

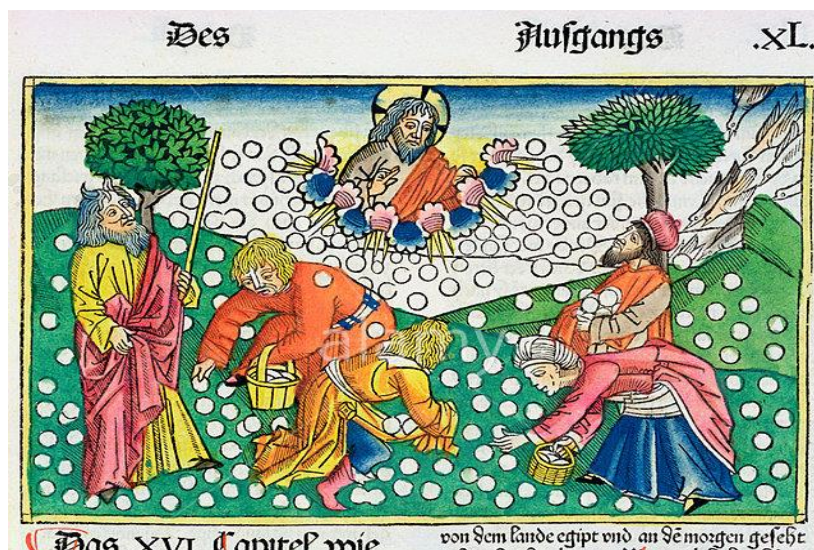
Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 13th September 2020



Dear Friends,

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.'
(John 14: 1)

This past week I have been the recipient of abundant kindnesses, finding a wonderful supply of home-grown fresh figs on my doorstep. This comes with my grateful thanks to all concerned, especially to one or two anonymous benefactors whom I have not yet been able to track down to thank personally! Our gracious Lord certainly works in rare and mysterious ways, as these figs have sustained me through a particularly fraught week in which I have had no time to even think about food, let alone visit a supermarket. It has been such a gift to have had the blessing of these delicious figs. Their unexpected arrivals across the week serve to remind me of God's grace in providing for us. A timely opportunity for us to focus on our need to trust God who will provide 'supplying every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.' (Phil. 4:19)



'God provides quail and Manna to the Israelites.' Alamy

I am grateful to Charlotte Nash, who has also blessed me, not with figs per se, but with the fruit of her wise and thoughtful reflections on our need to trust God. She has given me permission to share her thoughts with you here, thereby revealing yet again, God's abundant care – blessing us all with the riches of Charlotte's spirituality, and, personally, blessing me with material for this newsletter in His perfect timing!

You will all have heard the news that, as of Monday, Government social distancing regulations have been revised in line with an increase in the number of Coronavirus cases in some areas of the country. We may not meet in numbers greater than six. However, happily, this regulation does not apply to worship services. We are still able to gather in church, in the bubbles you have become used to seeing since the beginning of July. You will still need to book your seats for services in advance, by calling or emailing Caroline McAulay in our Benefice Office. Please see the grid at the foot of this newsletter for details of services and contact numbers.



'Cross on Blue' by LivsGlad

Our prayers are with the children who have been so badly hurt in the bus accident at the railway bridge on Wellhouse Lane on Thursday of this week.

As they and their families comprehend the enormity of their injuries, let us place them all in the healing arms of Christ, and entrust their lives to Him.

Yours, in the riches of Christ,

Jax

Rector, The Downs Benefice

'Trust in God, Trust also in me' (John 14:1)



Yummy Mummy Club

A couple of weeks ago our grandson visited us with his mother. He is three years old and is beginning to explore his independence, but every so often he looks at his mother as if to say, can I do this, is it ok? He looks up into her eyes and sees the expression on her face. He trusts her unquestioningly.

As God's children, our heavenly Father loves us and promises to look after us. Yet we are faced by many challenges and understandably we may be feeling anxious and worried at this time. Trust may not come easily for us. As we listen to the news about world events, the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit, we may well be asking ourselves, what do autumn and winter hold for us? What will our world look like in a few months' time? In these difficult days we have the sense we must trust God.

I'm always fascinated by the story of Abraham, one of the great Patriarchs of the Old Testament, a man who trusted God implicitly. His story began when, as Abram, God told him to leave his country and his family and go to a land God would show him (*Genesis 12*). It was a huge request and Abram was already seventy-five years old when he left his homeland. But the call from God came with a promise that God would bless Abram and he would become the Father of a great nation and through him all people would be blessed. Yet Abram had no children and without an heir this promise could not be fulfilled. God tested Abram as he waited for a child and when he was 100 years old his son Isaac was born, the long awaited child on whom rested the hopes and expectations of the promised nation.



'Abraham' courtesy of YouTube

Pastor John Greenow, lead Pastor of Xcel Church, from Newton Aycliffe, observes that at the beginning of this story Abram was asked to trust God by letting go of his past. Later in his life he was asked to trust God by letting go of his future as once more God tested him when he told him to go to the mountain and sacrifice his son. (*Genesis 22*) We can only begin to imagine his anguish as he heard those words, yet he was faithful and obedient to God.



'The Messianic Prophecy Bible Project'

We read this story with hindsight knowing that at the last moment God intervened. But Abraham went up the mountain in obedience, trusting God, not knowing what the end result would look like. Did he believe that God would provide an alternative sacrifice?



'In the Shadow of the Lamb: Jesus in Genesis 22' Apple Eye Ministries

'When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

The angel of the Lord called out to Abraham from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not held from me your son, your only son." (Genesis 22:9-12)

God was faithful and he provided a ram for the sacrifice in place of Isaac.

God tested Abraham. We too find ourselves facing times of testing. As we go through this time of Covid-19, it's a bit like climbing a mountain, taking a few steps forward, then sliding back, dodging the obstacles we encounter on the way, lockdown, social distancing, face coverings. We can do all these things and we can trust our heavenly Father, for God is always with us. Even when we cannot see him, He is working on the other side of the mountain. When we trust him, he is working to provide for us.



New Apostolic Church Canada

The Psalmist praises God for his greatness and his wonderful works. He spends time meditating on God's goodness. In these testing times, we can be encouraged by reflecting on God's faithfulness through stories of ordinary people in the Bible and also in our own lives and how God provides for us.

In this fragile world in which we live, Jesus says, 'Trust in God, Trust also in me.' (*John 14:1*) God is working, He is with us and he is for us, and He lives within us through His Holy Spirit.

A Prayer of Hope

This was found scrawled on a cellar wall in Cologne concentration camp, Germany in 1943. It is believed to have been written by a child.

I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining
And I believe in love, even when there's no one there.
And I believe in God, even when he is silent.
I believe through any trial, there is always a way
But sometimes in this suffering and hopeless despair
My heart cries for shelter, to know someone's there
But a voice rises within me, saying
"Hold on my child, I'll give you strength,
I'll give you hope. Just stay a little while."

In faith and hope,

Charlotte

Charlotte Nash, LLM, The Downs Benefice

Genesis 12:1-4 - The Call of Abraham

The LORD had said to Abraham, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.'

So Abraham went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.

Psalms 145:1-13 - A Psalm of Praise.

I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.

Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.
One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.
They speak of the glorious splendour of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.
All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you.
They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,
so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does.

Collect Prayer – Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth;
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.



'God and the Angels visit Abraham' by Arent de Gelder

John 14: 1-6; 27 – Trust in Jesus

Jesus said to His disciples, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus answered, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'

Schedule of Services for September and October 2020

Remember that our churches are open for individual prayer and for Sunday services - please see our website for more details at: <http://downsbefice.org/>

All seats at our services need to be booked in advance. Please see the table below and book your seats by either calling or emailing the **Benefice Office** on **(01962) 880845** or office@downsbefice.org.uk

| | Chilbolton | Crawley | Littleton | Sparsholt | Wherwell |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 13 th Sept | | 10am - Holy Communion | | 10am - Matins | 10am - Morning Prayer |
| 16 th Sept (W) | | | 9.30am - Mid Week Holy Communion | | |
| 20 th Sept | 10am - Morning Prayer | | | 10am - Holy Communion | |
| 27 th Sept | | 10am - Harvest | 10am - Holy Communion | | 10am - Holy Communion + Harvest |
| 4 th Oct | 10am - Harvest | | | 10am - Holy Communion | |
| 7 th Oct (W) | | | 9.30am - Mid Week Holy Communion | | |
| 11 th Oct | | 8am - Holy Communion | 10am - Harvest | 10am - Matins | 4pm - Evening Prayer |
| 18 th Oct | 4pm - Evening Prayer | | 10am - Communion | | |
| 25 th Oct | 10am - Holy Communion | 10am - 4 th Sunday Worship | | | |