

St John's

Prayers:

We thank you our God and our Saviour for your promises to be with us always and especially when life is difficult. We pray for those who struggle today, for those who feel unsupported or insecure, that they too may find relief and wholeness. We pray for all who are sick:

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

We also commend to God, those who have died:

RIP: Elizabeth Bowen & Maureen Felton

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

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

9th August 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

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

Our online services will continue for the time being.

**"Take heart, it is I.
Do not be afraid"**

Matthew 14:27

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 Ninth Sunday After Trinity

Collect

Gracious Father, revive your Church in our day, and make her holy, strong and faithful, for your glory's sake in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[1 Kings 19:9-18](#)

[Romans 10:5-15](#)

[Matthew 14:22-33](#)

Short Sermon by Jean Orpwood, Licensed Lay Minister

It had been a busy day. In the verses prior to our reading Jesus was still absorbing the news of the death of John the Baptist and had sought a quiet place to be alone. Again surrounded by the crowds He feeds the Five Thousand. Finally, He sends His disciples to the other side of the lake, so He can find solitude with His Father. We don't often think of Jesus being tired and exhausted, but we should remember, as the writer of the letter to the Hebrews puts it, that He was, in all human things, like us, "yet without sin". I find this such an encouragement. Whatever I may be feeling, good or bad, Jesus knows all about it and can be a great source of comfort for me. I only have to ask.

The scene changes. The disciples are having a tough time of it in the boat as the winds gather pace tossing it about in the waves. They were far from land with the wind against them and they were all scared. Storms on the Lake of Galilee were not unusual and often sprang up unexpectedly. What could they do? Then they see Jesus looking ghostly in the early light, walking towards them on the water, as only God can do. His voice reminds us of Isaiah's words. "Fear not ... you are mine ... when you pass through the waters, I shall be with you." God is ever present with us, - Emmanuel. Peter's attempt to "walk on water" while demonstrating an enthusiastic commitment, shows that he remains fragile, ordinary and vulnerable. As Jesus

says of him, his faith is still lacking, - patchy and incomplete. Despite this, the disciples confess Jesus to be the Son of God. Their faith has grown a little, compared with their previous experience of Jesus stilling the storm. Then they could only marvel and ask, "What sort of man is this?"

What can we take from our readings today? First, Jesus Himself, who would regularly seek quiet places to be with His Father, especially when He was tired. Until six weeks ago, our worship and prayer time while solitary, has been none the less real. Despite its difference, I have enjoyed worshipping online, not only with the few I knew, but also the wider Church here in the UK. Helpful reflections from St Paul's Cathedral website have also both challenged and encouraged us to "keep afloat" during our isolation. They remain accessible for a while yet.

Second, we too are battered by life, tired and exhausted, worried or scared. In our first reading Elijah had just defeated the prophets of Baal and now fled for his life, from the scheming Queen Jezebel. He was scared and alone, thinking he was the only God-fearing person alive. But, God first meets Elijah's need for food and rest and only then, within the sound of sheer silence encourages his faithful prophet to move on to new tasks. Elijah had not been deserted and there were still 7000 faithful believers.

How do we experience such help? It may have been a distinct sense of His presence with us, or something we have read or heard recently. Equally, it may be a friend on the phone or Face time. For many it has been the comforting voice or presence of strangers in our intensive care units, or with any of our frontline workers, paid or voluntary. It may even have been you, or me.

God's grace is freely available for all who need or want it, today and every day, and especially in the dark nights of our lives. At times like these, I turn to a verse from childhood: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace". May God help us to turn to Him in our need, and to be the means of grace to others in theirs. Amen.