**Sunday 12th July 2020** WORSHIP AT HOME: **Matthew 13.1-9,18-23**The Parable of the Sower

Welcome to our act of Worship

Call to worship Isaiah 55v10-13

10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
   and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
   giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
   it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
   and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

12 For you shall go out in joy,
   and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
   shall burst into song,
   and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
   instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
   for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

HYMN: For the beauty of the earth…

HP333, MP152, RS41, STF102

(Some of the hymn books widely used in the Wiltshire United Area)

*Prayers of Praise*

God, who made the world, and everything in it, we marvel at the variety and richness and we adore your name.

God, who continually recreates the world, forgiving and offering new opportunities, we marvel at your generosity, and we adore you.

God, who shares our experiences, both good and bad, we marvel at your faithfulness to us, and we adore you. **Amen.**

*Prayer of Confession*

Holy God, we so often fail to uphold what is good and honest, right and true. Forgive us when we fall short of the high standards we should have. Make us ready to admit our faults, grateful to receive your forgiveness and eager to renew our commitment to live in your strength.

*(Pause)*

Our sins are forgiven. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

HYMN Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness

HP138, MP590, RS512 , STF254

Ministry of the Word of God

Isaiah 55.10-13; Psalm 65.(1-8),9-13; Romans 8.1-11; **GOSPEL** **Matthew 13.1-9,18-23 with special focus on:**

**20As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.**

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

Reflection

I received that quizzically-disapproving Chiropractor look along with the pursed lips that said “So what have you been doing this time: gym, running, cycling, swimming?” “Actually” I replied, “moving soil and stones!”

Let me explain 8 years ago the front garden at Westbury resembled a miniature version of Chesil Beach! Ever since moving here I have been returning it to a living garden, whenever anyone has a skip of soil, along trundles the wheelbarrow and I knock on their door. Year by year stones and concrete slabs recede replaced by growing plants – that is wonderful, but my chiropractor just shakes her head!

We are all familiar with Jesus’ parable of the Sower and we often reflect on the words at harvest. Today’s lectionary also gives us Jesus’ explanation of it.

As we continue to wrestle with the pandemic and the continuing impact it has both on our daily lives and our Christian worship and service it can feel as though we are in rocky ground. We wonder when it will end? We can also wonder where God is in all this! It can feel like a wilderness experience.

Let us not forget that it was on the rocky wilderness mountain of Horeb that Moses experienced the burning bush – and was told by God that he was on holy ground. It was also whilst in the rocky wilderness at Meribah with a group of very grumpy and complaining Hebrews that Moses was instructed to hit a rock and a gushing stream came forth. Indeed in the early Church we have the Desert Fathers (and Mothers) who literally lived in this wilderness as they believed that would enable them to become closer to God.

As we journey through this strange time may we likewise experience something of God in a new or more vivid way, so that when this is over we may be akin to the seed that fell into the “*good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”*Oh, and if you have any good soil going spare my front garden is still a work in progress, just don’t tell the Chiropractor! **Amen.**

HYMN We are marching in the light of God

HP, MP954, RS555, STF483

Our Prayers

In the world, we pray especially for places where climate change has brought drought…
for the places where it has brought floods …
for those whose crops have been scorched…
for those whose landscape has been made barren

**May we see you, may we hear you, may we know you care.**

We pray for those whose life's seeds
are being choked by anxiety, poverty and hardship…
for those who have lost their jobs…
for those unable to feed their families
or to pay their mortgages and rent…
for those living without basic facilities.
We pray for those given hope by the emergency budget
and for those who feel hope-less
and for foodbanks and charities that try to help all who are struggling.
**May we see you, may we hear you, may we know you care.**

We pray for those unable to thrive because of illness…
and those denied the opportunity
to plant the seeds of their dreams in fertile soil...
for those hospitalised with Covid-19…
for those whose journey to recovery is long , slow and painful…
for those who nurse them…
for those who love them…
for those whose treatment has been put on hold…
We pray for those robbed of the opportunity to go to school,
for children in war zones, those in refugee camps,
those who have to work to find their daily food.
**May we see you, may we hear you, may we know you care.**

And we pray for those whose seeds are watered by their tears...
those grieving the loss of someone close to them…
those who feel forgotten…
those who are neglected…
those who are victims of injustice, abuse, or cruelty…
**May they – and all in any kind of need today – see you, may they hear you,
and may know you care. Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN Great is thy faithfulness…

HP66, MP200, RS96, STF51

Blessing

May God sow in you the seeds of an abundant harvest;
May Christ the Word be a lamp for your steps;
And may the Holy Spirit give life to you – body, mind and soul. **Amen**

Go well.

**In the name of the Father, and the Son,**

**and the Holy Spirit. Amen!**

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire United Area

Bank Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not be open, but the Church is alive.***

*This is service is offered to any and all, with love and prayers.*

**Matthew 13.1-9,18-23**

**That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. 2Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3And he told them many things in parables, saying: ‘Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. 7Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8Other seeds fell on** **good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9Let anyone with ears listen!’ …**

**18 ‘Hear then the parable of the sower. 19When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.****20As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. 22As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. 23But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.’**

**Storytelling the Gospel for Little People**

Take a children’s Bible and place some seeds inside, then use it as you tell the story.

Jesus was a great storyteller. He told very special stories called parables. These helped everyone to know more about God.

Jesus said, ‘A farmer went to sow seeds.
(*open the Bible and let the seeds fall out*)

Some of the seed fell on the path and was eaten by the birds.
(*fly hand down and pick up some seeds*)

Some of the seed fell on the rocks and was burned by the sun.
(*make sun rays with your hand and pick up some seeds*)

Some of the seed fell onto weeds.
These seeds grew but were choked by the weeds.
(*grasp hands together and pick up some seeds*)

But some fell on good soil.
These seeds grew into strong and healthy plants.’
(*encourage the children to reach up high*)

This would also work as part of an online children's session.

**A prayer of response for all ages together**

Lord,
I don’t want thorns or weeds in my life.
*(shake head)*
**I have ears, let me hear you speak to me.**
*(cup ears)*
I don’t want to be without roots,
and get scorched by the sun.
*(shake head)*
**I have ears…**
I don’t want to shrivel up
through not enough rain.
*(shake head)*
**I have ears…**
I need your sunshine and your rain. to help me grow.
*(nod head vigorously)*
**I have ears, let me hear you speak to me.** *(cup ears)*
**Amen.**

**Play**

Fill a large container with soil and provide plant pots, toy gardening tools and seeds. Invite the children to play and plant seeds.

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**For the** [**beauty**](https://www.definitions.net/definition/beauty) **of the** [**earth**](https://www.definitions.net/definition/earth) **T "Dix"**

For the [glory](https://www.definitions.net/definition/glory) of the skies,

For the love [which](https://www.definitions.net/definition/which) from our [birth](https://www.definitions.net/definition/birth)

Over and [around](https://www.definitions.net/definition/around) us lies.

Lord of all, to Thee we raise,

This our hymn of [grateful](https://www.definitions.net/definition/grateful) praise.

For the [beauty](https://www.definitions.net/definition/beauty) of each hour,

Of the day and of the night,

Hill and vale, and tree and flower,

Sun and moon, and [stars](https://www.definitions.net/definition/stars) of light.

For the joy of ear and eye,

For the [heart](https://www.definitions.net/definition/heart) and mind's delight,

For the [mystic](https://www.definitions.net/definition/mystic) harmony

Linking [sense](https://www.definitions.net/definition/sense) to [sound](https://www.definitions.net/definition/sound) and sight.

For the joy of [human](https://www.definitions.net/definition/human) love,

Brother, sister, parent, child,

Friends on [earth](https://www.definitions.net/definition/earth) and [friends](https://www.definitions.net/definition/friends) above,

For all [gentle](https://www.definitions.net/definition/gentle) thoughts and mild.

For each [perfect](https://www.definitions.net/definition/perfect) gift of Thine,

To our race so [freely](https://www.definitions.net/definition/freely) given,

Graces [human](https://www.definitions.net/definition/human) and divine,

Flowers of [earth](https://www.definitions.net/definition/earth) and buds of Heaven.

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God T Seek ye first**
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto you
Allelu, alleluia

Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you
Allelu, alleluia

We shall not live by bread alone
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God
Allelu, alleluia

**We are marching in the light of God** **T Siyahamba**
We are marching in the light of God
We are marching in the light of God
We are marching in the light of God
We are marching marching
We are marching Oh Oh
We are marching in the light of God
We are marching marching
We are marching Oh Oh
We are marching in the light of God

We are living in the love of God
We are living in the love of God
We are living in the love of God
We are living in the love of God
We are living living
We are living Oh Oh
We are living in the love of God
We are living living
We are living Oh Oh
We are living in the love of God

We are moving in the power of God
We are moving in the power of God
We are moving in the power of God
We are moving in the power of God
We are moving moving
We are moving Oh Oh
We are moving in the power of God
We are moving moving
We are moving Oh Oh
We are moving in the power of God

**Great is Thy faithfulness**, **T Faithfulness**

O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

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