

**Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 5th September 2021**



Dear Friends in Christ,

‘They were completely amazed and said again and again, ‘Everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak.’ (Mark 7: 37)

About a month ago now, I managed to break the big toe of my right foot. It was a neat trick as I was standing still in my kitchen at the time! Pausing to open the fridge door, an over-stacked bottle of Corona beer fell from the top shelf and ... bam! Proving, much to my children’s delight, that Corona is indeed bad for us!! Over the weeks, I’ve felt a sense of personal achievement as my throbbing digit has progressed from flip-flops to trainers and on Sunday to proper grown-up shoes.

However, I write this as 43 year old Paralympian, Sarah Storey, upstages my feeble efforts by winning her record-breaking 17th Gold medal on Friday in Tokyo, winning the women's C4-5 road race.



Source: BBC Sport

Even more remarkable than Sarah’s superhuman achievements, I am humbled by the people of Haiti, of Louisiana and of New York, as they struggle to respond to the devastating impact of climate change claiming countless lives in these last days. Closer to home, there are families suffering the illness and death of loved ones: all of whom are living out the very deepest of what it means to live and to love. What is a broken toe by comparison?

In today's Gospel reading, we find Jesus responding to the needs of suffering people on the margins of society as he makes his way throughout the region of Phoenicia. He cures deafness and mental health problems in this text, yet His reach goes much farther. Jesus is responding to the needs of the poor, the marginalised and those considered to be beyond hope, whatever their creed or colour. He asks us to have His vision to do likewise.



Source: Hermano Leon Clipart

Our text begins with the story of a Gentile woman whose eyes and heart have been opened to Jesus as the son of God. The separation of faith from what we accept as being right or wrong in our own lifetime's experience of immoral and weak values on behalf of the other has led many people to live as if God does not exist. People of faith, like the mother of the little girl in this Gospel story, are caught in a culture that increasingly refuses to see much value in those who live their lives in faithfulness before God. Ostensibly, we are caught in a time and place of secular values in which we're losing our voice. Many of our neighbours have forgotten their faith stories. They no longer sing sacred songs; they've become deaf to their heritage and are living their lives in and through the superficial values of materialism and consumption.

Olympians such as Sarah Storey are modern-day models to us of unswerving faith. They show us the merits of striving for Gold and praying thanks to God as she rejoiced in her success. In saying 'Ephphatha' to open the ears of the deaf man, Jesus shows us how His healing power is personal to each of us, in each of the unique situations we face in our lives. Jesus shows us in this parabolic narrative how those who strive to hear Him, even though bodily deaf or psychologically traumatised, will be restored, not just in this fragile life, but for the peace of eternity into which Jesus came as our guide.

Yours, heard by Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin,

Rector, The Downs Benefice

Collect Prayer for the 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.



Mark 7:24-37 - The Faith of a Gentile Woman

Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre. He didn't want anyone to know which house he was staying in, but he couldn't keep it a secret. Right away a woman who had heard about him came and fell at his feet. Her little girl was possessed by an evil spirit, and she begged him to cast out the demon from her daughter.

Since she was a Gentile, born in Syrian Phoenicia, Jesus told her, 'First I should feed the children - my own family, the Jews. It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.' She replied, 'That's true, Lord, but even the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the scraps from the children's plates.'

'Good answer!' he said. 'Now go home, for the demon has left your daughter.' And when she arrived home, she found her little girl lying quietly in bed, and the demon was gone.

Jesus left Tyre and went up to Sidon before going back to the Sea of Galilee and the region of the Ten Towns. A deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to him, and the people begged Jesus to lay his hands on the man to heal him. Jesus led him away from the crowd so they could be alone. He put his fingers into the man's ears. Then, spitting on his own fingers, he touched the man's tongue. Looking up to heaven, he sighed and said, 'Ephphatha,' which means, 'Be opened!' Instantly the man could hear perfectly, and his tongue was freed so he could speak plainly!

Jesus told the crowd not to tell anyone, but the more he told them not to, the more they spread the news. They were completely amazed and said again and again, 'Everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak.'

Community First – Donating to help Afghan Evacuees

Community First is working with Hampshire County Council and other partners to coordinate the collection and distribution of donated items to support those being offered temporary accommodation in Hampshire.

For what to include, and other needs, see: <https://www.cfirst.org.uk/donating-to-help-afghan-evacuees/>.

Community First Shopmobility Winchester is the donation collection point in the Winchester area. They are open for drop off **Monday – Friday, 11am – 3pm** at the Upper Parking Level, the Brooks Shopping Centre.

Alternatively, Unit 12 are collecting donations at Winnall Valley Rd, Winchester, SO23 0LD, Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm. There is parking outside the unit.

What is most needed are donations of new underwear, all sizes, children, teenagers, men and women.

There will be an underwear collection box in the church porch in Littleton for a couple of weeks.

Top Tips from Austen Hooker



Tropical Canna flourishing at Flowerdown!

This week, Austen has been reminiscing about a woman who came to his Nursery complaining how all the plants she had bought from him were dead. The conversation was prompted by my admiration for the beautiful Canna plants flowering outside the front door of Flowerdown Nursing Home, and my admission that I'd been so busy this past week I'd failed to water the plants which adorn my front doorstep. They are now in need of some serious remedial TLC!!

The complaining woman had been a regular customer of Austen's over the years, but on this occasion she told him the death of her plants was not her fault. 'I know all there is to know about gardening,' she rather haughtily advised. Austen, by reply, was the model of restraint. 'Madam,' he said, 'you are very fortunate. I don't think I know even a quarter of all there is to learn.' Austen's characteristically grace-full response, reflected a comment made by Sir Harold Hillier, who sagely suggested that we would need to live three lives over to know all there is to know about gardening, and still have room to learn more!

So, for those of you out there contemplating the sorts of horticultural disasters I regularly face, take heart. Even the best of gardeners are still on a learning curve with us. Austen's top tip for reducing our failures? 'You must love your plants and give them all the attention they deserve.' Mea culpa!

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, with the exception of Café Church, which starts at 4pm.

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>5th Sept</i>	Harvest Festival		Café Church		Morning Prayer
<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	
<i>26th Sept</i>		Harvest Service			Harvest Festival