

St John's

Prayers:

Father, we thank you for your wisdom and truth, your understanding and generosity. We acknowledge our dependence on you and praise you for providing all we need. We pray for all those who are sick, especially:

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

We remember with thanksgiving:

RIP: Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman (funerals on Thursday).
Also, Mary Fitzpatrick who anniversary of death falls on 28th July.

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

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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

26th 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:
10.30am-12.30pm each day (*not Thursday this week*)

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

Our online services will continue for the time being.

"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God."
Romans 8:28

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 Seventh Sunday After Trinity

Collect

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow: though our faith is small as mustard seed, make it grow to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Genesis 29:15-28](#)

[Romans 8:26-39](#)

[Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52](#)

Short Sermon by Becky Stone

Good things come to those who wait. That's what the Guinness adverts promised us in the '80s and '90s, and that seems to be what our readings today are promising us too! Mind you, they are not promising an easy 'wait'. Jacob worked for 7 years to 'earn' Rachel, only to find he had been given Leah, and had to work another 7 for Rachel!

A mustard seed, from humble, proverbially-tiny beginnings, grows into the largest of garden plants, but not overnight. The birds who love it so much must wait, patiently, for it to grow large enough and strong enough for them to perch in, and for it to yield the seeds they long to feast on. Yeast will transform a dough from something tough and dry into something light and spongy and considerably larger. But not immediately: it must be given time to work its miracle. Good things come to those who wait!

The disciples may have heard, in these messages of patience, a gentle rebuke of any expectation they had that Jesus would be the conquering hero Messiah. He wasn't going to overthrow the Romans and usher in the perfect rule of the Kingdom overnight: he was going to do it in his own time, slowly, invisibly, starting with one man in one country, and growing it to an empire which would attract others. A tree was used in Old Testament times as a picture of a great empire, and nations subject to it were depicted as birds finding rest in its branches. Jesus was effectively promising his impatient followers: good things come to those who wait. He might not do it in their time but eventually the kingdom of heaven will grow into precisely that

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mighty empire they dreamt of, with many nations gathered to it.

The parable of the hidden treasure reminds us of the kingdom's worth. Jewish law at the time was essentially 'finders keepers': the man who discovered the treasure already owned it by right for that reason. By selling everything to buy the field, he was safeguarding his find: this treasure was too precious to risk losing once found, no matter what the cost. We cannot act in a way which wins us a place in the kingdom: Christ did that for us. But when we 'find' this truth, we can give up everything else to be obedient to God as members of that kingdom; to show how precious it is to us.

Good things come to those who wait. It is echoed again in the reading from Romans. Verse 28 famously promises "that in all things God works for the good of those who love him". It is a message of ultimate hope for an ultimate future, but not a promise of ease while we wait. The passage goes on to list all the things which cannot separate us from God's love, and they include famine, persecution, danger, death, demons, the present and the future. By implication, we are going to experience some or all these things, and we are not promised God will intervene and end them to spare us, but that he will work for good *in* them. His decisive intervention happened in the death and resurrection of Christ: he planted the mustard seed, he mixed the yeast in to the dough, and the kingdom they represent is growing and transforming our world one difficult circumstance at a time, one personal sacrifice to at a time, one person at a time.

Good things come to those who wait. Sometimes we may experience the good in a sudden change of circumstances, or in the support and prayers of faithful friends. But the ultimate good which is promised is the kingdom of heaven. And just maybe, within that, the discovery that God, having searched for and found us, judged us a pearl of such great value that he gave everything, even his own Son, to buy us and make us part of his kingdom. So when this world leaves us frustrated by its imperfection, or impatient for God to 'do something', remember that He already did, and ask him to help you be patient as you wait to experience it, patient as you watch for the evidence of the growing kingdom, patient as you learn your place in His heart as a pearl of great price. Good things come to those who wait. Amen.