



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 26th July

Collect

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow: though our faith is small as mustard seed, make it grow to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

A MESSAGE FROM REV. KEN HOBBS

This is the last Sunday (we hope!) of the single channel service via Zoom. From next Sunday I will be leading in church and you will have been given information about how that will happen. We will observe all the safety procedures as far as the use of the building is concerned and I am grateful for the work of Ken and Janis behind the scenes to make this possible. You are welcome to join the service via Zoom as well.

We are incentivising actual church attendance by offering socially distanced and hygienic coffee after the service which will be available by the west door as you leave! Next Sunday will be a simple service of morning prayer appropriate for all ages. The Communion services on other Sundays will use the new worship book which you will be given. If you have not received one you can collect your copy at the door.

We are travelling together in uncertain times and let us pray that as a church family we support one another in this journey of adventure and faith.

Ken

ST JOHN'S TO RESTART SUNDAY SERVICES

As we are aware the Government have allowed Churches to resume live Services, and it is intended that we at St John's restart 10am Sunday Worship in Church commencing on Sunday 2nd August. (All age worship)

This does NOT mean our now regular computer 'Zoom' broadcast will stop. This will continue from the Church for all those that do not yet wish to venture out to a communal gathering. So now there will be two ways to enjoy the service led by Rev. Ken Hobbs, together live in Church, AND live on screen at home.

We will of course be following all Government guidelines concerning Covid19. Social distancing, Sanitisation, Restricted circulation, etc.

So if you feel you are able to join us in Church each Sunday at 10am, then we would be pleased to welcome you on 2nd August, but if you feel you are not yet ready then do please continue to join us on Zoom.

There will be more information to follow, nearer the date.

Ken Mussell and Janis Forder

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

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Worship at Home

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all who live in it. For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. (Psalm 24. 1-2)

Hymn Tell put my soul

Confession

As we come to confess our sins, we hear the words from our psalm **"Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart..."(Psalm 24 v3-4)**

Almighty God, we confess that we have often misused and ill treated your creation; hear us and in your mercy **save us and help us.**

For every act of carelessness that has treated the world merely as a playground Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**

For every act of wastefulness that forgets the crying of the needy Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**

For every act of selfishness that defies your just rule over our lives Father forgive us. **Save us and help us**

Cleanse us from our sins through the love of Christ and set us free for his service through the power of the Spirit and for the glory of your name. Amen

Collect

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; 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**

1st Reading Genesis 1:27-31 and Genesis 2: 19-20 read by Maggie Savill

So God created humankind[♂] in his image,

in the image of God he created them;[♂]
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Song from Sarah

2nd Reading Matthew 6. 25-34 read by Maggie Savill

'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink,[♂] or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?[♂] And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God[♂] and his[♂] righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 'So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Reflection

We end this month with a final look at the theme of work in Genesis 1-11

We have looked at the Divine Example and the Divine Economy and now we can comment on **The Divine Environment**

The context in which work is introduced in Genesis is a physical environment which I have spent my whole life studying and teaching. I am using my experience as a geographer rather than a church minister although the two are related! John Wesley famously said "The world is my parish!"

Although the COVID crisis has filled our attention and concerns, the care and maintenance of the planet and green issues generally remain at the top of the political and economic agenda. This is not new!

Aside from COVID there are at least 6 areas of concern

1. **Population Explosion-**
2. **Resource Depletion**
3. **Runaway technology**
4. **Climate Change**
5. **Planned Obsolescence –**
6. **Global Poverty and Inequality**

Does Scripture give us any guidance on this anxious debate? The fundamental question is "To whom does the earth belong?" (Ps 24.1 "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it") God is the creator and the owner!

But it is only a partial answer (Ps 115.16 "The highest heavens belong to the Lord but the earth has been given to man") There is a double answer here

"the earth belongs to God because He MADE it and to us because he GAVE it!"

Here are three key ideas-

1.DOMINION – mankind has dominion over the earth.

There are two extreme or polarised positions

(a) **Do as you like** or (b) **do nothing.**

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(a) is represented by some Christian traditions in the UK and parts of the USA who are in denial about what is actually happening and cling to the Biblical mandate to apparently be fruitful and multiply etc.

(b) says Do nothing to develop, exploit or manage the resources of the earth- almost venerate the earth- Christian ecology gone to extremes.- Christian eco warriors!

Genesis suggests that our dominion over the earth is the result of our unique relationship with God. There is an order or even a hierarchy in creation and God has set humanity midway between himself as Creator and the rest of creation.

Although we are constructed of the same building blocks of matter, we are different although you and I share a substantial amount of our DNA with our pets!

The Bible's position is that we are moral and spiritual beings. In this sense we are unlike animals but we are like God- we think, we reason, we choose, we create, we pray and we exercise dominion.

We combine **dependence** on God with **dominion** over nature. (**not domination!**)

Generally speaking mankind has obeyed the Genesis command to fill the earth and subdue it.- a process of food gathering to farming- domestication and cultivation, the discovery and utilization of natural resources. In his progressive control of the earth man has not been invading God's private sphere or wresting control from him. He has not stopped up the gaps where God apparently used to be! God has provided in the earth all the resources of food. Water, clothing, shelter, energy and warmth that we need.

Kepler famously said "Science is thinking God's thoughts after him"- true in the physical sciences- true also in environmental science.

2. COOPERATION- we cooperate with the creator.

In exercising our God given dominion we are not creating the processes of nature but co-operating with them Genesis suggest that the earth was already fertile and fruitful before man arrived on the scene. Man's task earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are great examples

We do have the power, unlike animals, to change and influence our environment but we remain dependent on the Creator who gives us rain, sunshine and fruitful seasons. The Rainbow is a reminder in Genesis of the promises of God- not merely in the matter of flooding but that summer and winter, seed time and harvest will not cease.

3. STEWARDSHIP

While we were in Albury we let our house in Cheam. We had tenants. They had a responsibility to maintain and care for the property to which they have been instructed.

The NT parable of the vineyard reminded Jesus' hearers that they were tenants and not owners. Mankind is made in God's image and we are his vice regents God makes us, in a very literal sense, the managers and caretakers of his property.

God's continuing ownership and caring supervision of the universe is maintained in Scripture for example in Ps 50 "the cattle on a thousand hills are mine!" In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said "He feeds the birds, clothes the lilies and the grass of the field"

Dominion, Cooperation and Stewardship do not give permission for destruction. We have a delegated responsibility in our working and our leisure and in our church witness to care for our planet

Conclusion

We must apply our faith to our world. A former director of Kew Gardens, writing in the Church Times some years ago said this **"If Christians believe that the earth belongs to the Lord, then we should be at the forefront of the battle to release creation from bondage!"**

The motivation for conservation is "The earth is the Lord's" The value and worth of work is seen in the Divine Example; the Divine Economy and the Divine Environment!

(Too big an issue? The starfish on the beach story- "It will make a difference for that one!")

God is concerned and interested in his creation and how we manage it! He is not just interested in what goes on inside a church building!

There is such a thing as HOPE! – from the dawn of time history has a destiny, a purpose and a focal point. One day "there will be a new heavens and a new earth"

Hymn Great is Thy Faithfulness

Prayers lead by Chris Redrup

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, no and for ever Amen

Hymn A new commandment I give unto you

Peace

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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)

Closing music The Lord bless you and keep you (Rutter)

Blessing

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