

**The Churches of St Bartholomew and St Chad  
Thurstaston and Irby  
20th September 2020 – Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity**



<p><b>Collect</b> Lord God, defend your Church from all false teaching and give to your people knowledge of your truth, that we may enjoy eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.. Amen</p>	<p><b>Post-Communion Prayer</b> Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy; and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall, keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.. Amen</p>
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**FOR OUR PRAYERS THIS WEEK**

**For our Community:** Please pray for children and young people returning to schools and colleges. Please pray the number of Wirral cases of Coronavirus stops rising.

**For our Church:** Please pray for the PCC and for wisdom as we seek to work out how and when to re-open for community groups. Please pray for Bishop Mark as he officially begins his ministry as Bishop of Chester.

**For the world:** Please continue to pray for countries struggling to reduce the number of Coronavirus infections and deaths.

**For those preparing for marriage:** Please pray for Peter and Diana to be married on 6th November.

**For the Sick:** Please continue to pray for Molly (aged 2), Karen Fox, Anna Drysdale, Audrey Fernyhough, Roy Fordham, Moira and Peter DeBoorder (Sister and Brother in law of Julie DeBoorder) and all those who are sick at home or in hospital.

**From the Diocesan Prayer Cycle: (Prompted by the Gospel Reading for today)**  
It is right for the labourer to be paid at the end of the day (see Deuteronomy 24), but that is about as far as the landowner can be seen as being right in the eyes of the labourers. They expected differentials based on performance. They expected the superiority of some to be reinforced at the expense of the others. Instead of using wages to reinforce distinctions, the landowner uses them to express equality and solidarity. He evens out the distinctions. The one with great wealth, the one with the most to lose if egalitarianism rules, does the surprising thing. This isn't the expected thing by any stretch of the imagination. No wrong has been done – at least in terms of agreement, but I think the landowner is 'a wrong 'un.' After he does the strange thing, he goes on to justify himself based on elitist privilege – he can do just what he likes with his wealth. That privilege he asserts has enabled him to do what is good, that is to treat them all equally. This is the Godlike thing that is done. It should not elicit jealousy or envy. In God's empire the last will be first, and the first will be last. The irony is that the landowner, of course, has the most to lose (and to gain) in this. He becomes the cartoon character whose exaggerated action is larger than reality but discloses something vital and truthful about reality. Christian households will be shaped by a new reality that has nothing to do with fairness. Shouldn't we rejoice in this? Which of us can come anywhere near the justice and love of God? What hope have we of fairly deserving God's love? None at all. So, I thank God that God is not fair. We cannot earn what God gives. There is no way God can be in our debt. This is a theological point, but not only a theological point. The parable asks us to live this alternative lifestyle where what counts isn't the pecking order, isn't the labour put in, isn't the social status we accrue, isn't ranking according to social or economic position. No, in the household of God different norms apply. This is dangerous and subversive stuff, but it's the stuff of discipleship. In every circumstance we can depend on God's 'bleeding-heart charity.' Thank God, God is a master who always makes mistakes on payday!

**From the Anglican Prayer Cycle:** Pray for the Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan Archbishop Justin Badi Arama – Bishop of Juba and Archbishop of the Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan

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## OLD TESTAMENT READING: Jonah 3:10-4:11

<sup>10</sup> When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

**4** But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup> He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. <sup>3</sup> And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." <sup>4</sup> And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" <sup>5</sup> Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. <sup>7</sup> But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. <sup>8</sup> When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live." <sup>9</sup> But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." <sup>10</sup> Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. <sup>11</sup> And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

## Psalm 145:1-8

- 1 I will exalt you, O God my King, ♦  
and bless your name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless you ♦  
and praise your name for ever and ever.
- 3 Great is the Lord and highly to be praised; ♦  
his greatness is beyond all searching out.
- 4 One generation shall praise your works to another ♦  
and declare your mighty acts.
- 5 They shall speak of the majesty of your glory, ♦  
and I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
- 6 They shall speak of the might of your marvellous acts, ♦  
and I will also tell of your greatness.
- 7 They shall pour forth the story of your abundant kindness ♦  
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.
- 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, ♦  
long-suffering and of great goodness.

## **NEW TESTAMENT READING: Philippians 1:21-30**

<sup>21</sup> For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. <sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; <sup>24</sup> but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. <sup>25</sup> Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, <sup>26</sup> so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

<sup>27</sup> Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup> and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. <sup>29</sup> For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—  
<sup>30</sup> since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

## **GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 20:1-16**

### **All: Glory to you, O Lord**

**20** "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup> and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. <sup>5</sup> When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup> And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup> They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' <sup>8</sup> When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' <sup>9</sup> When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. <sup>10</sup> Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. <sup>11</sup> And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, <sup>12</sup> saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' <sup>13</sup> But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?' <sup>14</sup> Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup> Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' <sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

### **All: Praise to you, O Christ**

**Next Sunday: 27th September**

**Morning Worship St Bartholomew's 11.15am**

**Holy Communion St Chad's 9.30am**

Don't forget to book your seat

Details on front page of our website and circulated as a separate leaflet on 9th August - contact Parish Office if you need a copy.

**Sermon on Facebook and by email**

continues as throughout pandemic, posted after Service in church.

## Welcome to Bishop Mark

watch the Crozier Service Live 3.30pm Sunday 20th September - <https://youtu.be/Y2V2Bew7AIQ>

On the 20 September, Bishop Mark will begin his public ministry as the Bishop of Chester, a moment that in times of normality is symbolised by the bishop taking up the "cathedra", a physical seat at Chester Cathedral. Dean of Chester Cathedral, Tim Stratford, explains the significance of the *cathedra* and why the 20 September will be different due to Covid -19:-

Many of you will know that a Church is designated as "Cathedral" when it contains a "*cathedra*". The *cathedra* is the physical seat that the bishop occupies representing his or her teaching and oversight of the churches and people in the diocese. The *cathedra* belonging to the Bishop of Chester sits in the Quire of Chester Cathedral. We are looking forward to the day when Bishop Mark can take up this seat now that he is legally recognised as the Bishop of Chester. That day may, however, be some months off yet. Covid-19 means that it would not be possible for us to hold a service of this significance with the number of representatives who should be present for the time being. Furthermore, we cannot arrange this service until Bishop Mark has paid homage to Her Majesty the Queen and she is not yet receiving formal engagements.

On 20 September we will therefore be doing something else to celebrate the beginning of our new bishop's ministry. Bishop Mark will process formally through the cathedral into the Quire with prayers at the door, the font and the nave platform. He will pause at the *cathedra* and reflect on the consequences of covid and then sit with the College of Canons and Choir for Evensong. At the end of Evensong Bishop Mark will receive the Melanesian Crozier at the High Altar and go to the West doors to pray for the diocese, the city, the county and our nation.

The Melanesian Crozier currently stands alongside the *cathedra* in our Quire. It was given by our link diocese of Melanesia to the Bishop of Chester in honour of our fellowship. A crozier is one of the signs of the ministry of a bishop taking the form of a shepherd's crook symbolising care and maintenance of the unity of the flock.

Attendance in the Cathedral for this service will be limited to thirty people under covid regulations and there will therefore be no online booking facility. The service will be broadcast live on YouTube and I hope that you will join us in prayer for Bishop Mark that way. You can find the live stream directly by clicking the Youtube link above.

I very much look forward to the weeks and months ahead as we work with our new bishop. No sooner will his ministry have begun when we will be hosting ordinations under the extraordinary conditions that currently prevail. Along with you I am also very much looking forward to the normalisation of social interaction when the threat of the virus subsides. In the meantime, please be assured that Chester Cathedral remains as open as possible providing a safe space for exploration, Christian enquiry, prayer, reflection and worship.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Tim Stratford, Dean of Chester

**Wirral Coronavirus Helpline 0151 666 5050**  **WIRRAL**

 **STAY AT HOME**

 **PROTECT THE NHS**

 **save lives**

[www.wirralinfobank.co.uk](http://www.wirralinfobank.co.uk)

**Welcome** to the online resource to help you find support services near you. We are here to support Wirral residents requiring advice, guidance and additional help during this ongoing and difficult coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.