

St Francis Weekly News for FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 12th July 2020



This bulletin may have come to you by email or through your letterbox, if you received it on paper but are happy to receive an email in future please email deborah.lechmere@ntlworld.com If you know anybody else who would like this delivered or emailed please contact Deborah or Revd Janet: revdjanetwyer@outlook.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

OPEN FOR WORSHIP!

How wonderful it is to be able to gather for worship at long last.

Although conscious of those still not able to venture out [we are still zooming for those keeping safe at home] a goodly number of folk came forth to worship on Sunday morning and all was well.

It will take a little time to become accustomed to our new way of being church [who would have thought that sugar tongs would come to play an integral part of distributing Holy Communion?] but, all in all, it was so good to be starting again.

From an organisational point of view the new arrangements for socially distanced seating, projecting the order of service, and a quieter, more individual method of receiving communion went well.

Reflecting on the service from a spiritual perspective should, however, lead us to rejoice!

Whatever fears or qualms there may have been, there is no doubt that God was with us in all our efforts – and our time together was indeed blessed.

As we picked up the threads of congregational worship there were many things that had to change – and the lack of music was a great concern to many. However, it was evident from the very beginning of the service that there was much

singing going on in the hearts of those who were there. A fitting substitute whilst we wait with patience for much loved worship music and song to be a part of worship once again.

So, onward and upward to heavenly places! Each week will be an adventure of discovery as we explore together



the new land that God is opening up to this little church called to serve the Heartsease community.

As with every adventure there are necessary precautions that need to be taken – and some people will need more than others.

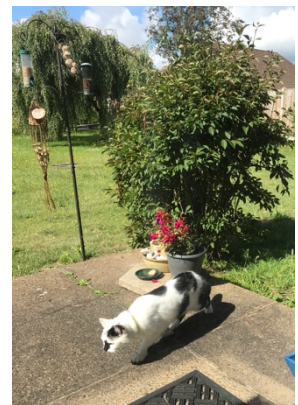
Whilst decisions are still being made at government level about the use of face masks in public places – you'll see that Revd Winnie and Eeyore are quietly leading the way in terms of assuring the people of St Francis that it is perfectly ok to look after yourself by wearing a face mask in church if you feel you need to.

Revd Winnie was also quick to observe that there were many seats still free to be taken – so if you are thinking about coming to church to see what it's like, please do contact me, Revd Janet, to see how we can make it happen! Please feel free to call or text [07990 576118]

A VISITOR...

Over the past few weeks we have noticed a very shy visitor hanging around the church and vicarage at all hours.

On one occasion this little person did make it indoors only to scuttle out again very quickly. Because of how often puss is being spotted we're wondering if all is well. If you happen to recognise this little white and black cat perhaps you could let us know please. [Parish Office 01603 431259]



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Genesis Adventure continues – but the weather is not being kind...

For the second week running it seems we have a classic example of rain stopped play.

Although a couple of young people picked up their pack this week, it was very evident that the weather was playing a huge part in keeping children and their families from venturing out.

But never fear! We will find other ways to ensure that all those who want to take part have the opportunity.

If your child [or a child you know] would like to take part in the Genesis Adventure designed for ages 8yrs – 12yrs; please get in touch.

ST FRANCIS BABBLERS

Although it may be some time before we are able to reopen Babblers, the team has been hard at work making up fun bags to share with the little ones who are missing out on their Thursday morning fun times.

Thanks to a kind legacy left to St Francis by Molly Gunton, a donation of books by Morrisons Riverside and a lot of hard work by Rachael and the Babblers Team the bags are each a tiny work of art, filled with goodies and activities that will be a little reminder that they are still a much loved part of St Francis Church.

Rachael and Nicky will be out and about next week distributing the bags – so if you happen to see them, give them a wave!



As ever, Revd Winnie and Eeyore managed to get in on the act!

Although it looks as though Revd Winnie is looking a bit put out over not getting a cuddle!

Many thanks to Rachael for all the work that went into the artwork on the bags.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

For those interested in Anglican affairs, Jim Green will be presenting a Zoom Event entitled: 'Anglicanism and Protest'.

This presentation forms a part of Jim's first year training for Lay Readership and would usually be undertaken in church.

Unfortunately the constraints placed upon us all in terms of social distancing has meant that this cannot happen so we have had to find a new way forward.

If you would like to join Jim in the St Francis Zoom Room on Wednesday 22nd July at 7.30pm please either let him know or call the Parish Office to get your name on the invitation list. [01603 431259]

As Jim approaches the end of his first year in the Diocesan Readership Training Programme please remember him in your prayers as this has been not been the easiest of years to be in training.

ST FRANCIS FREE FOOD

Up to the beginning of this week, the Free Food Team have distributed over three hundred and seventy food parcels to those in the Heartsease Community who have asked for assistance.

Unlike many other charitable operations offering food we have not had the benefit of any large government funded grants and depend almost entirely upon a donation given by one generous hearted donor, other smaller donations and food collected by our volunteers through the Fareshare and other schemes; we have also had food brought to us by Morrisons Riverside. Given the precarious nature of what we receive the help we have been able to give to so many is, I think, an amazing achievement and truly representative of God's gracious provision.

We have needed food – and it has been given to us; we needed hands to give it out – they too were given. I give thanks to God for these blessings and I would also very much like to thank our small, but incredibly efficient team for the work they have undertaken and continue to do. I am very conscious that it would not have happened without them.

And by way of a reminder, the food we offer are basic provisions and usually consist of a range of non perishables such as cereals, pasta and rice etc. supplemented with fresh veg, fruit, bread, eggs and any dairy products that we may have to hand.

We always try to make sure that families receive a range of foods, but this is of course dependent entirely upon what we may happen to have in stock at any one time.

New referrals and self referrals are coming in every week – and we do our best to offer a timely and discrete service.

Once again thank you God and thank you St Francis Free Food Team.

If you or someone you know is on need of a helping hand please call the Parish Office [01603 431259] and we will do our best to help.

Food deliveries are usually available Monday – Friday. Please be aware that any requests made over a weekend may not be picked up until Monday morning.

PASTORAL CARE

As we ease our way out of lockdown there remain those who are not able to fully participate in the changes because they are shielding or indeed because they feel that the time for fuller freedoms has not yet come for them.

If you are apprehensive about any of the changes that is happening around the church, in the community or indeed in your own particular circumstances, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We are very happy to talk with you if that would be helpful.

Please do not feel that you are alone - help and support is always available, whatever may be troubling you.

Revd Janet [07990 576118]

Eleanor [07840 206716]

Also, there is always someone available in the church building weekdays 11.00am – 12.00pm; please feel free to knock at the door, it will open to you.

ALMA SABBERTON

Alma's funeral will be taking place on Thursday 16th July, 11.00am at Earlham Crematorium. We continue to hold Alma's family and friends in our prayers.



USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

In these difficult times someone might just need one of them...

Childline: 0800 1111

Samaritans: 116 123

Domestic Violence Hotline: 0808 2000 247

[If you hear a neighbour in distress please do not hesitate to call this number or 999; you could save a life]

Mind: 0300 123 3393

Age UK: 0800 169 6565

St Francis Free Food: 07990 576118

A WORD FROM THE VICAR

Over the past few months St Francis Church weekly newsletter has been growing.

This week almost one hundred and thirty copies will be delivered – a huge increase on the twenty or so two page editions that went out on 22nd March this year; Mothering Sunday.

That was the first Sunday we were unable to meet in church – it seems a long, long time ago; as indeed it was and an awful lot has happened.

But, out of this long time of challenge many good things have emerged and it would seem that this little publication is one of them.

As we begin to raise our heads and look at life, the 'new normal' - we are very much hoping that the work of the newsletter will continue; that this will be a way of sharing good news; the Good News of Jesus, of St Francis Church and the Heartsease Community.

But for this to happen effectively we need to be in touch with each other – church with community, the community with church.

We need to be talking to each other!

The thing is, it is very difficult to talk to 'the community' because the community is not a faceless group of people; community is made up of individuals, with each and every one having their own thoughts, hopes and needs.

It's the same with 'the church' the people who are God's church each have their own thoughts, hope and needs, but as well as these all have hearts that yearn to know Jesus better.

And as well as yearning to know God and Jesus better, did you know that everyone at St Francis

Church is totally and utterly committed to serving the Heartsease community, and the world, in Jesus name?

A big commitment to undertake, and an enormous challenge – but with every big job it has to start somewhere; and St Francis' job has a fresh start right here, in this parish, through this newsletter.

St Francis Church has much to offer: the good news of God's love; the wonder of getting to know Jesus; the opportunity to gather as loving friends; the comfort of knowing that no one is ever alone in times of need.

All this is on offer, and much, much more – but your help is much needed. How can we share what is on offer with you?

So, as an individual who is a part of this wonderful Heartsease community, please help!

What is it that you would like from this newsletter?

What could St Francis Church do for you, your family or your neighbour?

How can this church of St Francis Heartsease share God's love with you?

Have you any thoughts about how St Francis Church can be more approachable, open or accessible?

Please, if you have ever thought about any of these things – get in touch.

There has never been a better time to talk about new beginnings for all of us.

I look forward to some wonderful conversations

God's blessing be upon you and yours

Revd Janet

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: John R; Doreen F; Tom; Martin M & Margaret; Riley & his mum and family; David; Jeanette, David & Grace; David B; Paula; Gill; Karen; Maegan; Colin; Pete; Lauren; Fr Brian; Hazel

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Rosemary, Sheila, John, Joy, Shirley.

We remember with love Alma and all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends.

PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Church of St Francis Heartsease

**Heavenly Father
We ask your blessing upon us.
Hold the Heartsease Community,
and all the world,
in your arms of love.
Be with us.
Give us your strength,
peace, and healing grace.
Watch over us,
protect us from harm;
and keep in safety
all those who care for the sick
and attend to our needs,
in Jesus name we pray.
Amen**

PRAYERS FOR 5TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

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

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

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you,
that the course of this world
may be so peaceably ordered
by your governance,
that your Church may joyfully serve you
in all godly quietness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

READINGS FOR 5TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ISAIAH 55:10-13



For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

PSALM 65: 8 – end



8 Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

9 You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.

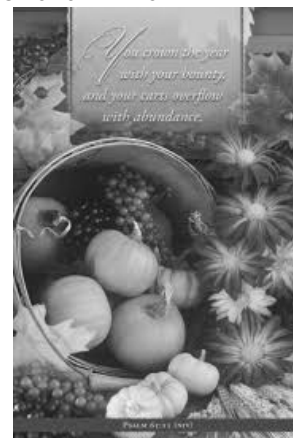
10 You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

11 You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness.

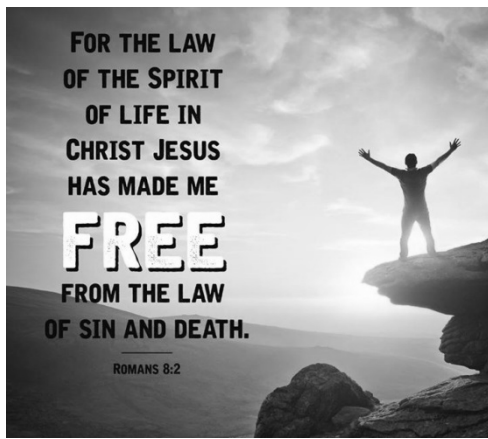
12 The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy,

13 the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen



ROMANS 8:1-11



There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law - indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

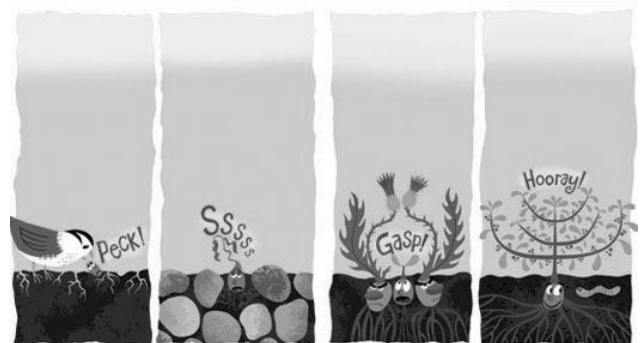


MATTHEW 13:1-9,18-23



That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!'

'Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'



REFLECTION ON MATTHEW 13

Today's Gospel reading is commonly known as the parable of the Sower, but it could more accurately be described as the parable of the soils.

Jesus does this teaching from a boat with all his hearers ranged along the shore and it's quite possible that in the distance there actually was a farmer sowing his seed.

Why does the sower apparently waste so much seed? The fields would have been in strips with a path of beaten earth between each strip so it would be very easy for some of that seed to land on the path. Every gardener knows that even when you have dug over a patch of earth and removed all the stones more will start appearing.

Again, as every gardener knows, once you sow your seeds the weeds grow more quickly than the crops. In my case the first crop of the year was nettles, all of which had to be carefully and painfully removed to give my crops room to grow.

So Jesus, in this story was reflecting the reality of life for most of his listeners, most of whom would cultivate their own vegetables. So what does it all mean?

This is one of the few parables where we get a full explanation. Clearly the disciples were puzzled by the story and wanted Jesus to explain it, which he does to them in private.

He explains that the seed itself is the Good News of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The seed that falls on the path represents those who are so set in their ways that they just aren't prepared to listen. The rocky ground represents those who hear the message and respond quickly but without proper thought or deep acceptance and so, as soon as something bad happens, they abandon it.

The seed among thistles represents those who hear and receive the word but then find that life is too short and too full to give it any attention. There are too many distractions for them to want to keep on with it and so they allow themselves to be lured away.

And the good soil is those who hear and receive the word and become followers of Jesus. And where

that does happen, says Jesus, the yields can be enormous, 30, 60 or 100 times what was sown.

So does this have something to teach us today? Yes, of course.

The need to tell people about the love of God is still as great as it's ever been. In fact in present times a message of love and hope is more important than ever. We are all called to act the part of the sower, spreading the good news of the kingdom by word and deed.

There will be those whose hearts are so hardened that nothing at all will persuade them to consider the claims of Jesus or to take him seriously. We will come across those who apparently respond with eagerness and joy but who, as soon as anything happens to disrupt the pattern of their life will turn their backs on what they have learned.

Perhaps most relevant in this day and age is the picture of the seed where the thorns and thistles spring up. In our modern busy world it's so easy to get distracted. While personal computers and mobile phones are generally useful, they also provide huge distractions and temptations. Clearly for some the pursuit of ambition means there is no time for anything else, for others it may be that all-consuming hobby whether sailing, cycling, bowls, gardening or collecting.

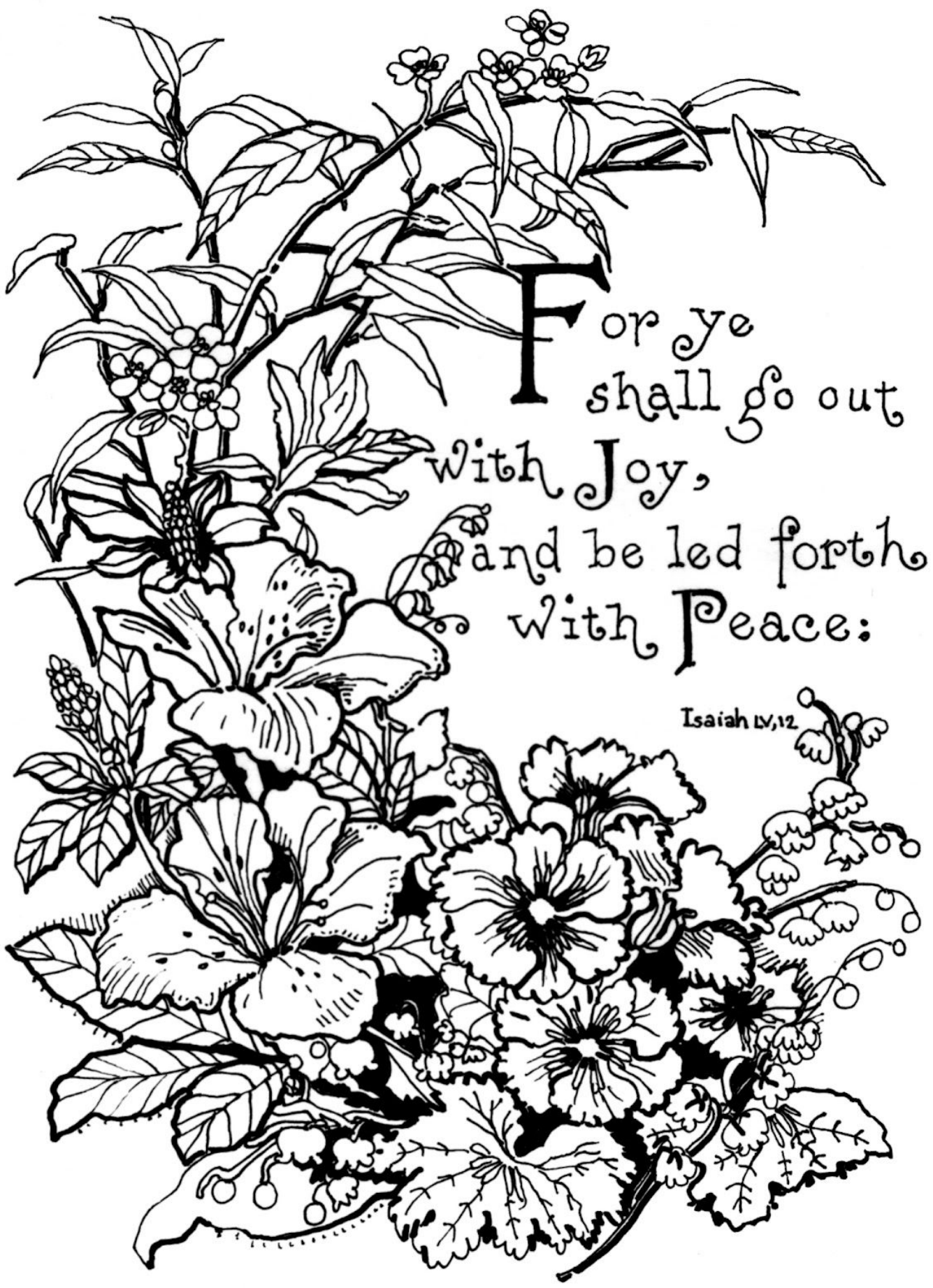
It's so easy to allow ourselves to be distracted and our lives to be filled up so that there is no time to give God any priority.

So Jesus warns his disciples of all the problems they may face when proclaiming his kingdom, but he says, where the seed roots in good soil the results can be spectacular

This, of course is the promise in the reading from Isaiah, that God's word will achieve his purpose. The disciples then, and all of us who are disciples now, will not be judged by results or performance.

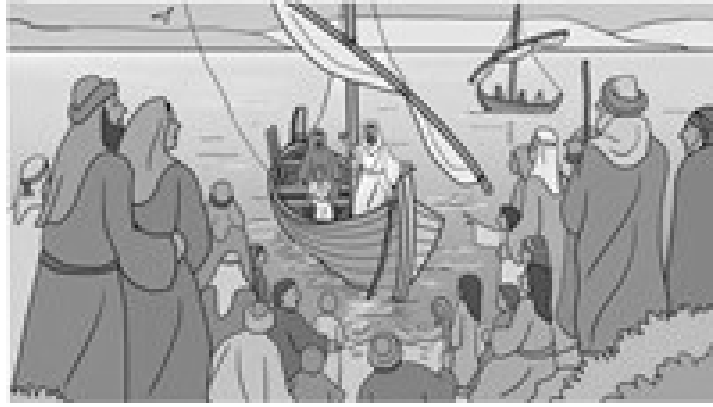
Our responsibility is to faithfully sow the seeds, and the promise is that God's word will achieve the purpose for which he sent it, allowing us to go out with joy and the mountains of Norfolk to burst into song.

David Lechmere
Reader



For ye shall go out
with Joy,
and be led forth
with Peace:

Isaiah IV, 12



So many people wanted to see Jesus and hear what he had to say, that he had to sit in a boat and teach the people standing on the shore. He told them many things through parables.

‘Listen!’ Jesus said. ‘A farmer went out to sow his seeds. As he scattered them, some of the seeds fell on the path and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell onto rocky ground. At first they grew quickly, but when the sun came out they got all burnt up because they had no roots in the shallow soil. Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up around them and choked them. Other seed fell on good soil and they grew into thirty, sixty, a hundred times more wheat. Listen!’ Jesus said again. ‘If you’ve got ears, listen!’

Jesus explained the parable of the sower to the crowd. ‘What did I mean by the seed on the path being eaten up?’ he said. ‘Well, that’s like when the good things that God has planted in our hearts get snatched away by the devil. And the seed on the rocky path? That’s like when someone hears God’s word and loves it and is full of joy, but their enthusiasm disappears as soon as trouble comes their way. And the seed among thorns? Well, that’s like when someone hears God’s word but worry and greed take over. But the seed planted in good soil – ah, the seed in the good soil is like the person who hears God’s word, loves it and lives it, so it produces thirty, sixty, a hundred times more goodness in their lives.’

Glossary

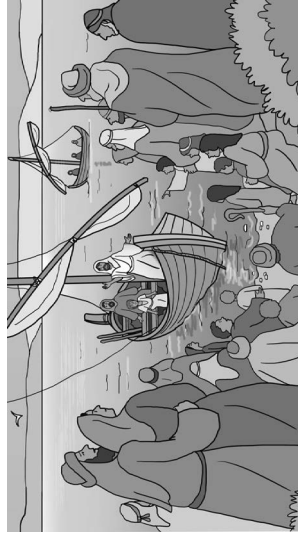
devil a personification of evil, also called Satan or ‘the evil one’.

Name



Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

Jesus tells simple stories called parables to help people understand an important message.



Family time

Talk In the story, what helped the seeds grow and what stopped them from growing? What helps us to grow as followers of Jesus? What might stop us from growing?

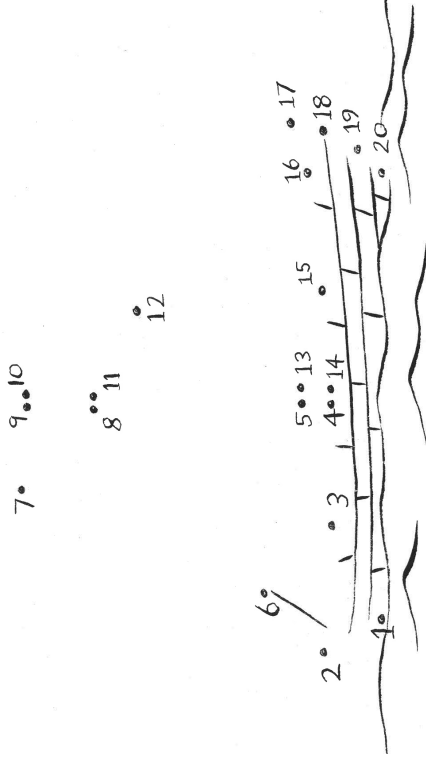
Do Take it in turns to tell a story. Someone starts the story with a sentence, e.g. 'One day, John went to help clean the church when...'. Continue until the story reaches a natural conclusion.

Pray Make time to read some favourite Bible stories together (some of the parables ideally) and pray about the meaning together.

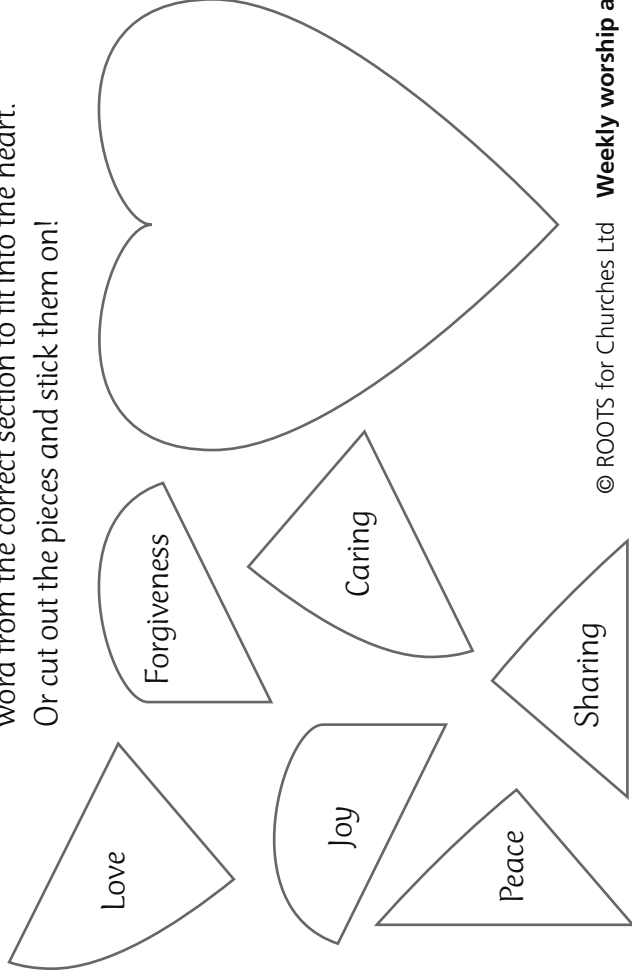
Activity time



Crowds gathered to listen to Jesus telling stories. Where did he sit so that everyone could hear him? Join the dots to find out.



Jesus sows the seeds of God's love in our hearts. Can you 'plant' the words in this heart? Write the word from the correct section to fit into the heart. Or cut out the pieces and stick them on!

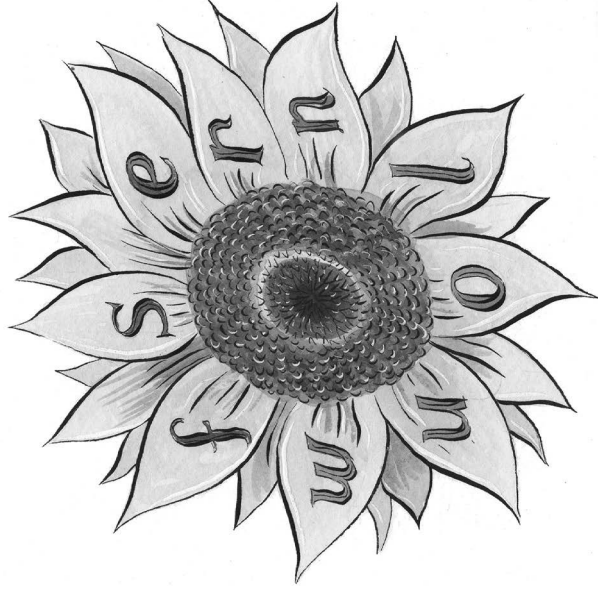


ROOTS children's Sheet

12-18 July 2020



Fit the nine letters from 'sunflower' into the gaps below. Cross them off as you use them.



Jes _ s told th _ m a st _ ry
about a farme _ who sowed
_ots of seeds. Some of them
_ ell on bad ground, and died.
But all the seed o _ good
ground gre _ tall and _ trong

Name

Colouring time

Jesus was such a good storyteller that he often had to find a way for all the crowds to hear.

