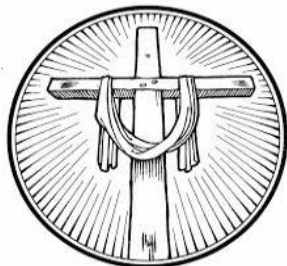


Reflection for Easter 5 by Phil Baker

As I write, on Tuesday, I have just heard the sad news of the young man Folajimi Olubunmi-Adewole (Jimi) who jumped into the Thames to try to save the life of a woman who had fallen into the river and was screaming for help. He told his friend to call the police and jumped in. Sadly he was the one who in spite of being a good swimmer died. The police and another member of the public saved the woman. He cared about a stranger and lost his life in doing so.

In the Gospel Jesus describes himself as the vine and us as the branches that His Father tends. The vine grower tends his vines with love and care. So does God tend us. Jesus is the vine and we are his branches, just in the same way that we say in the eucharist that we are the body of Christ. God loves us as a vine grower loves his vines.

In the epistle John extols the readers to love each other because God loves us. He loved us so much that he sent his only Son to die for us. He says there is no fear in love; perfect love casts out fear. Young Jimi's love for his fellow beings exceeded his fear as he took the risk and died in his attempt to save someone else. I wonder how much risk we are willing to take to show God's love to others?



Codes for the Zoom worship at 10.30

These are codes for Sundays from 11.04.21 until the end of June

Meeting ID: 843 1587 4178

Passcode: 180903

Telephone numbers (as previously) 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

NEXT SUNDAY 09.05.2021 6th Sunday of Easter

SERVICES 10.30am by Zoom, 12 noon in Church



READINGS

OT Acts 10: 44-end
NT 1 John 5: 1-6
Gospel John 15: 9-17

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Messages at any time.



St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 2nd May 2021

5th Sunday of Easter

10.30 by Zoom (phone-in available)

12 noon Mass in Church

At a recent meeting of the **Christianity Deanery** synod we discussed the movement out of lockdown restrictions towards something resembling where we were before—the 'new normal' as people are saying, as things will have changed. If you haven't seen it before, these 4 Rs are a helpful prompt for thinking, which we must also do for St Thomas, and is everybody's responsibility. See what you think, and do feel free to respond with your ideas to any of the staff.

RETURN: what are you looking forward to once lockdown ends?

RETAIN: what do you want to keep from your experience of worship and parish life during lockdown?

RESIST: what don't you want to return to doing?

RENEWAL: what is your hope for the future?

Philip Sourbut, who is Director of Ministry and Mission, responded to us, reminding us that knowing our **values** and being faithful to them was very important. He also showed a powerpoint which I am happy to share.

I think our **\$64k question** is about how to retain what is good about our zoom services, as well as our worship in Church.
Fr David



Collect

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Acts 8: 26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptised?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptised him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

1 John 4: 7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

John 15: 1-8

Jesus said 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

Post Communion

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth, and to share his risen life; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

NOTICES

Knit and Natter *Update for May 2021*

We are still in agreement that these cold east winds are preventing us meeting in the park. We are keeping a close eye on The Roadmap and will see how we may meet after 17th May. In the meanwhile, we shall continue with the regular Thursday Zoom, from 11.15am to 11.55am, to which all are welcome. All details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

Annual Meeting Sunday 16 May by Zoom, talk in Church.

House Group. Tuesday evenings. Please contact Ian Totterdell for Zoom details.

Community Larder The Community Larder will be collecting on **Tuesdays only** from 10am-12noon. The collecting point is in the Church Hall. Judith Southam has **homemade chutneys for sale**. The jars are labelled with a full list of ingredients. All proceeds will be given to the Community Larder. Please continue to be generous.

The winner of the 'Easter Joy' photography competition was Karen Williams, who has selected the Royal British Legion as her chosen charity. The U14s prize was won by Seren Woodland.

200 Club If you would like to join the 200 Club please see Andrew Withers. The draw recently took place and the winners are:

January: Helena Withers & Dan Wright
February: Ian Totterdell & Christine Sturman
March: Nigel Byott & Trevor Smith
April: June Farmer & Phil Baker