

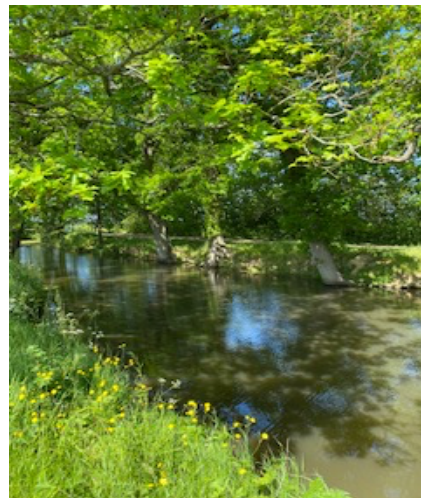
Fourth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 27th June 2021



Dear Friends in Christ,

'If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.' (Mark 5: 28)

Do you ever wonder whether you would have what it takes to be an astronaut? As much as I am mesmerised by the moon in all its glory, I doubt I would have the mettle to rocket through space in a tiny capsule. I'm not good in small spaces, and I fidget too much! These things were whirring through my mind as I travelled to Basingstoke Hospital on Thursday evening for an MRI scan on my knee which has spent the past year showing me who's 'Boss' after I slipped and fell out of the bath and used it as a landing pad!



Sissinghurst Castle Gardens

As I lay in the MRI capsule feeling humbled by the kindness and skill of the technicians and overwhelmed at the blessing of the technology at my disposal, I nonetheless felt rising panic at being told I would be incarcerated and unable to move a muscle for the next 30 minutes. The saving grace came in the form of a set of headphones which, at my request, were tuned to Radio 4! However, whereas I thought I was going to be listening to The Archers (it was 7pm after all!!), above the banging and clanging of the scanner whirring around me, I started to hear a man's voice speaking about the healing power of Christ's Divine Love. Instantly I felt calm, and began to pray, concentrating my mind on a recent trip to Sissinghurst Castle Gardens; imagining I was back among the happy memories of fragrant blooms and verdant riverside.

Once 'sprung' from the capsule, I asked the technician what it was I had been listening to, as it hadn't been The Archers nor the programmes scheduled either side. The nurse checked and said she had correctly tuned me into Radio 4. They were both astonished when I recounted what I had heard, particularly because they said I had proven to be one of the calmest patients they'd ever had.



Source – Instagram/jcee2spoons

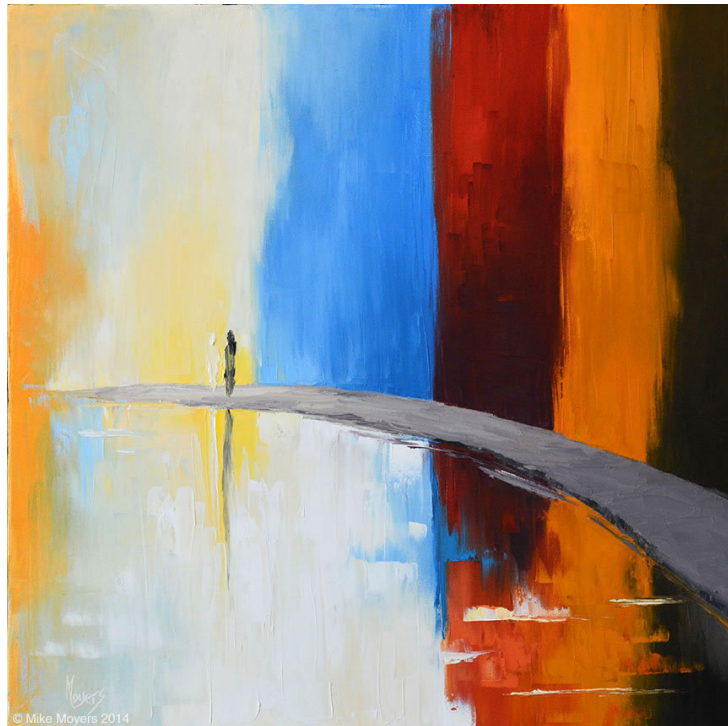
Later that evening, walking through the churchyard with the low full moon pendulous in the night sky, I can't help reflecting how Jesus' divine healing love was with me in that MRI scanner just as surely as the moon's bright gaze was shining upon us all from the heavens. Sometimes we are touched by the divine in mysterious yet very real ways; part of our walk of faith is to be open to the experience of such love breaking through. Reading Mark's Gospel account for this Sunday, I imagine the woman who touched Jesus' robe and Jairus the Synagogue elder felt a similar inexplicable sense of God's healing power at work in their lives.



'Touching Jesus' – Source: Pinterest

Have you ever wondered what kind of people Jesus associated with? Have you ever questioned what sorts of people He considered important enough to touch? The answer seems clear in the stories we read in Chapter 5 as we come to meet some of the people Jesus met in His ministry. The reality is they were just like you and me! Some reached out to Him - though He reached out to them all. Regardless of how great or unknown, rich or poor, young or old, sinner or saint, Jesus cares equally for all of us. No person is beyond His loving care!

In these two stories, Jesus comes into contact with a woman who is outcast from society by her medical condition because many people around her feared her symptoms out of ignorance. This story describes a woman who fought her way, desperately, through the crowd to reach Jesus. As soon as she touched Him she was healed. She knew that by touching Jesus, she risked making Him unclean in Jewish law, yet such was her desire to be healed by Him that she risked everything to touch the hem of His robe. Sometimes we feel that our problems will keep us from Jesus, but this woman helps us to understand that Jesus is always here to help us, no matter how impossible or insurmountable our problems seem to us.



'Master, Let Me Walk with Thee' by Mike Moyers

In the case of Jairus, we hear a different version of the same message. Jairus' crisis over his daughter, quite understandably caused him to feel bereft and out of control - lost, confused, afraid and without hope. Look at how Mark describes the way the mourners around Jairus laughed at Jesus when he said *'The child is not dead, she is just asleep.'* Jairus' precious daughter *was indeed* dead, but Jesus used the image of sleep to indicate that her condition was temporary and that, through His divine healing love, she would be restored. For us, we need to know that this restoration might be in a person's healing here on earth or in being healed through the joy of eternal salvation.

Jesus' words in the midst of this crisis speak to us as well: *'Don't be afraid - have faith!'* In Jesus, there is both hope and promise. We understand from Mark's insightful telling of the experience of Jairus and his daughter, that, when we feel hopeless and afraid, we must look at our problem from Jesus' point of view – we must not be afraid, just have faith!



'The Raising of Jairus' Daughter' by Henry Thomson

There are many times in my own ministry where I am witness to God at work among us. Sometimes He uses me as His hands and heart and voice. Equally, I often see His healing love at work in and through others as they are driven by the touch of the divine. In our world today, many people have a vague understanding of Jesus. Some think He was a good bloke, others a role model of a caring soul we should emulate. Yet, this passing acquaintance of Jesus changes nothing fundamental in their lives. What these stories from Mark's Gospel tell us is it is when we are touched by faith that our hearts are opened up to receiving Christ's healing power and our lives change forever. Often we experience these shifts in the depths of tragedy, despair and disaster – at those times when our own sense of self-reliance and autonomy deserts us and we become desperate. In these times, perhaps we allow ourselves to stand before the divine naked to the myriad defences we ordinarily employ to convince ourselves we don't need God's help.

Here are two people, just like you and me, showing us we *do* need to reach out to Jesus in faith. They are witnesses to the power of His divine healing in their lives and prove to us that, like me in the MRI scanner, when we allow His love to touch us, we can face our deepest fears and know His peace. We are even equipped to reach out to others as conduits of Jesus' healing power and have the capacity to express God's compassion for those around us who are suffering. Our actions will be gracious, forgiving, and ever hopeful in the eternal riches of His healing love.

Yours, reaching out to Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice

Top Tips from Austen Hooker



Pelargonium 'Crimson Crampel' – developed by Austen's Father

Many of you will know dear Austen Hooker, one of the best respected plantsmen of his time. Now beginning a new adventure in Flowerdown Nursing Home, Austen has agreed to give us the benefit of his many years of wisdom with a few well-timed gardening tips.

During June, we must remember to feed our plants. But Austen's advice is 'Little and often!' He recalls how his Dad told him 'You wouldn't give a child a big meal and then starve them the rest of the week.' So it is with plants. Feed them regularly and watch them flourish!

Collect Prayer for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever,
Amen.



Mark 5: 21-43 - Jesus Heals in Response to Faith

Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, pleading fervently with him. 'My little daughter is dying,' he said. 'Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live.'

Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had got no better. In fact, she had got worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. For she thought to herself, 'If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.' Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.

Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my robe?' His disciples said to him, 'Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?' But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. And he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.'

While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, 'Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now.' But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, 'Don't be afraid. Just have faith.' Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James). When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing. He went inside and asked, 'Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's only asleep.'

The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying. Holding her hand, he said to her, 'Talitha kum,' which means 'Little girl, get up!' And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed. Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone what had happened, and then he told them to give her something to eat.

Service Schedule

This schedule is correct at this time but may be subject to future alterations – please check on our website for the most up-to-date information.

All services start at 10am, with the exception of Café Church, which starts at 4pm.

Until we hear further from the Government and the Church of England, please could you continue to book to attend services by contacting the Benefice Office on 01962 880 845 or office@downsbenefice.org.uk

Please would you also continue to wear masks until we are advised otherwise.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>27th June</i>		Holy Communion			
<i>4th July</i>	Morning Prayer			Morning Prayer	
<i>11th July</i>		Morning Prayer			Holy Communion
<i>14th July (Wed)</i>			Holy Communion		
<i>18th July</i>				Holy Communion	Morning Prayer
<i>25th July</i>	Morning Prayer		Holy Communion		
<i>1st August</i>		Morning Prayer	Café Church		Holy Communion
<i>8th August</i>	Morning Prayer			Morning Prayer	
<i>15th August</i>		Holy Communion	Morning Prayer		
<i>22nd August</i>	Holy Communion			Morning Prayer	
<i>29th August</i>			Holy Communion		Morning Prayer