



St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh

WORSHIPPING AT HOME

Harvest Festival

4th October 2020

WELCOME

. . . . to our Church at Home resources for this Sunday. Thank you to Canon Roy Woodhams, The Rev'd Rutton Viccajee and Tim Clifford Hill for our Sunday Worship this week.

THIS WEEK *(Events in red will be 'virtual' events!)*

Sunday 4th October – Harvest Festival:

8am: Said Holy Communion (1662)

11am: Said Holy Communion (*Common Worship*)

(This Service will be live streamed on our Youtube Channel)

11.15: SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code for this is ID: 148-785-166)

4pm: All Age Harvest Service (Outdoors if fine)

Tuesday 6th October:

12noon: Said Holy Communion (1662)

4pm: Virtual Afternoon Tea and Chat

(the Zoom joining code for this is ID: 804-694-233)

Thursday 8th October:

10am: Quiet Time for Prayer

Saturday 10th October

9am: Tim Clifford Hill's Ordination.

(See Notices for details of how to watch the service online)

Sunday 11th October – Trinity 18:

8am: Said Holy Communion (1662)

10am: Church at Home

11.15: SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code for these is ID: 148-785-166)

11am: Said Holy Communion (Common Worship)

The Preacher will be Canon Colin Hill (Tim's Grandfather)

(This Service will be live streamed on our Youtube Channel)

We continue to welcome Home Worshippers from the Churches at Dunsfold and Hascombe – it's good to have you with us!

Coming to Church During COVID-19: The risk from the Coronavirus is still significant. Please read our safety notices before coming to worship at Church! Face Coverings must be worn at all Church events!

*****NEW THIS WEEK*** We have been advised that we must keep doors and windows open at all times during worship – as the weather worsens, we suggest that you may consider bringing a blanket and/or hot water bottle to church! To keep church warm for as long as possible we will not be opening the doors until 10 minutes before a service – please don't come earlier than that!**

HARVEST FESTIVAL:

COLLECTS:

Eternal God, you crown the year with your goodness and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season: grant that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever.

Creator God, you made the goodness of the land, the riches of the sea and the rhythm of the seasons: as we thank you for the harvest, may we cherish and respect this planet and its peoples, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 5: 1-7.*

Let me sing for my beloved

my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem, and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done

in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;

I will also command the clouds; that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 21: 33-end.*

“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those

wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord’s doing,

and it is amazing in our eyes’?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

SERMON *(Written by The Rev’d Rutton Viccajee)*

Harvest. I have a question for you: what is the harvest that God requires from us?

Is it grapes? Is God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, short of grapes? Or tinned food and gifts of produce? Is God short of those? Well no – but other people most certainly are. And so, we bring our gifts and our thanks at harvest-time. And rightly so.

Why do we do it? Well, perhaps because God requires our thanks, and our compassion, both, to help others in any way we can. The harvest He requires is to act kindly and decently to others.

But when it comes to human nature, alas, so quickly things go wrong:

Isaiah 5 v2 says that instead of good grapes, all the vineyard of the human heart produced was bad grapes. The Hebrew is even stronger: it really means 'stink-grapes'. There is a violence in the language used. And talking of violence, that's what's happening in verse 7: What is the harvest God requires? Well, instead of justice, God's people practice violence and bloodshed; instead of righteousness, that is, treating people decently, there is only a cry of distress from the weak being oppressed by the strong. In the Hebrew, those words for justice and bloodshed, for righteousness and a distress cry are very very similar – just one tiny letter different in each case. And so, my translation might be: when God looked for right, all he got was rot. Stink grapes. Moral and spiritual decay.

And so, God also has a question for us about harvest. God's question is: tell me what else I could have done to avoid all this? V4: what more was there to do for my vineyard people than I have not already done? I loved them with an everlasting love. I took every care to make sure they were tended and cared for. I lavished them with grace upon grace, provision upon provision, deliverance upon deliverance. The potential for righteous living was absolutely there. I set them up, in love, for holiness in my nation-vineyard. But when it was their turn to deliver – the only harvest I got were the stink-grapes of corruption and violence and oppression.

Does Matthew 21 shed any more light on the problem of the vineyard, and God's failed harvest?

In Jesus' version of this harvest parable, it is the same story, but the focus is tightened now on the Pharisees: on their failure of leadership and authority. Roy spoke about authority last week – good authority based on respect earned, and bad authority based on power abused. It seems to me a crucial point.

And so, same, question: is divine grace finally exhausted in this vineyard of the Pharisees and Chief Priests? Is there any hope for the no-hopers? Is “grace upon grace” simply not for them? Is their stink-fruit future already written? Or can things change?

That is a good question. Well – grace is there, because Jesus is there. We just need to dig a bit deeper to find it: context is everything. Like the Dickensian ghost of Christmas Yet To Come, Jesus is speaking not of things that will be, but of things that may yet be. The Chief priests and the Pharisees listening to Jesus in chapter 21 have not yet crossed the line. They have not yet killed the Son. They have one last chance. God the Father reasons: ‘they will respect my Son’. And the parable forms a final warning to them to get that choice right. It's not too late. Yet. Not in Matthew 21. There is no ‘fait accompli’ here – because Jesus shouts this one last warning – even though he knows it will not work. Respect the Son. Or kill Him. That's the choice. But it IS a choice.

Every warning in Matthew 21 is written in the present tense: v32 for example: the tax collectors and the prostitutes – the moral dregs of society that you Pharisees so despise – they are going (present tense) into the kingdom of God ahead of you.

So they are still travelling. You can do something about it, says Jesus to those broken leaders. It's not too late to change your ways, and take your place in the procession behind them. And at least get into the Kingdom of heaven last. Better last than not at all.

And so, finally, here is grace. One final appeal from the Vineyard Owner's Son to the human heart. Do the right thing. The future is not yet written. "There is no fate but what we make". Respect the Son.

We can do better than those hapless vineyard tenants, and I pray with all my heart that that we are doing better. We can rest in the forgiveness of God. We can commit to living lives that respect others, lives that put others first. And we can respect the Son, the ultimate messenger, come to us from the Father. For in Him lies all our message of salvation. Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Lord of the harvest, with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your love in creation and have shared in the bread and the wine of the kingdom: by your grace plant within us a reverence for all

that you give us and make us generous and wise stewards of the good things we enjoy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

WEEKLY PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

Church and Christian Ministry:

- For all who volunteer with Youth and Children's ministry across the Diocese.
- For Gabrielle, our Young People's Minister, and all who help her minister to our young people.

National and World Affairs:

- For all affected by Coronavirus, and for the Governments and scientists across the world, seeking to find ways of combatting the virus

Community and Family:

- For those who live in Rowland Road and Victoria Road
- For our All Age Harvest Service, in our churchyard, this afternoon at 4pm.
- For all farms that surround Cranleigh and for those who work in them, farming the land.

The Sick and those in Need:

- Robin Burnett, Mike Ford, Stefan Godier, Stella Goldsmith, Michael Hart, Louise Harbutt, Amy Loveless, Libby O'Brien, Brian Pettyfer, Jean Quallington, Maureen Steele, Dennis and Rosemary Talbot, Marion Tomkins, Mac Walker, Angela Wild, Henry Young (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Amanda and Hugh, Barbara Crabb, Sally Rivett, Jackie Williams, Alli, Judy Bolt, Sue and Dennis Evans, Peter Hutley, Sally Davis, Lorna Thompson, Paul Wiltshire, Sami Bennewith, Dru Ridley*)

The Departed:

- All we have known and loved, and especially: Tony Kenison, Mike Maxwell, Wally Starling (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Des Crabb*)

NOTICES:

Harvest Gifts: Due to the risk of spreading COVID-19 we will not be receiving or distributing Harvest Gifts this year. Instead, a donation can be made to the wonderful Charity Crisis, working with homeless people, at all Church Services or by posting through the Church Office door.

Plants: From Win Bracking (275573) – If you are dividing perennials that have outgrown their allotted space please remember the Church Plant Stall. I do not need any more

Alchemilla, Sedum (Ice Plant) or the ubiquitous Crocosmia (Montbretia) but last year someone gave me some beautiful Hemerocallis (Day Lilies) which were red/bronze. I would love some more of those as they were popular in the sales

Tim's Ordination: Please pray for Tim as he prepares for his ordination as a deacon. Tim will be ordained by Bishop Andrew at St Bartholomew's, Haslemere, on Saturday 10th October at 9am. Although he will only be able to take a tiny group of 4 supporters, the service will be live streamed, via the diocesan youtube site. The link to the service is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9jyZdYeyQw&feature=youtu.be>

Nativity Festival: Regrettably, with the present worsening COVID-19 situation, we have made the decision to postpone the Nativity Festival which had been planned for the first weekend of December.

Parish Office: Our new Interim Parish Administrator is Nicola Craven-Smith. Her working hours are different from those that Elise worked – she will be available by telephone Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.30am to 2.30pm and her new email address is nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Traidcraft: Sue Knight is offering Traidcraft goods for sale by appointment or would be willing to deliver to Cranleigh on receipt of an order. She will have catalogues or you can go on line at traidcraftshop.co.uk to see the whole range and if she has to

order it in, this usually takes about a week. You can pay for any orders by BACS or she will accept cheques. Call Sue on 275032 or 07950 025137.

Paying Money to the Church: If you wish to pay any monies to St Nicolas, cheques should be made payable to 'Cranleigh PCC'

Curate Visiting: Our Curates, Tim and Rutton, continue to safely visit parishioners during this time of change and uncertainty. If you would like one of them to visit you, either socially distantly in your garden, on the telephone or on Zoom/Facetime, please contact them.

Please send notices for next week to Margie Nursey at 1, Elm Cottages, Smithwood Common (01483 273693) notices@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk by **7pm on Tuesday**

Keep in touch:

The Rector (Roy): 01483 800655 or email

roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

The Full time Curate (Tim Clifford Hill) 01483 276267 or email

tim@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

The Part time Curate (Revd Rutton Viccajee, works Wednesday, Friday, Sunday)

rutton@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

**Interim Administrator (Nicola Craven-Smith): 01483 273620 or
email nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk**

**Young People's Minister (Gabrielle Clarke): 07427 748408
gabrielle@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk**

Church Website:

www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk and on FaceBook

**If you know of anybody who would like to
receive a printed communication like this each
week, please call us on one of the numbers above!
Alternatively, with the church re-opening, if you no
longer require this weekly publication delivered
to you, please can you let Elise know**