

Newsletter feedback please!

This week the outer sheet of the newsletter is what those who come to church on Sunday will receive. This inner sheet contains a “Thought for the week” which has been sourced from Roots on the web as well as the prayers that will be used in church and a hymn. We would welcome your feedback on this inner sheet so do please call Ben on 875651 and let him know what you do (and don't!) find helpful in the newsletter.

Volunteer letter writer needed for grant applications

We need to replace the projector in the Canterbury Room with a new digital screen which will hugely improve things for Pick a flick and other users of this great facility.

Grant bodies are much more willing to give to this sort of thing than anything religious! So we need a volunteer to chase a few grants for this and other upgrades for the Canterbury room (such as better blinds).

Can you help? Please contact Ben.

Thought for the week from “Roots on the web”

[Luke 8:26-39] It can't have been much of a life. When they could the townsfolk locked the man up, as best they could; but somehow and often he managed to escape. He didn't conform to any societal norms. He probably had no idea of hygiene, and he didn't bother with clothes. We are not told what he thought about all this. Simply that he was rejected and, where possible, ignored. And because he was different, people were a little bit frightened of him. Those who are different can be unsettling, whether it is because of the way they dress or the way they speak or what they wear. But is that really a good reason to sideline or ignore them?

He didn't ask for healing. If anything, he seemed to be scared of it. He tried to ask Jesus what he wanted of him or at least the voice that came from him cried out. Jesus seems to approach the man and command his healing immediately. He commands the healing by calling out the unclean spirit. But this spirit – or these spirits – answer back. They do not want to return to the abyss. The abyss is the hell from which they originated. This is almost a plea for healing. It is as if they want to avoid

the torment of the abyss at any cost and in a sense that is because they are seeking to be healed.

Here are two contrasting impacts that encounters with Jesus bring. The first is wholly positive, in that the man is restored and made whole. The second is more difficult. The destruction of the pigs must have been a financial disaster for the swineherds. This is a reminder that encounters with Jesus can be costly and have unforeseen consequences.

The people have at best an ambivalent reaction to Jesus. He has robbed some of the community of their livelihood. But he has restored health to the man whom they believed to be possessed. In sending the man home Jesus does two things. First, he completes the restoration begun in the healing by restoring the man back into his community. Second, he uses the man to show a Gentile community that the love of God is for them as well. It is a glimpse of what Paul envisaged when he wrote that there is no longer Jew nor Greek.

In today's world, there are many who are damaged and excluded, and there are many divisions of all sorts. These passages remind us that unity and not division are God's desire and the impact of an encounter with Jesus may be the first step on the way to wholeness. It is up to his followers to proclaim this and to play their part in bringing healing and unity.

Hymn:

<p>1. For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord; for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords; To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word, help us rise and pledge our word.</p> <p>2. Lead us forward into freedom; from despair your world release, that, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace. Show us how through care and goodness fear will die and hope increase, fear will die and hope increase.</p>
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3. All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned;
pride of status, race, or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span,
may we hallow life's brief span.

4. You, Creator God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind,
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find,
earth its destiny may find.

Prayers for this week

Thank you to Sally Horton for this week's prayers based on "Prayers for the Church Year" by David Adam.

Lord of light and truth, who in Jesus gives peace to our hearts and minds and renews and refreshes our whole being, may we know that you are an ever-present help in trouble. Lord, heal us and we shall be healed, strengthen us to work for you; through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

God of love and compassion,
you are always more ready to hear and help than we are to pray;
help us to know that you are with us now and always and that you are a very present help in trouble.

We pray for all who come to your church with hopes and fears,
all who come with special needs, that in you they may find new hope.
We remember all who thirst for God, we pray for pilgrims and seekers.
Lord, we wait upon you.

You are our helper and deliverer.

We pray for our troubled world, for places of oppression, tyranny and violence, especially for Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria & Yemen.
We remember all who suffer through war or natural disasters.

We ask your blessing upon the hungry and the homeless,
all who have no place to call their own, remembering the many migrants
throughout the world.

Lord, we wait upon you.

You are our helper and deliverer.

We give thanks for all who have shared their love and peace with us;
we pray for our homes and our loved ones.

We pray for homes where there is trouble, for destitute families,
for those who have been evicted or driven out of their homes.

We pray for homes where there is abuse or neglect.

Lord, we wait upon you.

You are our helper and deliverer.

We remember before you all who are not at peace with themselves or their
neighbours,

all who are troubled in body, mind or spirit.

We pray for all who feel despised or rejected,
all who walk in fear and in darkness.

We pray for members of our community who are ill or are lonely and feel
isolated - we pray that Jean Dixon will continue to feel more settled at
Lyndhurst Care Home.

Lord, we wait upon you.

You are our helper and deliverer.

We give thanks that you are our strength in times of weakness;
you deliver us from the power of death.

We give thanks for all who have been delivered from eternal death, and pray
for loved ones departed this life.

Lord, we wait upon you.

You are our helper and deliverer.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour,
Jesus Christ. Amen.**

For further information please check www.thomandmary.org.uk