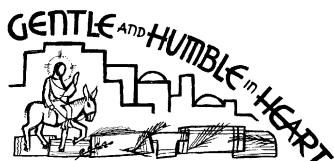


Prayers by Florence Gundle

Gracious God, we call on you now, as it was through your power that we were created. Everything we do we do under your power and guidance, and so we ask you now to touch all of us with that power. Heal and bring joy with every touch so that those who suffer from illness, whether mental or physical, or are lonely or sad, may have a renewed life. Give them all the sense of belonging and peace that you bring to all our lives.

Brokenness and loss of trust in leaders- political, business, media, health, education and police, is tearing us apart. When trust is broken and discrimination and injustice become appallingly 'commonplace', when daily survival is precarious, then fear and division flourish. Let us not be ruled by this brokenness, fear and division but stand out individually and come together, in your love, so that we might heal those wounds and revive our strength together.

Lord, we are proud and grateful to be part of your family. Your love and compassion bind us all and allow us to see without hatred or malice. Allow us to spread your love so that all those who need it may receive it. Amen.



See www.astwellparishes.org.uk for daily Morning Prayer readings from Vine Cottage with Alice Palmer, and links to more online resources

For services with Revd. Rich Duncan at St Peter's Church, Brackley see: <https://www.stpetersbrackley.org.uk/video-service>

For news & prayers from Revd. Paula Challen at St Lawrence Church, Towcester, see: <http://www.stlawrencechurch.org.uk>

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PEWS NEWS

The Astwell Benefice

St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury and St Lawrence Radstone, St James the Great Syresham with St John the Evangelist Whitfield, St Mary & St Peter Lois Weedon with Weston and Plumpton, and St Mary the Virgin Wappenham.

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

Sunday 5th July 2020 Fourth Sunday after Trinity

BENEFICE PUBLIC WORSHIP TO RE-START

Dear Readers

Your Benefice Worship Committee met this week and the following decisions were made:

- ★ Communion services will not be held until our new Rector Diane is in post.
- ★ Churches will be able to hold simple services where social distancing will be maintained, with face covering at the discretion of the wearer.
- ★ There will be no singing or physical contact & the church must be vacated as soon as the service is over.
- ★ It is at the discretion of the church wardens (depending on attendance) if the services continue, or revert back to private prayer only on Sundays.

Please talk to your church warden if you need further information or are worried about anything.

Yours in the love of Christ

Bill Elkington (Benefice Lay Chair.)

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SHEET FOR NEW SERVICES

The Readings for Today

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

³⁴ So he said, 'I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. ³⁶And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has. ³⁷My master made me swear, saying, "You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live; ³⁸but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son."

⁴² 'I came today to the spring, and said, "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! ⁴³I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, 'Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,' ⁴⁴and who will say to me, 'Drink, and I will draw for your camels also'—let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son."

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 (cont)

⁴⁵ 'Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water-jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, "Please let me drink." ⁴⁶She quickly let down her jar from camels." So I drank, and she also watered the camels.

⁴⁷Then I asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" She said, "The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milchah bore to him." So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms. ⁴⁸Then I bowed my head and worshipped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

⁴⁹Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left.' ⁵⁸And they called Rebekah, and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' She said, 'I will.' ⁵⁹So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, 'May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes.'

⁶¹Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

⁶² Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb. ⁶³Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming. ⁶⁴And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, ⁶⁵and said to the servant, 'Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?' The servant said, 'It is my master.' So she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

¹⁶ 'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

¹⁷ "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn."

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; ¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.'

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Bill's Thoughts on Matthew 11. 16-19, 25-30

Mathew wrote his gospel for orthodox Jews and uses many quotations from the Old Testament and does not explain the customs as they would be known by all Jews.

Jesus heard that John the Baptist was in prison and that John's time was over. John had asked if Jesus was 'the one'. Jesus quoted the scriptures (saying he was) and continued:-

"But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' Just like children who would not play happy games or sad games and are contrary, Jesus played the flute and John wailed.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; John came following all the rules and living frugally, but the leaders would not listen to him or follow him.

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." 'The Son of Man', used only by Jesus to describe himself 81 times in the Gospels, is trusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power. Once again, the leaders would not listen to him. Wisdom here is referring to God who sent both John and Jesus in their two different roles, that have been vindicated by the lasting works of both of them.

"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; Jesus uses this title for God, emphasising his sovereignty only three times in the Bible. The leaders were blind to the message, but the followers and disciples (infants) received the message.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Difficult! No one except the Father can fully know the Son; total knowledge of the Son belongs to God the Father. Believers can know the Son for salvation in a deep and satisfying way but not completely. Jesus chooses to whom he reveals a saving knowledge of God

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Here Jesus is referring to the heavy loads the Pharisees place on the people with legalistic interpretation of the law. There are 10 commandments but whole books of rules interpret them in detail.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. A yoke is a device to prevent an animal from going its own way. Here Jesus is saying he is not restrictive and forceful but gentle. Rest for the soul with no inner conflict, instead peace.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. This is love for God: to keep his commands. Amen