



Worshiping & Praying Together as a community dispersed

during the week beginning
Sunday, 30th August

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Parish of Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle.

The worshipping communities of the Cathedral and St Peter's Hamilton.

This week we continue our reflection on who Jesus is and what it means to be disciples of Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah. We are reminded of God's sovereignty over all things and Jesus' command to put our faith and trust in him, and to act accordingly in everything we do, in all circumstances, even when we are carrying heavy burdens.

After almost six months of changes and challenges to our way of life and particularly our ways of being church due to COVID-19, for many in our congregations and our extended community, this new normal comes with heavy burdens impacting ways of worshiping and gathering as a church community, and significantly challenging our ways of working, socialising, and being families. Many of us are "Zoomed" out and we might even find ourselves asking, "Are we done yet?"

And yet, Matthew tells us that especially in these times, we must pick up our crosses and follow Jesus. We are not done yet and there are people to connect with and faith, hope, and love to be shared. In the words of Paul to the Romans we are encouraged: "Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer." (Romans 12)

Our Services of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are streamed every day and Holy Communion at the Cathedral is streamed on Sundays and Wednesdays:

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXyas2uhJUNOnDetOpPdUOg>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/christchurchcathedralnewcastle/>

Eucharists are offered at Christ Church Cathedral on Sundays at 8.00am and 11.00am and Monday to Friday at 8.30am (following Morning Prayer), and at St Peter's Hamilton at 11.00am on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Families@Five Service at the Cathedral is on the first Saturday of the month.

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYF6oyfKg3zYHolmWjts2JA>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchCathedralFamilies/>

Parish Council are seeking additional volunteers to assist with sides people duties and cleaning in the church after our services. Please contact the Parish Office on 4929 2052.

Please do not hesitate to contact Dean Katherine or Reverend Angela if you have any concerns at this time and if you would like for us to visit you at home.

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 3: 1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.' But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you."' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you:"

This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.'

Psalm 105: 1-6, 23-26

1 O give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name:
tell among the peoples what things he has done.

2 Sing to him O sing praises:
and be telling of all his marvellous works.

3 Exult in his holy name:
and let those that seek the Lord be joyful in heart.

4 Seek the Lord and his strength:
O seek his face continually.

5 Call to mind what wonders he has done:
his marvellous acts and the judgements of his mouth.

6 O seed of Abraham his servant:
O children of Jacob his chosen one.
23 Then Israel came into Egypt:
and Jacob dwelt in the land of Ham.
24 There the Lord made his people fruitful:
too numerous for their enemies,
25 Whose hearts he turned to hate his people:
and to deal deceitfully with his servants.
26 Then he sent Moses his servant:
and Aaron whom he had chosen.

Romans 12: 9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Matthew 16: 21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.' Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

Reflection on a page by *The Very Reverend Katherine Bowyer*

Picture it (*as they said in The Golden Girls*), Oxford, mid-June 2019. It was the second last day of my long service leave trip to the UK, and I was feeling a bit despondent. Not despondent about going home, but despondent about the leave ending, about the experience finishing. Sad because it meant the end of this time and I wasn't ready for it to end yet. My husband David and I had visited many wonderful places, seen astounding things, and encountered generous grace-filled moments. Amongst the places we visited were many cathedrals. The day before our trip to Oxford, I had confidently called it: We had visited our last cathedral for the trip. Our plans had no more cathedrals in them until we returned home, to the cathedral that is our home.

Rain meant that our plans for walking around Oxford were disrupted, and so we found ourselves in Christ Church Oxford, taking photos of places that featured in the Harry Potter movies, and before we knew it, discovering ourselves inside the chapel which is also Christ Church, which is also the Cathedral. An unexpected cathedral! Here we wandered and wondered and jostled with others, tourists, and pilgrims alike, and turning a corner found ourselves, so the small black and white sign said, in "The Latin Chapel", which held a shrine, the shrine of St Frideswide.

Frideswide! My heart leapt! Frideswide! For I had wondered about St Frideswide since I became the Dean and prayed the morning office in the Christopher chapel under the gaze of the saints of the south, including Frideswide. The saints in the other windows I knew their stories, but of Frideswide, I knew nothing. Yet, here she was, her shrine, her story, here in the cathedral of Christ Church, Oxford.

Suddenly, in the midst of the crowds, I found a 'thin place', and praying in one Christ Church Cathedral for another Christ Church Cathedral, I lit candles to place in this wonderful tree sculpture votive candle.

And I was changed, I found my focus changed.

This week as I reflected on the Exodus reading for this weekend, I remembered this moment, those prayers, and this image.

'Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." (Exodus 3.3)



What do we risk missing if we do not turn aside, do not lay aside our plans, do not allow space for wandering and wondering? Nicholas King in his commentary on Exodus, points out that Moses is "one who been brought up an Egyptian, and who has never yet worshipped this God."¹ Moses, who had reasons to stay and reasons not to go back, hears the voice of God, goes back. Moses accepts the call, though he could hardly have known in this moment all that was going to be asked of him. Plagues and pestilence, coming into a new way of being God's people, with grumbling that "we were better off in the past in Egypt", with the temptation of new idols and commandments to help them live together well – all this lies in Moses' future. In this moment, he simply knows that this ground is holy, this place is thin, and he has encountered the one whose name is forever. All this, because Moses turned aside to see.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in her poem, *Aurora Leigh*, wrote:

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes —
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,
And daub their natural faces unaware...

Where will you encounter heaven this week? Where will you find holy ground? Where will you turn aside and see?

¹ Nicholas King, *The Old Testament: Volume 1 The Pentateuch*, Kevin Mayhew, Great Britain, 2010, p.96.

Readings for next week – The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 12:1-14

Psalm 149

Romans 13:1-10

Matthew 18:10-20



Prayers for use during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ever present God,
be with us in our isolation,
be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness,
be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness,
be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is
unfamiliar,
that when the doors reopen
we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness
to an emerging world.
For Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and
distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and
fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us
from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

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