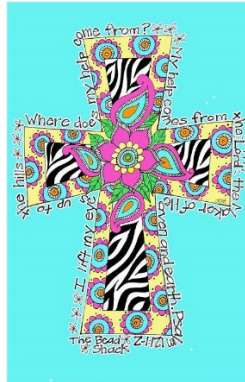


***Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 12th September 2021***



Dear Friends in Christ,

'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. My help cometh from the Lord'
(Psalm 121: 1)

I have been on Annual Leave for most of this past week, celebrating our son, William's 30th birthday down in a delightfully remote, rural corner of Dorset near Lyme Regis. We have been remembering how, 20 years ago, our family had been away on a holiday with my parents in the north of Majorca, at the picturesque fishing port of Pollensa.

Returning to the hotel foyer after a family walk, we were confronted by the first images from the United States of the horrifying attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York; on the Pentagon building in Arlington County, Virginia; and a fourth flight which was the only aircraft not to hit its intended target in Washington DC, instead crashing in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Thinking these images to be an horrific and deeply inappropriate film being screened in view of children, it was the complete silence of all those gathered in front of that hotel television which made me realise this was news footage; that these terrible events were actually happening in our world.



Source: NPS Centre for Homeland Defence and Security

Wikipedia cites some dreadful statistics: The attacks resulted in 2,977 fatalities, over 25,000 injuries, and substantial long-term health consequences. It remains the deadliest terrorist attack in human history and the single deadliest incident for firefighters and law enforcement officers in the history of the United States, with 340 and 72 killed, respectively.

It felt to my family, as I am sure it felt to many of you as the awful day came to a close, that all we could do was lift our hearts to God in prayer – for all those who had perished, for all those who were injured; for those still searching for signs of life, and for those whose lives were plunged into the depths of grief and diminishing hope as the world watched helplessly on.



'Footprints on the grey-covered ground' – Source: Guardian.com

As we come to the 20th anniversary of what is now known as 9/11, the loud presence of extremist violence continues to ravage this good earth. Many who feel consumed by fear and anxiety have perhaps lost sight of the far greater presence of good which gently persists, and which sometimes equally noisily roars out its capacity to love, to search, to defend and to generate change. Jesus embodies this love, and through Him we too have the capacity to love in this world and to live for eternity. Through Jesus' love, we are encouraged to bear the trials of our life, however catastrophic and chaotic, and to resolve to be part of the healing action of courage, of unity, of faith and hope in the enduring promise of love.

Even in the midst of the horror of Ground Zero, there God was: the Holy Spirit of love active in the world saving and supporting, holding and healing, climbing over rubble almost invisible in the thick clouds of ash - footprints the only clue to the eternal presence love which had walked there moments before, armed with truth and protected with grace.



People helping each other to safety on 9/11 – campneaal.blogspot.com

Beyond this time, we have known 20 years of peace in our world thanks to the protective action of peace-keeping forces; risking and giving their precious lives in the action of self-sacrificing love, communities have been taught to flourish in an understanding of what love is capable of, and our prayer now is for these lessons to continue to be learned and lived in the fragile regions of our world.

St Paul underscores the capacity of love to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things. The people of Corinth had lost sight of living as a community rooted in God's love. Paul directs them back to Jesus, whose suffering presence taught human-kind to trust in His risen life. His prophetic words which echo an understanding of what our world would look like if we choose to ignore what it means to love are regularly sought for funerals, baptisms and weddings as we embrace the most important God-given virtues upon which our lives must be lived.

For each of us today, whether bereaved and bereft, or on the threshold of a new life sacramentally blessed by God's love, Paul points us to a time when God's love which we now glimpse dimly, will one day be revealed to us in all its glory. Then will we be glad we have followed Paul's lead and that of the Psalmist, keeping our eyes and hearts firmly fixed on the Lord whose foot will not stumble or fall as He protects us. In Mark's Gospel this week, translated for our modern times, Jesus says that however tough our experiences in this world, 'Do not run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how.' Amen to that.

Yours, trusting in the love of Christ,

Jax

Rector, The Downs Benefice

Schedule of Services

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, unless marked differently on the table below

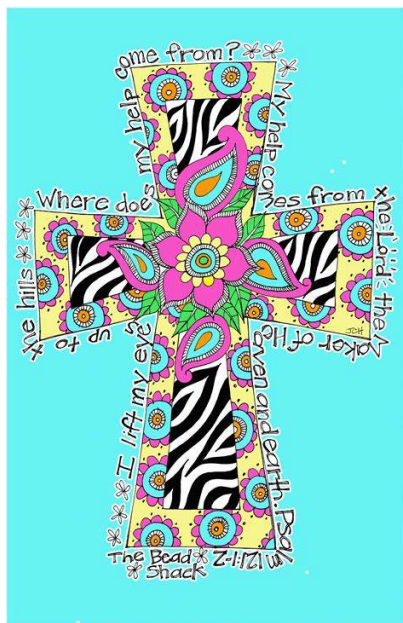
Please could you continue to book to attend services by contacting the Benefice Office on 01962 880 845 or office@downsbenefice.org.uk

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>12th Sept</i>		Morning Prayer		Holy Communion	
<i>15th Sept (Wed)</i>			Holy Communion		
<i>19th Sept</i>	Holy Communion		Morning Prayer	Pet Service on the Green, Woodman Close	
<i>26th Sept</i>		Harvest Service			Harvest Festival
<i>3rd Oct</i>	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	4pm - Café Church		
<i>10th Oct</i>			Holy Communion		Morning Prayer
<i>17th Oct</i>	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	6pm - Peace & Wholeness	8am - Holy Communion	
<i>24th Oct</i>			Morning Prayer	Harvest Festival	8am - Holy Communion <i>PLUS</i> 6pm - Autumn Meditations
<i>27th Oct (Wed)</i>			Holy Communion		
<i>31st Oct</i>	<i>With Wh</i>	All Souls Service		6pm – All Souls Service	3pm – All Souls Service

Collect Prayer for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:
grant that your people may be fervent
in the fellowship of the gospel
that, always abiding in you,
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;
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.



Psalm 121

1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
2 My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.
3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
5 The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
7 The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.
8 The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and
even for evermore.



Mark 8: 27-38 - The Message Translation

Jesus and his disciples headed out for the villages around Caesarea Philippi. As they walked, he asked, 'Who do the people say I am?' 'Some say John the Baptizer,' they said. 'Others say Elijah.' Still others say 'one of the prophets.' He then asked, "And you—what are you saying about me? Who am I?" Peter gave the answer: 'You are the Christ, the Messiah.'

Jesus warned them to keep it quiet, not to breathe a word of it to anyone. He then began explaining things to them: 'It is necessary that the Son of Man proceed to an ordeal of suffering, be tried and found guilty by the elders, high priests, and religion scholars, be killed, and after three days rise up alive.' He said this simply and clearly so they couldn't miss it.

But Peter grabbed him in protest. Turning and seeing his disciples wavering, wondering what to believe, Jesus confronted Peter. 'Peter, get out of my way! Satan, get lost! You have no idea how God works.'

Calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, 'Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to saving yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? What could you ever trade your soul for?

'If any of you are embarrassed over me and the way I'm leading you when you get around your fickle and unfocused friends, know that you'll be an even greater embarrassment to the Son of Man when he arrives in all the splendour of God, his Father, with an army of the holy angels.'