

**Sixth Sunday after Trinity
Sea Sunday, 11th July 2021**



Dear Friends in Christ,

‘Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.’
(Psalm 85: 7)

The Diocese of Winchester continues to traverse testing times. Our diocesan bishop has not conceded, and over the next two months is seeking additional facilitated meetings with diocesan and National Church of England officials. We do not know the focus of these meetings. And the Archbishop of Canterbury remains on sabbatical leave. So, we are treading water for a few months more. You couldn't make it up!

Nonetheless, when we read the set text from Mark's gospel this weekend, we are jolted into an understanding that, however difficult our own circumstances, the reality which others face puts our own travails into the shade. This Sunday, churches across the world commemorate Sea Sunday. We focus on the unique nature of our oceans as vast living worlds and the many unknown domains that surround us. We reflect on our neglect of the sea – on how we are diminishing our oceans by over-fishing, polluting with massive waste emissions and killing our coral reefs with global warming. We celebrate the seas – the precious waters of life that make our planet unique. And we give thanks for all Seafarers, for their families and for all those whose livelihoods depend upon the sea: on naval personnel and all those guarding our nations on the sea; on merchant sailors and fishermen, who bring us rich commercial and maritime resources; and on the communities who contribute to the fishing industry, boat-building, and provide us with coastal leisure. We thank them all for the hardships they face and the sacrifices they have been forced to endure, especially during the Coronavirus pandemic.



Cargo Ship Rescue in Hong Kong Waters during Storm Pakhar – Source: mfame.guru

According to statistics, 90 per cent of everything we buy comes by sea. Have a look in your kitchen cupboards and read the labels on the tins and packets you find there. Think about the journey your goods have taken to get to you. It's almost certainly thanks to the world's 1.5m seafarers, who face incredibly tough conditions in their daily life as they work to put food on our tables, petrol in our cars and clothes on our backs.

Around 1.5 million people work as seafarers across the globe and, in normal, non COVID conditions, hundreds of thousands of them pass through the major ports of our country every year. In their work, many of them regularly face the pain of prolonged separation from family and friends, the discomfort of freezing temperatures and enclosed surrounding, the possibility of pirate attack - and all this alongside the dangers of the sea itself. I often listen to the shipping forecast as I climb into bed at night, wondering how the weather conditions might be playing out in real time on rough or icy seas. It rarely sounds calm out on the waters around our island, and my prayers are often with the sailors and their families as I lie in the comfort of my warm bed.



Source – Bing.com

It is not unusual for seafarers to be away from home for up to nine long months at sea. During the current pandemic, many have needed to remain at sea far longer, often coping with symptoms of COVID. In the eyes of the children and spouses they have left at home they are often seen with warm admiration as heroes of the sea, as they send home much needed monies for their families to survive. The rest of us, however, benefit more from their sacrificial service - and from the sacrifices of their families - than we often realise. As we began to see at the beginning of the global pandemic, seafarers connect producers and consumers in globalised markets that would quickly seize up without them. They ship life-saving drugs and medical equipment such as PPE around the world, keeping our hospitals and health services going. They also take us across oceans for work, holidays and family visits, linking people across national borders.

Sea Sunday gives us a wonderful opportunity to remember and give thanks to God for the work of seafarers and to pray for 'those in peril on the sea'. Since 1856, the Mission to Seafarers has faithfully served the men and women of the merchant fleet who have dedicated their lives to seafaring; crews who have, in turn, served their countries during war and through peacetime.



P2000 Archer Class Patrol Vessel HMS Raider in Solent – Source: Bing.com

In 1856, moved by the needs and struggles of the seafarers toiling in the Bristol Channel, The Reverend John Ashley set up a ministry to seafarers, which lay the foundations of today's Mission. A seafarer's life is often dangerous and lonely. But it doesn't have to be friendless and without hope. Mission centres, such as the one in Southampton, provide a 'home away from home' where seafarers can have a little respite on land to relax and use internet and phone facilities to contact their loved ones, while its ship-visitors provide on-board practical and emotional support to crews.

Charities such as this shine out the Christian message of loving others. Jesus is the earthly embodiment of God's unfailing love and is the source of our salvation. As the many Christian seafarers will attest, to praise and glorify God, and to live in the truthful knowledge of the overriding purposes of God will not necessarily make our lives easy. John the Baptist is a prime example of this. We know his purpose was to herald the coming of Christ in the world, yet we also know this role didn't bring him fame, fortune or friends. Quite the contrary, it cost him his life. As followers of Christ, the crucified and risen Lord, perhaps we should not be surprised by that. This Sea Sunday may we re-think our response to His sacrificial love in relation to merchant seafarers and Royal Navy warfare forces who suffer incredible hardships for us to live our comfortable lives.



Please consider making a donation to Mission to Seafarers or to RNRMC (Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity) which support sailors, marines, and their families for life. May we be a source of flourishing in the lives of seafarers, just as they are ours.

Yours, in the unfailing love of Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice



A Prayer for Sea Sunday

Lord God, Creator of land and sea,
bless those who work at sea.
Be with them in fair weather and foul,
in danger or distress.
Strengthen them when weary,
lift them up when down
and comfort them when far from their loved ones.
In this life, bring them safely to shore
and, in the life to come, welcome them to your kingdom.
For Jesus Christ's sake.
Amen.

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>
11 th July		Morning Prayer			Holy Communion
14 th July (Wed)			Holy Communion		
18 th July				Holy Communion	Morning Prayer
25 th July	Morning Prayer		Holy Communion		
1 st August		Morning Prayer	Café Church		Holy Communion
8 th August	Morning Prayer			Matins	
15 th August		Holy Communion	Morning Prayer		
22 nd August	Holy Communion			Morning Prayer	
29 th August			Holy Communion		Morning Prayer
5 th Sept	Harvest Festival		Café Church		Morning Prayer
12 th Sept		Morning Prayer		Holy Communion	
15 th Sept (Wed)			Holy Communion		
19 th Sept	Holy Communion		Morning Prayer	Pet Service	
26 th Sept		Harvest Service			Harvest Festival

Top Tips from Austen Hooker



Source – Bing.com

I am sure you will all be pleased to learn that Austen seems to have come through a rather difficult couple of weeks, during which his health gave us all serious cause for concern. Nonetheless, he was still able to pass onto us some of his gardening wisdom. This week, Austen's thoughts have turned to something serious gardeners rarely do – sit in their garden and enjoy it!

As a small lad, Austen recalls his father walking him up to an ice-cream van which used to be stationed in a lay-by at Three Maids Hill on the outskirts of Littleton and Winchester. After a hard week of gardening, this was a well-earned treat indeed. Hopefully the weather looks set to improve in the coming days, so here's to your being able to enjoy the fruits of your gardening labours!



Collect Prayer for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as
pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we,
loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
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.

Mark 6:14 - 29 - The Death of John the Baptist

Herod Antipas, the king, soon heard about Jesus, because everyone was talking about him. Some were saying, 'This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead. That is why he can do such miracles.' Others said, 'He's the prophet Elijah.' Still others said, 'He's a prophet like the other great prophets of the past. When Herod heard about Jesus, he said, 'John, the man I beheaded, has come back from the dead.' For Herod had sent soldiers to arrest and imprison John as a favour to Herodias. She had been his brother, Philip's wife, but Herod had married her. John had been telling Herod, 'It is against God's law for you to marry your brother's wife.' So Herodias bore a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But without Herod's approval she was powerless, for Herod respected John; and knowing that he was a good and holy man, he protected him. Herod was greatly disturbed whenever he talked with John, but even so, he liked to listen to him.

Herodias's chance finally came on Herod's birthday. He gave a party for his high government officials, army officers, and the leading citizens of Galilee. Then his daughter, also named Herodias, came in and performed a dance that greatly pleased Herod and his guests.' He even vowed, 'I will give you whatever you ask, up to half my kingdom!' She went out and asked her mother, 'What should I ask for?' Her mother told her, 'Ask for the head of John the Baptist!' So the girl hurried back to the king and told him, 'I want the head of John the Baptist, right now, on a tray!' Then the king deeply regretted what he had said; but because of the vows he had made in front of his guests, he couldn't refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner to the prison to cut off John's head and bring it to him. The soldier beheaded John in the prison, brought his head on a tray, and gave it to the girl, who took it to her mother. When John's disciples heard what had happened, they came to get his body and buried it in a tomb.