



NEWSLETTER ❖ 8TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Dear friends

Vestry held a Zoom meeting this week and discussed various issues affecting the life of the All Saints'. You may be interested in news arising from some of the work done by members of Vestry over the last few weeks.

Many have noticed the letting sign over what was once the Ladyhead Book and Coffee Shop. Sadly, no commercial outlet was found after several months so the shop has recently been converted into an office for a small scientific research company, Zenotop Ltd, key staff of which live locally. Vestry is very grateful for professional assistance from Alastair Graham in submitting the forms to Fife Council for the conversion of use, and to Ian Palfrey for conducting the negotiations with Zenotop. Much has been achieved in far from ideal circumstances due to the good relationship between Ian and the Zenotop staff and good attentions from various local building trades. All Saints' therefore now has a happy new tenant and one fewer part of its plant requiring renovation.

A briefing concerning progress with the restoration project was recently given by our conservation architect, Ryan Cathro. His judgement is that progress with the work is good, with Stuart Niven and his team providing some innovative solutions and excellent attention to detail. The budget allows for the fish weathervane at the apex of the spire to be restored and gilded before the scaffolding is removed; however, carefully applied primer, undercoats and topcoats in grey will suffice for the rainwater goods.

Services continue in church at their temporary times with a slight adjustment to the start time of Morning Prayer: I am mostly the only person there on weekdays but commencing at 8.15 am on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays means that any need to retreat from the noise of renovation is evident as the beginning rather than halfway through.

Please hold in your prayers the congregations of the East Perthshire Group of churches - Blairgowrie, Coupar Angus, Alyth and Ballintuim. Their incumbent resigned unexpectedly during the lockdown and the Bishop has appointed me as interim pastor in addition to deputising for the Dean of the Diocese during the vacancy and appointment process. I never thought I would say it but thank goodness for Zoom.

More celebratory news comes from the Peacock family with the addition of Sophia, a sister for Alexander and Edmund and daughter for Liz and Andrew, all of whom are doing well. Also from the Gardners: Val and Rick's daughter, Sallie-Marie often serves at the altar when she is visiting and she and her boyfriend, Alex, recently announced their engagement during a stay in St Andrews. Congratulations to you all!

Fr Alasdair

THE WEEK AHEAD

SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sunday	8 am Mass 10 am Sung Mass 6 pm Evening Prayer 7 pm Mass	TRINITY 8
Monday	8.15 am Morning Prayer 6 pm Evening Prayer followed by Mass	
Tuesday	6 pm Evening Prayer followed by Mass	
Wednesday	<i>as Monday</i> but with Compline at 9 pm	<i>St Oswald</i>
Thursday	<i>as Monday</i>	Transfiguration
Friday	<i>as Monday</i>	<i>St Boisil</i>
Saturday	11 am Morning Prayer followed by Mass 6 pm Evening Prayer	<i>St Dominic</i>

Another Zoom meeting is scheduled for **1000 on Wednesday**:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82546386442?pwd=Nklvc005SGINVIldDSlJTZEFlkUT09>

Meeting ID: 825 4638 6442

Password: 4mkGii

Audio recordings of some services (Offices and Sung Mass on Sundays, Feast days and Wednesdays) will continue to be placed on the website here:

<https://www.allsaints-standrews.org.uk/category/virtualseervices/>

Thank you to those undertaking specific tasks in the Sung Mass today.

SERMON FOR TRINITY 8

We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish ...

There's a fishy story about a boat trip that the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral might have taken with the Lord Mayor of London, whose tricorne hat, caught by a sudden gust of wind, blew overboard into the Thames. The attendants looked on aghast as the costly headgear spun away in the wash of the boat. But the Dean lithely jumped out of the boat, walked over the water and recovered the hat. The next day a newspaper ran the headline, *Dean of St Paul's Can't Swim*.

Some say that facts speak for themselves. Occasionally that may be true, but even in this day and age when 'the big lie' once more rears its ugly head within the political repertoire, when the term

'world-beating' may not mean quite what it used to, and the temptation to retreat into cynicism can seem irresistible, the significance of events is often only found via their interpretation.

Today's gospel is set in Jesus' homeland of Galilee; Nazareth is the most recently mentioned place - where, the Lord concluded, a prophet was not welcome. His reaction to hearing the news of the death of John the Baptist was to get into a boat and retreat to a deserted place. But a boat wouldn't get you far in Nazareth, eighteen miles from the Lake up in the hills, so it's more likely this took place somewhere on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, perhaps Capernaum.

It's worth bearing in mind what triggered this attempted retreat. Herod Antipas, you may remember, wanted John the Baptist dead, but he was afraid of an uprising because the people regarded him as a prophet. St Matthew, intertwining these two events, seems to hint at a reason why so many people on hearing of St John's death, might set out on foot, seeking not just healing for their sick relatives and friends. These crowds would not be the only people in the Gospel to assume Jesus was about to do something powerfully political. In an unexpected sense, they were quite right.

Whatever their reasons, the crowds reached the destination first, thwarting any chance of quiet seclusion and setting the scene for the familiar miracle in that deserted place. St Luke tells us that this occurred near Bethsaida; St Jerome identified a place called in Greek *Heptapegon*, meaning 'seven springs', from which is derived its present Arabic name, Tabgha. The Church of the Multiplication is found there - not a mathematical shrine but, with its famous mosaic of the loaves, fish and baskets, perhaps the spot where the miracle occurred. Or, should I say, *supposed* miracle?

Some suggest that the story, demythologised, is an exemplar of the social virtue of sharing, with many others in the crowd following the Lord's example and dividing their food. Of course, every instance of blessing and sharing food or other resources motivated by compassion resonates with this event. Yet there's nothing remarkable if that was all that happened; with so many present, we might expect more prosaic interpretations of this event to have predominated, which they did not until modern times.

In that case, were ancient people just a bit credulous and superstitious or, in Richard Dawkins' case, frankly primitive? The modern mind certainly tends to lean this way, interpreting events from a particular perspective. We know that - in our culture at least - people are far more likely to be strongly repelled by reports of the miraculous rather than attracted to it. But that's not just a modern western phenomenon. Two generations before Christ, the Roman philosopher Cicero - who invented the word *evidence* - argued that everything could be explained by nature, that the supernatural simply was not. This way of interpreting reality was championed by many Enlightenment philosophers - Locke, Hume and Burke among them - and it remains the dominant lens for viewing the world in our time, so dominant it's hard to find it being questioned by serious thinkers.

One such rebel is G K Chesterton, who wrote that

... an extraordinary idea has arisen that the disbelievers in miracles consider them coldly and fairly, while believers in miracles accept them only in connection with some dogma. The fact is quite the other way. The believers in miracles accept them (rightly or wrongly) because

they have evidence for them. The disbelievers in miracles deny them (rightly or wrongly) because they have a doctrine against them.

What we have heard in this morning's Gospel is a form of evidence from an ancient event that we can choose to interpret as we wish, hopefully mindful of which dogma we use as a lens. But this event is greedy for our attention since it contains symbolisms that retain some power for us: two fish, five loaves of bread, twelve baskets of leftovers.

Twelve baskets for the remnants probably represents the reuniting of the remnant of God's people, the twelve tribes of Israel scattered by invasions and exiles over many centuries. The loaves and fish are less clear, but the five books of the Law of Moses - the Pentateuch - remain central to the Jewish Covenant and, in Jesus Christ, a second Moses was bringing a New and Second Covenant to unite all tribes and all peoples. It's natural, surely, to identify the fish as the most significant source of nourishment in this meal; and that's a significance mirrored by the fish being not just a car sticker for a certain kind of evangelical, but an early Christian symbol, since the Greek word for fish - ἰχθύς (ichthus) - forms an acrostic for the confession, *Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour*.

Our former Bishop, David Chillingworth, referred to All Saints' as *a loaves and fishes church*. I wonder if there is a higher compliment? What a blessing to have the loaves and fish, the old and new covenants, as a lens for exploring life as a community, a lens focused on Jesus Christ and his presence with us in the miraculous feeding of the Eucharist. What a blessing to work together for the gathering of the scattered and alienated, the healing of wounds in this year of anxiety. What a blessing to work for the opening of hearts and minds to the love that transcends all reason, all understanding, all nature, and all time.

The Rector

GIVING TO ALL SAINTS'

A reminder for any who would like to support All Saints' financially our bank details are:

Bank:	Royal Bank of Scotland
Branch:	113 – 115 South Street, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9QB
Sort Code:	83-26-28
Account name:	All Saints Episcopal Church – St Andrews
Account number:	00104363

Treasurer's contact details: Mr Ian Palfrey, 8a Howard Place, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9HL
01334 472358 treasurer@allsaints-standrews.org.uk

MALAWIAN RICE

A renewed supply of Malawian rice is available from Lil at the Rectory, should you wish to purchase some. With thanks to Margaret Duffy who first made us aware of this source of excellent, ethically-sourced food.

INTERCESSIONS

In particular need

Debbie & Priscilla White, Eleanor Ross, David McLean, Anne Zweers, *Priest*, Amy Cox, Robyn Seenan, Anne Clayton, Ian Sadler, Andrew Mate, Robin White, Berenice Smith

Continuing need

Lenora Mahoney, Effie Keracher, Jonah & Chris Andrews, Gareth, Jenni & Rosalie Saunders, Judy, Ashley & Kathleen Cummins, Charles & Thomas Ware, Ann Noltie, Lawrence Reynolds, Sally-Marie Gardner, Edie, Alice Bullough, Joan Day, Janet Reid, Catherine Rowe, Bill Hyland, Samantha, Steve Scott, Angela Allaway, Lori-Mark Quate, Elizabeth Talbot, Juliet Davey, Lucy White

Residential care

Catriona, Fiona Ingham, John Shillaker, *Priest*, Marie-Louise Moffett, *Priest*, Charlie Mather

Recently departed

Frances Humphries, Graham Kennedy, Andrew Macgregor, Ruth Warmer, Christiane Tissandier

Year's mind

- 3/8 Isabella Weise, 1945, Elizabeth Thornton Smith, 2005, Stewart Reid, 2015
- 4 Douglas Parsons, 2006, Thomas McLaren Keracher, 2007
- 6 Thomas Campbell Kennedy, 1945, Dorothy (Betty) Estyn Rowling, 2012
- 7 Arthur William Cooper, 1929, Albert Gourlay, 1935
- 8 David Lorimer, 2008

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