

St John's

Prayers:

O God, help us to trust you. May we know that you are with us and that nothing can separate us from your love, revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

We pray for all those who are sick, especially:

Sick: Scott Bradley, Dawn Forey, Ruth Gillespie, Hanna Lebrato, Marion Mason and Sue Ralfe.

We pray in the name of Jesus, our light and salvation. Amen.

Contacts

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The Parish Office is closed.

Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in their homes every day. Join them [here](#).

St John's Church

Pew Sheet

12th July 2020

Welcome!

The Government has allowed places of worship to open for individual prayer and services.

St John's Church is open for prayer:
4pm-6pm today (12th July),
then 10.30am-12.30pm each day (from 13th July).

St John's Church is open for services:
9.30am Sundays
10.30am Wednesdays

Our online services will continue for the time being.

'For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth....giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty. Isaiah 55:10-11

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk

Please do check our website for future updates

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The Fifth Sunday After Trinity

Collect

Almighty God, send down upon your Church the riches of your Spirit, and kindle in all who minister the gospel your countless gifts of grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Isaiah 55:10-13](#)

[Romans 8:1-11](#)

[Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23](#)

Short Sermon by Frances Westcott, Licensed Lay Minister

The parable of the sower is such a well-known one, isn't it? And it's another great visual parable. I picture the sower with handfuls of grain throwing it out in all directions, sowing it 'broadcast' as the saying is. I know the parable but I have never before gone deeply into the implications. I've always thought of the person who bore good fruit as the one to concentrate on - after all, that is the example to which we all aspire - so I've rather ignored the others, thinking of them as failures.

Sowing seed broadcast was the only way to sow seed in Jesus's time. There were no machines to set the seed in neat holes and lines in predetermined areas and it was very wasteful - as the parable shows, much of it came to nothing. But that indiscriminate way of sowing seed is important to the parable as it shows God's generosity: everyone is given a chance to hear the good news and act on it, whatever their likely response. The Good News is available to all, Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, old or young. No one is excluded.

Jesus explains to his disciples that there are three less than ideal ways of responding to the news of the kingdom - if the seed falls on a path, it doesn't grow at all. The message is rejected and never develops. If it falls on rocky ground, the message is initially welcomed but then, with no roots, the response is shallow and short-lived. The

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initially healthy plant dies. If the seed falls among thorns and brambles, the growing plant is smothered, choked to death by daily cares and worries which exclude everything else. Because, in the parable, the different places where the seed falls are fixed, it is easy to think that all these categories of response are also fixed but, of course, that is not the case.

Probably we've all gone through the stages mentioned. St Paul initially rejected Jesus' message so at first the seed didn't take root at all in him. But we know that changed dramatically and Paul's later life yielded a massive harvest for the kingdom. The second group of people - those who had a superficial belief - may also change. I know I was in that group for a long time, and maybe still am! I think most of us can identify with the third group, those who find that they are so busy or have so many problems - personal or financial perhaps - that they cannot give their minds to Christ's message. It may take a long time before we can be like the one who hears the word and is truly and fully receptive.

The parable may appear to dismiss those who do not respond in the most productive way but this is not the case. It would be to negate God's generosity if those who were not so responsive were seen as failures. Jesus, the shepherd who went in search of one lost sheep, the father who welcomed home the prodigal son, would never blame those whose soil was initially less fertile. Jonny reminded us last week of Jesus' compassion for those with cares and worries and his offer to share the burden. Everyone matters.

In this parable, we see that we are all works in progress; we are all at different stages in our spiritual journey. Jesus sows the seed and waits to see the result. He would have compassion on those of us who are not there yet and waits patiently for us to produce a bumper harvest. Amen.