

**Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity  
Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022**



Dear Friends in Christ,

***‘Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.’ (2 Timothy 1: 14)***

Last week, Sparsholt parish held another very successful annual Pet Services on Woodman Green. We were blessed with brilliant sunshine despite the prospect of a heavy downpour, which meant our plans to hold the service outdoors went ahead. I am grateful to Sally Wesley for planning the event and for the wonderful team who miraculously provided tables and chairs, refreshments and yummy biscuits!

Particular thanks go to the children of Sparsholt Primary School for leading the service with bible readings, moving prayers and a heartfelt reflection on how much we must thank God for the blessing of all animals on earth, especially our beloved pets. We are never quite sure what sort of animals will grace us with their presence at these services. Thankfully, I’ve not yet had to welcome a tarantula, though I gather they are quite gentle creatures and have very soft furry bodies. This year, we had one particular little dog who was quite vocal, especially during the hymns, which made for much merriment. This little toad, who had been spotted on a local pavement the night before, might well have been worshipping with us from the privacy of its own hedge!



Whilst all these fun and games were going on in Sparsholt, Littleton and Crawley were celebrating Harvest Festival. Thanks to all those who contributed so many wonderful items of tinned and dried produce to the collections for Basics Bank and The Beacon, formerly Winchester Nightshelter. If you haven't had chance to make donations, Chilbolton parish church is holding a Harvest Festival service this coming Sunday morning (2<sup>nd</sup> October) along with an auction of fresh produce. Wherwell and Sparsholt parish churches are holding their Harvest Festivals on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> October.



***'Fall Harvest' by Don Sahli***

The harvest season always inspires creativity, challenging us to find new ways to cope with the abundance we have been blessed with personally and an opportunity for us to share these gifts with others who are not so fortunate. Above all, this is a time for us to reflect on all the wonderful things our loving God blesses us with and to give thanks to Him for the bounty of His Creation, given in love for us all to share.

In the second letter to his beloved friend in faith, Timothy, who was leading the church in the challenging environment at Ephesus, St Paul encourages all Christians to *'Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.'* It is thought that Paul's words form something of a valedictory statement, either written shortly before his death from the prison cell in which he was incarcerated, or scribed in memory of him after his death. Either way, Paul's thoughts were focussed on sharing his faith with successive generations of Christians, encouraging us in steadfast faith, confident endurance and lasting love.

God's generosity isn't confined to the pages of the Bible or to some deep distant past. It is present all around us today too but often we don't see it because we hold to ourselves the things that God intends us to share. The feeding of the 5,000 began with the generous act of sharing by a young boy who was probably hungry willing to reach out to others with the little that he had. The miraculous way in which God provided for Elijah through the widow and her son only occurred because she was willing to share her last meal.



***'Blossoming Trees' by Vincent Van Gogh***

We are often made aware of the abundance of God when we share our limited resources with others, especially in these times of global pandemic and economic and financial crisis. But we also become aware of the generosity of God when we look for it in the everyday events of our lives. If we focus on our own needs, we can easily get caught in a mentality of scarcity and feel that we don't have anything to share... and that makes us more and more acquisitive and less generous. What do you think?

*'Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.'* Where have you become aware of the generosity of God in these days of fuel poverty and inflation? Have you felt able to share the good treasure of your lives with others, whether that is by offering your personal wealth, energy, time, kindness or prayer. As we celebrate Harvest Festival this year, may we always be mindful of St Paul's advice to remember Christ, the foundation of our faith. Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit to help us through the trials and the abundance of our lives. Harvest is about thanking God for the gifts He has given us in and through His Son, Jesus Christ, and encourages us to reflect on how we can use these gifts wisely for the good of all.

I leave you with one of my favourite prayer-poems by [Gerald Manley Hopkins](#):

Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks arise  
Around; up above, what wind-walks! What lovely behaviour  
Of silk-sack clouds! Has wilder, wilful-wavier  
Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,  
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;  
And, éyes, héart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a  
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies?

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder  
Majestic—as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!  
These things, these things were here and but the beholder  
Wanting; which two when they once meet,  
The heart rears wings bold and bolder  
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet.

Yours, in thanksgiving for the harvest of Christ,

Jax

**Rector, The Downs Benefice**

**Collect Prayer for the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity**

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers  
of your people who call upon you;  
and grant that they may both perceive and know  
what things they ought to do,  
and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them;  
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.  
Amen.



*'Tree of Life' by Gustav Klimt*

## **2 Timothy 1:1-14 – Salutation from Paul**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.



**Luke 17: 5-10 5 – The Mustard Seed**

The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’ He replied, ‘If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea,” and it will obey you.

Suppose one of you has a servant ploughing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, “Come along now and sit down to eat?” Won’t he rather say, “Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink.” Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.”

**Schedule of Services**

Now that all national Coronavirus restrictions have been lifted, it is no longer necessary to book seats in our parishes for services. Neither is it mandatory for you to wear masks in church. However, Coronavirus is still very much with us. There are a number of people in our villages with it at present, so we are encouraging people to observe social distancing measures.

Date	Ch	Cr	Li	Sp	Wh
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Harvest Festival		4pm - Café Church – <i>in the Church Room</i>		
9 <sup>th</sup> October			Holy Communion	Harvest Festival	Harvest Festival
16 <sup>th</sup> October	Holy Communion with REME	Morning Worship	6pm – Peace & Wholeness Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	

23 <sup>rd</sup> October			Morning Worship with Ben & Esther Brown (MAF)	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
26 <sup>th</sup> October			Mid-week Holy Communion		
30 <sup>th</sup> October	3pm – All Souls Service <i>(with Wherwell)</i>	Holy Communion		6pm - All Souls Service	6pm - Autumn Meditations
2 <sup>nd</sup> November			6pm - All Souls Service		
6 <sup>th</sup> November	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion with All Souls	4pm - Café Church – <i>in the Church Room</i>		
11 <sup>th</sup> November			10.55 am – Act of Remembrance – <i>at the War Memorial</i>		10.55 am – Act of Remembrance – <i>at the War Memorial</i>
13 <sup>th</sup> November	<i>(with Wherwell)</i>	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service – <i>at the War Memorial</i>	<i>Remembrance Service at the Barracks (to be confirmed)</i>	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service – <i>at the War Memorial (with Chilbolton)</i>
20 <sup>th</sup> November	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	6pm – Peace & Wholeness Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	6pm - Autumn Meditations
23 <sup>rd</sup> November			Mid-week Holy Communion		
27 <sup>th</sup> November	5pm – Advent Meditation		11.15am - Patronal Festival with Commissioning of the Anna Chaplain	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP) PLUS 5.30pm – Advent Carol Service