to “interpret” what has happened and gives the context to the Jewish listeners – verse 36 “Therefore let the whole house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified”.)
- Acts 5 verses 1 -11: Ananias and Sapphira (A hard warning not to test the Holy Spirit.)
- Acts 7 verse 54 – Acts 8 verse 3: The stoning of Stephen and our first glimpse of Saul/Paul.
- Acts 8 verses 26 – 40: Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (This is a wonderful episode with a dream-like quality, not really like the rest of Luke’s writings. Possibly this account had already become a part of the early church “canon”. It reminds me, though I cannot find a reference, of the stories of the prophet Elisha, and indeed the Apocrypha version of Daniel in the Lions’ den and the “flying” prophet Habakkuk we met a few weeks ago.)
- Acts 9 verses 1 – 22: The Road to Damascus. (The conversion of Saul/Paul is extraordinary for so many reasons, but notice that in a time of the Holy Spirit it is Jesus that Paul meets on the road –verse 5. So that he can hold his head up alongside Peter and the apostles who walked with Jesus in his earthly ministry?)
- Acts 10 verses 1 – 42: Peter’s Vision (This along with Paul’s conversion is what brings Christianity to a pagan world. See especially verses 34 -36 Jesus Christ is “Lord of all”.)
- Acts 12 verses 1 -18: Persecution and Peter in Chains (Lots to notice here including a glimpse of early church life in verse 12.)
- Acts 15: The Council at Jerusalem (Worth reading the whole of this chapter as it is key to much of what is going on in the rest of the New Testament: do followers of Jesus have to become Jews first? That decision was vital to us all here today.)
- Acts 17 verses 16 -34: Paul in Athens (Judeo-Christianity meets Graeco-Roman sophistication – who wins?)
- Acts 27 and 28: Paul at sea, shipwrecked and finally in Rome. (Read for Luke’s eye-witness account and for a strong sense of Paul as a personality.)

Acts ends with Paul in Rome, preaching and proclaiming the kingdom. Later he, like Peter, is believed to have been martyred there.

This week we have just introduced ourselves to Paul and read a couple of episodes from his missionary journeys. Over the next few weeks we shall look at these journeys in more detail – the places he visited, the people he met, and the Letters he wrote.

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How to Pray: A simple guide for normal people

Pete Greig

The doorbell rang, a parcel was dropped hastily on the doorstep. I had not ordered anything, so I checked the address. It was definitely to me. I opened it and inside was 'How to Pray'. This mystery book had arrived at just the right time. I had always prayed but I had become dissatisfied and realised that the key difference between the home I grew up in and the home I have

now, is the sheer quantity of prayers that have been said in each room. I was determined to fill my house with prayer. This was made even more necessary by the impending arrival of a baby, who I am determined to provide as many prayers for as my mum gave me.

But where do you start? All my prayers had hitherto started with the Lord's prayer and then trickled into a stream of consciousness. Other prayer books I had picked up all seemed a little over poetic with slightly too many Celtic influences and symbolism to sustain the uninitiated. That is where this book is brilliant. It starts with how to slow and centre yourself, so you are ready for prayer and then walks you through the Lord's Prayer. But rather than say it by rote, engages with what you are asking at each stage with stories and examples of where each prayer has been answered and how it has been answered. The book focusses on listening as well as talking, on contemplation and on developing a relationship with God that will hold and guide you through the good and the bad.

Greig scatters stories throughout this guide which have the effect of rooting prayer in the everyday and in scripture. Many stories are from his own life (in Guildford) but he also provides accounts of Heroes of Prayer. From Susanna Wesley, who used to put her apron over her head to find a place of calm in which to pray for her noisy boys, to Corrie Ten Boom and Desmond Tutu's prayers for forgiveness. These stories which also cover unanswered prayer and spiritual warfare, both topics I had shied away from, give real rigour and strength to the slightly unwieldy topic of how to pray.

I loved this book. It has taught and continues to teach me how to pray. I am sure it will live on my bedside table until I am a very old lady. The book, it transpires was a gift from a friend who heard my prayer ramblings, but really it was from the Holy Spirit.

Helen Kelsey

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.

Contemplative Prayer Gathering.

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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.



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

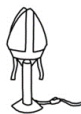
This foodbank is run in partnership with local churches, facilitated by Ealing Foodbank. Registered charity number 1156369 | Registered in England and Wales

MITRES

USES DURING A PANDEMIC



MASK



LAMPSHADE



POPCORN HOLDER



HANGING BASKET



GLOVE



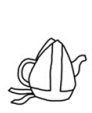
PIPING BAG



MEASURING DEVICE



OVEN MITT



TEA COSY



BUNTING



WASTE PAPER BASKET



KITE



PUPPET



BELLOWS



RAINBOW

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

Recently deceased:

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.



Worship this week:

Sunday 28th June – Feast of St Peter

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)

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