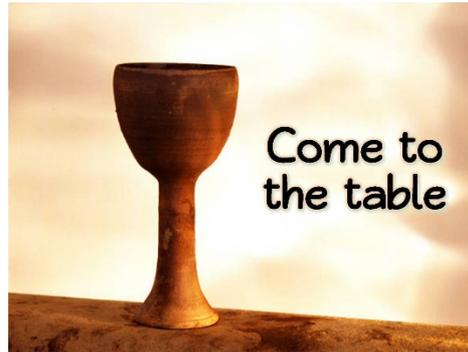


**Eleventh Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 28th August 2022**



Dear Friends in Christ,

'When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. (Luke 14: 13-14)

This past week, our nation has been haunted by the traumatic death in Liverpool of nine year old Olivia Pratt-Korbel. Shot at close range in her own home, this beautiful little girl should have been enjoying her summer holidays from school. Instead, we gather she was accidentally shot by a convicted drug dealer. Goodness only knows the full story. Our prayers are with her grieving family and friends.



Olivia Pratt-Korbel – Source: BBC

Though we cannot judge the particular circumstances of this dreadful event, we can as a society, reflect upon the tragic consequences of the drugs culture: both for those directly involved in the selling and using of illegal drugs, and for those innocents quite literally caught up in the cross-fire; here in leafy Hampshire just as much as anywhere else in our country and across the globe.

The illegal drugs culture exists in our world as a direct result of an individual's desire to seek pleasure, to explore bodily 'highs' or to inure themselves from the difficulties of their lives. The drugs industry meets this demand – exploiting the vulnerable and weak, preying upon the innocent. In our work culture and recreationally, people are feeling desperate to succeed and be seen to be successful. Alcohol and drugs have become a relatively easy way for individuals to soothe away their anxieties and stresses. In May of this year, Home Office Minister, Ben Wallace, described the UK as Europe's biggest consumer of cocaine, a trend which is fuelling growing levels of violence and anti-social behaviour.' (Source - eurofins.co.uk).



'Christ Teaches Humility' by Robert Scott Lauder

Psalm 112 tells us that *'the longings of the wicked will come to nothing'* and that the righteous will have no fear, for *'in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.'* Both the Psalmist and our Gospel reading this weekend show us that if we live God's way, rather than via the broken and self-seeking ways of the world, both individually and as a community, we will be greatly blessed.

Our scripture reading from Luke's Gospel this week reassures us – telling us we can be set free from the need to conform to the culture of power and esteem in our world. Luke's description of ancient meal practices and social behaviour isn't much different to today's experience. People are still trying to outdo each other socially – showing off with what they have, and demanding treatment by others commensurate with their status, with their expectations and sense of entitlement.

Jesus, however, drives home a deeper meaning. He shows the disciples, and by extension, us, how practicing humility will reap rewards for believers in the kingdom of God. Earthly standards of power and discrimination against the weak and vulnerable will be overturned. Those deemed as outcasts in today's world will be welcomed as equals in heaven. God asks us to live humble, faithful lives, respectful of people around us, encouraging the best in each other rather than causing anyone to feel inadequate or desperate to aspire to impossibly exclusive and selfish social positions.



'The Best Supper' by Jan L Richardson

Jesus tells us that righteousness before God is what we should aspire to, not social status. God looks to see how we practice generosity and inclusivity and not on the glittering status of our dinner party guest lists. For Jesus, meals are a time of celebration and inclusive fellowship – with family and friends and with strangers alike. The Last Supper points us all to the banquet in heaven He promises all who follow Him. Perhaps we should brush up our table manners!

Yours, feasting on Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice

Psalm 112

- ¹ Blessed are those who fear the LORD,
who find great delight in his commands.
- ² Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
- ³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.
- ⁴ Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.
- ⁵ Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.
- ⁶ Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.
- ⁷ They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
- ⁸ Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.
- ⁹ They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn^[c] will be lifted high in honour.
- ¹⁰ The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.



Luke 14: 1; 7-14 - Jesus at a Pharisee's House

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.

When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: 'When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honoured in the presence of all

the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Then Jesus said to his host, ‘When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’

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
28 th August			Morning Worship	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
4 th September	Morning worship	Holy Communion	Show Service in the Littleton & Harestock Show Marquee		
11 th September			Holy Communion		Patronal Festival Morning Worship
18 th September	Holy Communion	Harvest Festival	6pm - Peace & Wholeness Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	
	12 Noon – Airborne Forces Remembrance Service at Stonefield Park				
25 th September			Harvest Festival	Pet Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
28 th September			Mid-week Holy Communion		