

REFLECTIONS

In our Gospel reading for today we should note that Peter doesn't cite a stranger or non-believer but one of our own, a fellow Christian-perhaps someone to whom we are very close. Isn't it extra hard to forgive a close friend? But Jesus says that it doesn't matter - friend or stranger, a big sin or a little one, intentional or accidental- we are to forgive across the board; freely, unconditionally, charitably and without reserve or rancour.

This teaching is linked to the portion of the Lord's Prayer - the petition that God will forgive us as we forgive others. The depth of our love doesn't go anywhere as deep as God's love but we ask to be forgiven because we forgive others. The quality of our forgiveness is always going to fall below the quality of God's but if we are genuinely doing our best to forgive then God will honour our intention and our efforts.

And not once or twice but until it becomes a habit. But forgiveness needs careful watching otherwise we can find ourselves forgiving but not forgetting and not allowing the other party to forget.

Peter would remember this occasion together with the ghastly remembrance of his own denials and Jesus' forgiveness when in later years he was called upon to forgive, again and again. His would be a blessed remembrance.

We do not need to have sinned as badly as Peter to know that reassurance and unconditional forgiveness. To sin is to sin and what may be termed by some as a "little" sin can produce as much anguish and heartache as a mega crime. By the same token let us not spend time quantifying the wrongs done to us. They all cry out for forgiveness.

Let us not postpone forgiving another or it may be too late and in any case hesitating to forgive does nothing for the well-being of our souls. And please God the more we forgive may it become easier the more we do so.

Michael Lovegrove

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES SUNDAY IN CHURCH

St Marys 10am Holy Communion President: Michael Lovegrove

Sewards End 9.30am Holy Communion President: Chris Bishop

Little Walden 11.15am Family Service Leader: Tracey Nicholls
Talk: Richard Peet

Hadstock 9.30am Holy Communion President: Paula Griffiths

Ashdon 9.30am Holy Communion President: Caroline Curren

Debden 9.15am Service of the Word Leader: John Saxon

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES ON ZOOM

SUNDAY

9.30am Holy Communion President: John Sibson

11.00am Holy Communion President: John Saxon

TUESDAY

5.00pm Evening Prayer Leader: Alan Curren

WEDNESDAY

9.30am Holy Communion Caroline Curren

NEXT SUNDAY 20th September 2020 SERVICES IN CHURCH

St Marys 10am Harvest Festival Leader: Matt Williamson
Saffron Walden Talk: Tracey Nicholls

Ashdon 9.30am Holy Communion President: Caroline Curren

Wimbish 9.15am Holy Communion President: Hilary Davey



See St Mary's Church, SW, website at
www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org to find out more.



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The Grapevine

COVERING THE PARISHES OF SAFFRON WALDEN, WIMBISH,
DEBDEN, ASHDON AND HADSTOCK.

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity
13th September 2020

Collect

Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: Romans 14.1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Gospel: Matthew 18.21-35

Peter came and said to Jesus, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

Post Communion

Lord God, the source of truth and love, keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, united in prayer and the breaking of bread, and one in joy and simplicity of heart, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Churches Together Prayer Cycle: In September please pray for: **Society of Friends, Saffron Walden, Chrishall School**

The family and friends of those who have died recently:

Christine Dixon

Those whose wedding banns are being called: **Samuel Maguire & Laura Johnson, Adam Miles & Sarah Powdrill** (at St Mary's, SW) and **Peter Vine & Emily Day** (at Debden)
Those who are renewing their wedding vows at St Mary's, Saffron Walden on 19th September: **Mark & Laura Walker**

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Over the past few months I have regularly used a prayer from an old prayer book which begins "O God the Father of all mercies who knowest the needs of thy people in this place; we pray that of thy great goodness thou wilt send us a minister to preach thy word and care for thy people". It ends thus "And grant that he and we, brought together in thy good purpose, may rejoice in thy service through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I used the same prayer in the early months of 2008 and on 4th May of that year it was announced that David Tomlinson - then at St John's Grays End - had accepted the nomination of the Patronage Board to become our new Team Rector. So began a joyful and fruitful ministry and an answer to my prayers and those of many others.

Now in the autumn of 2020 our search for a new Team Rector continues. The prayer I have quoted envisages a male priest because that was how it was in those days. On this issue and on other matters the Church of England has its divisions as does the Anglican Communion more generally. Thankfully our Team ministry happily embraces those from differing traditions and forms of churchmanship.

It may be that you hope that our new incumbent will favour the Book of Common Prayer over Common Worship liturgy. Maybe you look for someone who is good with the young or the elderly. Perhaps you think that their ministry should be centred on the Town and not the villages or vice versa. Perhaps you hope for someone who especially values the ministry of music or engagement with the community.

In all this we must heed the warning that the Christ of the Gospels cannot be contained within any single slogan or tradition. We have been given a vision of what our unity of purpose might achieve "If two of you agree on earth about anything you ask it will be done for you by my Father in heaven". The Epistle to the Romans broadens this practical advice to include our general conduct, both to other Christians and to the world in which we live. Paul sounds almost impatient. Surely, he implies, any fool knows what we ought to be doing. It can be summed up in the phrase "Love your neighbour" For Paul this is not something to get around to one day but a matter of extreme urgency. Rather a lot depends on it.

With love and prayers,
Michael Lovegrove

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Mon 14th	Morning Psalm 2 & John 12:27-36a Evening Psalm 110
Tue 15th	Morning Psalm 5 & Acts 13:44-14.7 Evening Psalm 9 & Mark 10:1-16
Wed 16th	Morning Psalm 119:1-32 & Acts 14:8-end Evening Psalm 11
Thurs 17th	Morning Psalm 15 & Acts 15:1-21 Evening Psalm 18
Fri 18th	Morning Psalm 19 & Acts 15:22-35 Evening Psalm 22
Sat 19th	Morning Psalm 23 & Acts 15:36-16.5 Evening Psalm 24

NEWS

SERVICES IN CHURCH Details are listed on the back page. **It is now compulsory to wear a mask** unless you have an exemption.

Advance booking is required to attend St Mary's, SW as services are now close to capacity and we cannot guarantee that you will be able to enter the church if you haven't booked. Please book your place online using the link on the weekly bulletin or the website – alternatively, email or telephone the Parish Office before noon on the previous Friday, giving your name, telephone number and postcode. No booking is required for the village churches but, if the service has reached capacity, you may not be able to enter.

PRIVATE PRAYER St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden, is open for private prayer on Wednesdays and Sundays between 2pm and 4pm from Sunday 13th September. Please note the new times. *Gill Caswell*

All Saints, Ashdon is open for private prayer on Wednesday and Sunday between 11am and 6.00pm.

ONLINE SERVICES are listed on the back page. Full joining details are available on the weekly email bulletin and on the website. Please email Dawn at office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org if you would like to be added to the bulletin distribution list.

LIVE WORSHIP by phone - you don't need a computer or tablet to join our services from home. If you would like to know more please contact Judith Hasler on 525041 or John Saxon on 541619

TRUST130 SCHEME Ecclesiastical Insurance, our church insurers, will donate £130 to St Mary's for each new home insurance policy taken out with them. They can be contacted on 03457 773322 or household@ecclesiastical.com *Denis*

PCC MEETING A meeting of the PCC will be held on Zoom on **Wednesday 16th September** at 7:45pm. *Lisa Brook*

PAMELA BRAY would like to thank everyone for their prayers and kindness to her whilst she has been convalescing. Thank you also to everyone who sent birthday wishes for her 95th birthday - she had a wonderful day.

LYNN TRENEARY'S, (ST MARY'S CMS PARTNER)

LATEST LINK LETTER Martin Hugall has kindly put Lynn's newest link letter on the church website on the latest News section. As always, it's full of inspiration and faith. If you would prefer a hard copy, please contact me at suewalker619@btinternet.com and I will happily drop one round to you. *Sue Walker*

HOMEMADE JAM I have been making jam as usual over the last few weeks - Bullace (wild plum), Victoria Plum (not set very well but tasty) and Blackberry for sale at £2 a pot for Church funds. Anyone who would like a pot or two, please contact me on 521356 to arrange collection from Little Walden Road or delivery to you at home. Many thanks. *Lesley Green*

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Most merciful Father, you have called us to be a caring Church, reflecting in our lives your infinite care for us your children. Help us to fulfil our calling and to care for one another in an unselfish fellowship of love; and to care for the world around us in sharing with it the good news of your love and serving those who suffer from poverty, hunger and disease. We ask it in the name of Christ our Lord.

Michael Ramsey

MINISTRY TEAM

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Revd John Saxon	01799 541619
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