

Dear friends,

Along with the literary festival in September, the music festival hosted mainly (but not only) by St. Peter's church are the highpoints in our cultural engagement with wider society. We attended the African artist Seckou Keita on Wednesday and the BBC Big band on Saturday. Louise in addition went to the piano concert by blind pianist Ethan Loch which apparently was extraordinary and emotional. It warms the heart that so many people come to so many things and it is lovely to be publicly thanked from the stage for facilitating the events and it makes the resulting chaos involved in running St. Peter's as a church both during and in the immediate aftermath of the festival that much more bearable.

In a change of mood, we celebrated a "summer cocktails" event at All Saints church hall which raised money for the upkeep of the churchyard. Apparently, a member of the Tanqueray Gin family is buried in the churchyard – every day is a school day!

### Sunday 14th July – Trinity 7 – Proper 10

At St. Peter's I will preside at the 8am and Ken Parry will preside at the 10am services. I will then preside at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively and later I will then also preside at Choral Evensong at St. Peter's at 6pm.

**Amos 7:7-15.** Amos is perhaps the earliest prophet we have a record of and is my personal favourite. Punchy and blunt, Amos is almost embarrassed to be called a prophet because they were held in very low esteem amongst the people for corruption and just saying what the rich and powerful wanted them to say for money. Hence his famous line about being "neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees". But in exposing the hypocrisy of the Israelite elite "I hate, I despise your religious feasts" (Amos 5: 21-23) he is second to none in speaking truth to power.

**Ephesians 1: 3-14.** This piece has always inspired me and really is not to be deeply analysed but just wallow in its marvellous rhetoric. It places all the benefits of Knowing God's will and purposes in Christ out there and places Christ at the centre of all things, at all times, and in all places. Everything has its source in God and all things find their end in Christ.

**Mark 6: 14-29.** Herod is full of guilt for having beheaded John the Baptist and when he hears word of Jesus and his miracles he immediately thinks that Jesus is John the Baptist come back to haunt him. Then follows the sequence of events that leads to John's beheading. Herod is revealed as a weak man who was cajoled into beheading

an innocent and righteous man because he didn't want to lose face in front of his cronies by refusing to honour his oath to Herodias. There are obvious similarities to the death of Jesus with Herod in the Pontius Pilate role.

**The annual RMC vicarage garden party** is upon us again and this year we have avoided Wimbledon ladies' finals day (Hurrah)! **Saturday 20th July from 3pm.** Bring and share food and drink but as usual we will provide a seedbed of wine and nibbles. Hopefully the sun will shine so bring a rug or something to sit on. We don't have many joint events where people from St. Peter's, St. Michael's and All Saints can mingle and chat, so this is a great opportunity to relax together.

### Thought for the day

In the aftermath of the election some are rejoicing, and some are grieving at the result. I take a more nuanced approach that maintains that two centrist parties have swapped position in the house, but major differences are in fact rare between the "big two" and the differences are more to do with degree and emphasis. I'm afraid that every time a new broom arrives anywhere, either in this or other countries and people are full of hope, the words of the classic track by the Who rings in my ears..." Meet the new boss. Same as the old Boss" from the track "we won't get fooled again!". This suits my naturally cynical mind when it comes to national politics or to the motivations of people generally – including myself. We are a fatally flawed people seething with a mass of contradictions, prejudices, and motivations who mostly mean to do the right things but as they say, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions". I wish the new government well, but with our Christian assessment of basic human nature that "we are all sinners" forming the backdrop to those good wishes.

Despite that basic assumption, this is a country which is still one of the best places in the world to live with so many advantages that people are reluctant to leave and indeed many hundreds of thousands are willing to risk their lives to get here and take advantage of our democracy, health, welfare, education and legal systems. There is no doubt that things can be done better than they have been, and I wish the new Boss well, as I say, but after the honeymoon period is over, I dare say that he might start to receive the same amount of opprobrium as the old Boss had to get used to. That too is part of human nature. Whoever the Boss is, our role as Christians is to pray for decent and non-corrupt Government and pray for each individual representative elected that they would seek to serve wisely in the interests of the majority and serve the common good.

**The Prayer for Today** is a pertinent prayer written by William Tynedale

**Almighty God, whose is the eternal only power  
And other men's power just borrowed from thee:  
We beseech thee for all those that hold office that,  
Holding it first from thee, they may use it for  
The general good and to thine honour.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Love and peace,  
Martin