

Leaking south aisle roof and gully - an update

Following a meeting of its trustees last week, the Cliffe Feoffees have now most generously offered to fund a much larger project to replace the damaged and leaking lead gully along the entire south aisle of the church.

We await a fresh estimate from the contractor to see whether this is feasible but it should provide a saving over the two-phased approach as we had previously planned due to our inability to fundraise this year. If possible to achieve, this would enable us to make the whole area watertight in the spring and, after the walls have dried out sufficiently, to re-decorate the south wall internally later next year.

The charity, formed in 1603, has as its prime objective "the reparation of the church" and without their continued support over many years, St Thomas' would be much the poorer. We are so blessed by God with this charitable provision to us.

LOCKDOWN II

Lockdown Two means that, although we are allowed to keep the church open every day for private prayer and meditation, we are not permitted to hold any public worship.

You are very welcome to call in to St Thomas' for some peaceful time in the presence of God.

WOODWORM

Not content with a vermin infestation in the vestry, we also had to cope with woodworm who devoured several items, rendering them irreparable. The opportunity was taken, while fumigating the area, to have a general tidy up and improve one of our fire escape routes.

GARDEN

Ruth has worked very hard to begin the transformation of our front garden area in memory of dear Lois Bean. There is still more to do, as and when the weather permits.



PRAYERS

We pray for all those in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity at this time; including: Phil, Pam Swabey, Joan Bishop, Ken Allbon, Jean Burges, Susan Larkin, Rosemary Burnett, and Rosemary Chapman.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Parish prayer requests may be sent to Fr. Herbert or via Trevor.



COVID CLEANERS

We are so indebted to our team of volunteer cleaners who ensure the church is made Covid-safe each and every day. Thanks be to God for their commitment.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC

We very much hope to welcome the Lewes Singers to St Thomas' on 20th December for their Christmas recital. This very much depends, of course, on the level of Covid restrictions in place. More details to follow.



PCC MEETING

Due to lockdown, the next meeting has been moved to Friday 11th December at 7pm in the Hall.

The Parish Church of
St Thomas à Becket
Cliffe High Street, Lewes



22nd November 2020

TRINITY XXV

The Sunday Next Before Advent



The Collect

Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle – Jeremiah 23.5-8

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the lord our righteousness. Therefore behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north-country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

The Gospel – St. John 6.5-14

When Jesus then lift up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? (And this he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do.) Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.



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FROM Fr Herbert:
Dear Parishioners, Although we continue to have no public services we can rejoice that our lovely church is still able to be open for private prayer, and to be in God's presence. In addition the Church of England

offers a 'Message of Daily Hope' with a free 24-hour dial-in 'phone service offering hymns, reflections and prayers, which may be a comfort during these times: call 0800 804 8044. With my very best wishes and prayers, Fr Herbert.

A prayer for our parish
Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent.

Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

SERMON

THIS Sunday is known as that Sunday just before the Season of Advent starts. It is also called 'Stir up' Sunday, taken from our Collect today, and I am reminded of my dear mother who used to say that meant it was time to make the Christmas puddings and mince meat ! However, before we get ahead of ourselves let us look at what today's gospel reading presents to us.

It concerns that well known account of the miracle feeding of the 5,000. Jesus had been in Cana and had now crossed to the eastern side of Lake Galilee to the region of Bethsaida where He ascends a mountain to sit with His disciples, no doubt for some rest after their journeying. However, a great crowd of people had followed them because of Jesus' healing miracles of those who were sick. Many of the crowd would have also come from Capernaum which was only about 9 miles away.

Jesus then turns to Philip and asks 'Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?'. Philip comes from the neighbouring town of Bethsaida and so should perhaps know. However, Philip, like we perhaps would be in such a situation, is overcome by the magnitude of the situation and challenge before them that he simply

acknowledges this by replying that 'two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little'. At this Andrew then tenders a possibility towards responding to the task by saying 'there is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves and two small fishes'.

Then we read that Jesus, knowing full well what He would do, directed the disciples to have all the people sit down on the grass and assemble upon the mount. You will recall us considering a few Sundays ago that mountains are places in the Bible where God chooses to reveal something of Himself to us and where God's power is evidenced. So here on this mountain Jesus receives the loaves of bread together with the fishes and looked up towards Heaven to give thanks to God for them, before directing that they be distributed amongst the people. Then we read of the miracle that after everybody had eaten to their full the remaining fragments filled twelve baskets.

The fact that all were fed and yet much was still in reserve reveals the miracle of how in the midst of crisis God does provide abundantly for our needs and that if we in response are generous in our sharing of God's provisions

there is enough, by His grace, for all in life in this world. However, God's provision for our earthly needs is only a reflection of that great Heavenly banquet to which He invites all to be His guests.

This account is apparently the only single account that is recorded in all the four Gospels and that implies that it carries great importance. That importance can be seen in the final verse of our gospel reading with the response of the crowd to Jesus' miracle of God's provision, for they said 'This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world'. That is no less than the coming of Jesus the Messiah which is the wonderful Advent season we shall begin to celebrate next Sunday.

So in conclusion let us take heart that in times of great unrest and challenge in life, such as our own times now in this world, we are to acknowledge our vulnerability and inadequacies before God and like the disciples, to offer ourselves with what we have and look to God for His sure provisions and blessings.

An old quotation comes to mind – 'Let go and let God'. As our Collect today says, 'Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people...' let us take heart and look with joy towards our Lord. Amen.