



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 12th July

Collect

Almighty God, send down upon your Church the riches of your Spirit, and kindle in all who minister the gospel your countless gifts of grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

A MESSAGE FROM REV. KEN HOBBS

We are continuing to work towards a partial re opening of St Johns for worship on a Sunday morning. The service will be available simultaneously at home via Zoom as well. Further trials of our technology will continue. We hope therefore to start on Sunday August 2nd and we hope that some of you will feel able to join me in church for an informal service for all ages.

We are working on a risk assessment and set of protocols that will keep us safe and also restore some sort of fellowship after the service as well. More details to follow and in the meantime do continue to pray about the future and how we manage it.

God bless

Ken

Israel 2021

Thank you to those who registered an interest. We have been advised by McCabe Travel to postpone until March 2022. This is a sensible decision in these uncertain times.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Don't forget you can keep in touch by joining the WhatsApp group, visiting our website and following us on Facebook. All your contributions to these groups during this time provide great encouragement to us all. For details of the website and where to find us on Facebook, please see the bottom of this page. To join the WhatsApp group, you will need a smartphone and to have installed WhatsApp. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

KEEPING IN TOUCH AND PRAYERS

Please don't forget to call if you need some help during this time or if you would like to add something to the prayer board.

Jean Tutton 020 8393 3687

SUNDAY SERVICES

Don't forget you can join us live on Sunday at 10am using this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86852818063>

For those of you who do not have access to the internet you can now join our Sunday Worship by phone.

Dial this phone number: 0203 051 2874

You will be asked to enter the meeting ID followed by # (hash).

Key in: 868 5281 8063#

You will be asked for a personal ID, just press # again and you will be connected to the Service.

If you want help with this speak to John Simon (phone 0775 187 4807).

For security reasons we need to start using a "Waiting Room". This means that you may have to wait a short while for me to let you join the service".

John Simon

THURSDAY COFFEE MORNING

Each Thursday, St John's will be hosting a coffee morning via Zoom. Please join us at 10:30am using this link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83134817320>

The link will be the same each week.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

DAILY HOPE

There is a free phone line 0800 804 8044, for hymns, reflections and prayers, provided by Guildford diocese, especially for people without access to the internet. It is called Daily Hope.

Janis Forder

OPENING OF CHURCH

The Side Chapel is now open has been open for private prayer. We hope some of you have been able to use the Side Chapel. If you haven't already done so, please do pop in. We hope the Side Chapel will remain open but this will only be possible if we all adhere to the guidance below.

- Do not go into the main church area.
- Use the hand sanitiser on the wall when entering by the glass doors.
- Ensure no more than 6 people are in the chapel at any one time and observe the 1 metre social distancing rule at all times.
- Bibles and all papers have been removed to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
- Bring and use your own bibles if you wish.
- When leaving please use the provided wipes provided on the table at the entrance to clean anything you may have touched, including your seat and the door handles on the glass front doors.

Please do not enter the Parish Centre, this will remain closed for the foreseeable future.

Janis Forder and Ken Mussell

KEYS

We are missing a key for the Book of Remembrance cabinet. If you have used the key, can you please return it to the key cupboard in the vestry. Many thanks.

Janis Forder

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FOODBANK

I love it when the doorbell goes or if I hear the letterbox clatter during the day as it frequently means that there is a donation for the Foodbank. I've also heard that some people are collecting items from those who cannot leave their homes to take down to the Baptist Church, I gather that some meet there and then take a walk together - all great news. Perhaps this is also the place to tell you that one enterprising lady organised a collection from her whole street. Thank you all so much.

It was interesting to hear the reports from people who have needed a Foodbank's support as part of the One Show's focus this week. It really made me try to walk in another's shoes when I heard a lady say that she had taken her vouchers and walked past the door five times before she could actually go in to ask for help. The gentle support she received from the volunteer there went a long way to restoring her confidence in herself. As previously mentioned the Epsom and Ewell Foodbank has a very good stock of many of the basic items so, if possible, please would you be kind enough to donate only the items on this list.

URGENTLY REQUIRED: Biscuits, Shampoo, Toilet rolls and Pump soap.

LOW STOCK ITEMS: Female/male deodorant, Adult toothpaste, Adult toothbrushes in single packs, Shaving foam, Baby shampoo, Bars of soap, Hair conditioner, Sanitary towels - not tampons please. Cleaning products such as bleach, anti-bag sprays etc. Custard, Sugar in small bags please, Breakfast Cereal but not porridge please, Cooking sauces, Long life fruit juice, Tinned vegetables, Tinned rice pudding, Long life sponge puddings, Children's treats - chocolate etc, Powdered milk.

Polly Elder

Worship at Home

This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will be glad and rejoice in it.

Hymn All Hail the power of Jesus' name

Confession

O Lord our Heavenly Father, we confess that we have sinned against you and done many things to grieve you. We have often been selfish and unforgiving. We have forgotten to pray to you and we have not loved you as we should. For these and the other things we have done wrong we ask for your forgiveness and we pray that you will cleanse and renew us and strengthen us in the days ahead. Help us to walk in the light of your presence. Amen

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

1st Reading Genesis 2. 8-15 read by Lynda White

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Song from Sarah

2nd Reading Ecclesiastes 3. 1-14 read by Lynda White

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. I know that whatever God does endures for ever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him.

Hymn All Heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord

Reflection

Over these Sundays we are looking at Creation and the whole issue of how we approach Genesis and how we understand our origins under the general title "Lessons from the Dawn of Time." We are looking at the theme of "work" and we have seen that historically the church has not been good at relating faith

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and work. Our Sunday worship may bear little relationship to what goes on from Monday to Friday.

One person said **"the church appreciates my tithe but not the enterprise that gives rise to it!"**

Last week we looked at the Divine Example of the Trinity at Work. God Father, Son and Spirit are all workers. We worship a working God and we are working models made in the image of a working God. Today we are looking at the Divine Economy- the nature of work in Scripture recognising that God has invested work with worth

In my video reflection this week I commented on the purposes of work in Scripture. The status and value of work is assumed in Scripture from the very beginning Long before the Fall mankind is given the responsibility to be fruitful, multiply, increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it (literally rule) see Gen 1.28 He is told specifically in Gen 2.15 to "work the garden and take care of it" Work is not the result of the Fall it precedes it. And as I noted this week work is therefore intended for the fulfilment of the worker

The parables of Jesus are rooted literally in a working environment and many of them, 16 out of over 30, refer to money.

So what can we learn in general about the nature of work in Scripture?

Here are four key words

1. DIGNITY God has invested work with worth and we are working models. Work is mentioned over 650 times in the Bible- 4 times as many as the word "Salvation"!

2 DIVERSITY- look at the job list of Bible characters- here are just a few from Genesis 1-11. The actual Biblical list is much longer!

1. **ADAM-** manager, gardener and taxonomist
2. **EVE-** motherhood
3. **ABEL-** shepherd
4. **CAIN** farmer and city builder
5. **JABAL** (son of Lamech) -pastoralist ("father of those who live in tents and raise livestock")
6. **JUBAL-** musician ("father of those who play the harp and flute) Gen 4 21-22
7. **TUBAL CAIN-** technologist (tool maker in iron and bronze)
8. **NOAH** Boat builder and wine maker-

Genesis 1-11 also includes two major construction projects (a) The tower of Babel a huge Ziggurat (see David Rohl's extraordinary book " Legend" the Genesis of civilization" reconstructing ancient history and linguistics in Babylonia.) And (b) Noah's Ark

We could continue beyond our chapters and include Joseph, Moses and the rest. There is great mix of "sacred" and "secular" work – so from the earliest times there is no Biblical distinction between the sacred and the secular.

3. DILIGENCE

The Bible constantly encourages hard work and discourages laziness This sign appeared in a US Supermarket in, of all places, Springfield Illinois "Wanted a clerk to work 8 hours a day to replace one who didn't"

The book of Proverbs gives positive pictures of the value of such diligence and speaks negatively about laziness

- "All hard work brings a profit but mere talk leads to poverty" (14.23)
- "the sluggards craving will be the death of him because his hands refuse to work" (21.25)

The New Testament injunction, in the context of slavery is to work heartily as serving the Lord and not men because "Christ is the Real Master you serve!" (see both Ephesians 6 and Colossians 3)- The seeds of the destruction of slavery are built into these texts. The converted thief is told to work with his hands and make retribution

4. DAMAGE

The arena of work is one of collateral damage from Fall of mankind. There is a literal FALL OUT for the FALL!

We know from Romans 8 that the whole of creation was affected by the Fall which is described by Paul as "groaning as in the pains of child birth until the present time" Paul uses the Genesis 3 description of pain in child birth as a metaphor to describe the pain and the alienation that the world is in. Here are some examples of how the Fall has invaded the world of work

a) Work becomes a burden and not a blessing

The ground will only yield its fruit by the sweat of human brows The command to be fruitful and multiply will be characterized by pain as well as joy Work will become a labour in every sense of the word!

(b) Work becomes a means and not an end

Work can be a means of occupying time and making money it can become a method of personal gain rather than the stewardship of God's resources

Solomon having espoused the value of work in Ecclesiastes then goes on to lament as follows

"My heart took delight in my work and this was the reward of all my labour. YET when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless and a chasing after the wind" (Ecc 2 10-11)

So work has become an unsatisfying idol because the Fall has invaded our economic as well as our spiritual lives In a famous poem by Shelly Ozymandias says "look upon my works you mighty and despair"

Francis Schaeffer graphically described our culture as "Death in the City"

(c) Technology goes off the rails

The natural resources, elements, products of our world and their means of production become distorted by selfishness, greed and the exploitation of the environment. At a simple level the OT iron age culture of Tubal Cain leads to the manufacture of weapons of war that lead to self destruction. At a complex level today we have a range of moral and ethical dilemmas that we associate with the nuclear and genetic industry for example.

(d) We have generated a culture of incessant work patterns and an inability to stop

We can buy into a philosophy that says "To be busy is to have moral worth" The Sabbath principle of rest is built into the creation order where God "rests" on the 7th day. There have been attempts in history to abolish rest days in favour of increased productivity which have been disastrous Jesus himself made regular times for rest, relaxation, meals and prayer Leisure and literally re-creation is vital for our physical, psychological and spiritual health I never met anyone

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who at the end of their lives said "I wish I had spent more time at the office!"

Conclusion: We need to affirm and value the work we do. As Christians we have a high view of work and alongside that we have a great pastoral responsibility for those whose self worth is shot to bits by the destructive power of unemployment and joblessness

(Our guest speaker next week is Rev Michael Dunk who will continue our series by talking about the story of Noah and the theme of "Rescue")

Prayers – Margaret Hobbs

Almighty God, we thank you for your mercy and your grace: Thank you for the wonder of your presence and power in Creation. You are our light in darkness, our strength in weakness and our comfort in sorrow. You heal our bodies and our minds; you ease our pain, you lift our anxieties; you give us hope and you set us free.

So fill us with your Spirit's power that we may take your healing love to a world in need, with your strength rebuild broken lives, and bring glory to your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
For the Kingdom, power and the glory are yours, now and for ever Amen**

Hymn When I survey the wondrous cross

Peace

Thanksgiving Prayer

The Lord is here

His spirit is with us,

Lift up your hearts

We lift them up to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give thanks and praise.

On the night when He was betrayed, at supper with his friends, Jesus took bread and thanked you. He broke it and gave it to them saying "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me"

At the end of supper, taking a cup of wine, Jesus thanked you and said "Drink this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me."

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory, send your Holy Spirit that the bread and wine we share may be for us by faith the body and blood of your dear son
(do share some bread and wine if you feel that is appropriate)

Hymn Christ be with me (Stuart Townend)
Blessing

Book of Remembrance: Daphne Iris Ramshaw

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