

## Sermon for 16th Sunday after Trinity 16th September 2018

Susan Peatfield, Reader

Good morning – we find ourselves today joining with Aiden’s family to celebrate his baptism – and – with great joy –to also celebrate the third week of our Stewardship campaign.

Ideally as Fr Michael did this time last year the preacher finds a satisfying link between these two strands of our worship this morning. The link I would like to suggest this comes from the word “steward” – the stewardship we have of our church and Christian heritage and the stewardship of Aiden that we share with parents , godparents and family as we help him to grow and flourish in the Christian faith.

For this reason it would be brilliant if the word steward appeared in either of our readings.... It doesn’t, but another word does to help us (and me ) make this link. The word is “teacher”.

We heard the words of Isaiah this morning : The Lord has has given me the tongue of a teacher that I may know how to sustain a weary world.”

Appropriately for today St Aidan of Lindisfarne echoed Isaiah when in his lovely prayer he asked God to "with the turning of the tide prepare me to carry your presence to the busy world beyond." Teachers and Stewards are not the same thing but the call to sustain a weary world with a word is a call to us all.

We are called not only to care for and look after the treasures and wisdom of the past , but also to pass it on. We are called not just to pass it on but to discern in ourselves and in those we speak to those gifts that are growing and promising fruit for the future. And in all of this we are to know more deeply the one who truly sustains the weary of this world and whose Word we speak.

To do this we need to know what the treasures of the past are. To be interested in the people we are with now to see the gifts they hold for the future. And – more than anything else – know the Word that we are called to share.

The best teachers do not necessarily know everything about their subject – they are often the most honest in admitting this – but they are interested in

finding out both for themselves and for others. Perhaps this holds us back in our Christian life? We did not go to church as children. We are not confident in church “stuff” – the treasures that have been handed down. Maybe this year, this new term is the time to find out more. Reading the Gospels again - or for the first time - properly. Finding out about the many opportunities here at St Peter’s to deepen our understanding of the rich tradition we are part of.

The best teachers know their students by name as individuals as people from whom gifts are received as well as given. Perhaps this holds us back in our Christian lives? Perhaps we do not talk about the things of faith with other Christians? Perhaps we feel uncomfortable asking for help, for prayer? Maybe this is the time to begin getting to know each other better and moving through the awkwardness to speak about those things we need help with and to offer that help to each other.

The best teacher is teaching about himself in our Gospel reading today. Of the 90 times Jesus is directly addressed in the Gospels 60 of those times he is called “teacher.” Jesus has the word of life because he is the Word of Life. The message we have to share is of Him. Perhaps we need to start here. To renew our relationship with him today. To encounter afresh what he wants to teach us, what gifts he sees in us. The life in all its fullness he wants us to share.

As we welcome Aiden in baptism today we shall have the opportunity to connect ourselves afresh with the promises of faith and to take responsibility to live those promises tomorrow as well as today. To ask God to prepare us to carry his presence to the busy and weary world beyond.  
**Amen**