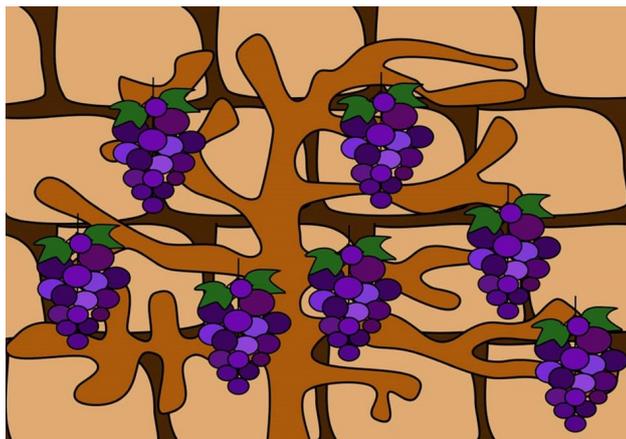


The Smestow Vale Team Ministry

St. John's and St. Michael's



Keeping in Touch with our Church Family

Sunday 2nd May

Risen Christ,
Your wounds declare your love for the world
and the wonder of your risen life:
Give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Philip meets an Ethiopian Official

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Acts 8:26-40

Jesus the True Vine.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.'

John 15:1-8

A Reflection for the Fifth Week of Eastertide from the Revd Richard Fisher.

Why are there readings from the "Acts of the Apostles" on all seven Sundays between Easter and Pentecost every single year? At first it seems strange, as "Acts" is ignored between June and Easter! The reason is that "Acts" acts as an important bridge. It is the sequel to "Luke" and connects the New Testament Gospels and the Epistles. "Acts" explains how the Jesus movement rippled out from Jerusalem to the Roman world. The mission statement of "Acts" is Acts 1.8: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Themes that Luke introduced in his Gospel are developed here: about the Holy Spirit equipping

Christians to share the good news in new places with unexpected people, stories of people reconnected with neighbours, folk discovering peace with themselves and of lives made whole. It tells of a movement not working alone or inert but animated, with a story to tell - by people on the move. Above all, it is about how Jesus is still working through his people by the Holy Spirit.

Most of these themes are evident in today's "Acts" passage as the Christian good news crosses cultural boundaries and leads to a black African diplomat being saved and baptised.

Over the past year, surveys tell us that more people have started to pray and watch services online than ever before. Doubtless, the Spirit of God is leading us in new and unexpected ways. The Pandemic is leaving so much suffering behind though "Acts" reminds us that the Lord delights to work through us to bring his wholeness and peace to our communities today.

Richard

Prayer During the Week

Sunday

Pray that we may remain firmly grafted into Jesus, the True Vine. (John 15: 5)

Monday

Pray for the people of India, suffering from lack of vaccines, medicines and oxygen.

Tuesday

Pray for those lost in the sinking of the Indonesian submarine.

Wednesday

Pray for efforts to protect the Brazilian rain forest.

Thursday

Pray for understanding when engaging with people with all kinds of disabilities.

Friday

Pray for discussions to reduce global warming and its effects.

Saturday

Hear with Mother Julian (remembered today) that "All manner of thing shall be well."

Please remember those who have asked for our prayers

Lisa, Morgan, Joy Waistell, Jane, Sarah Aldridge, Carl Baker, Heather Gent, Jean Caswell, Joan, Alan Compson, Geoff Truby, Irene Haycock, Delma Scriven and Sue Oakley.

Prayers for those working in the NHS and Care Workers

Lewis, Jayne, Sandy, Anthony, Vicky, Helen and Karen

Those who have died

Doris Smith, John Ware, Vera Pagett, Mary Farman, June Shilvock, John Poultney, Denise Mansell, Iris Greenaway and Malcolm Manley.

A Prayer for when life is difficult

Prayer is often born out of the rough and difficult times of our lives. When we offer these times to God he will help and support us.

*O Lord God, creator of all
Open my eyes to beauty
Open my eyes to wonder
Open my ears to others
Open my heart to you.
Amen*

Share the Good News

You are very welcome to share Keeping in Touch with others. If you know of anyone who would like it emailing to them direct please let Maxine know.

Ascension Day

Team Eucharist 7.30pm at St John's Swindon
Please come and help us celebrate.

Services this Sunday

St. John's 9.30am Holy Communion

St. Michael's 11.00am Parish Communion

Don't forget to book your place with Hilary by 12noon on Saturday either by email hilmoore@gmail.com or telephone 892856.

Tuesday Prayer Meeting

Zoom meeting on Tuesday 4th May at 7pm.
Everyone welcome

Bread of Life

The Diocesan teaching Course on the Eucharist led by our Bishop's continues this week Bishop +Rod, Bishop of Maidstone will explore the theme of "Remembering."
The video lectures are available from 10am on the Tuesday of each week on our Bread Of Life webpage at www.lichfield.anglican.org/bread-of-life

Church Electoral Roll.

Our church electoral Roll is being revised in preparation for our Parish AGM .

