

Dear friends,

Our major walk this Friday was from Sidmouth to Salcombe Regis, to the Donkey sanctuary and then to the coast and back to Sidmouth via Salcombe hill.

Not as long as Sidmouth to Sidmouth but much hillier. On bank holiday Monday we got the bus to Exmouth and walked back via Sandy Bay, Knowle and Squabmoor reservoir and East Budleigh common. I'm sure this is doing us good – well that's what I tell my throbbing feet.

Being invited out with friends on Friday, and the cream tea concert on Saturday and Solo's lunch on Sunday means we have to keep walking to stop putting on too much weight – though it often feels like a losing battle!

Sunday was great in the villages with some lovely hymns - one during communion at East Budleigh particularly moving – more of that later.

Sunday 1st September – Trinity 14 – Proper 17

Chris Cant will preside St. Peter's on Sunday and I will preside at All Saints at 9.00am and John Archibald will preside at St. Michael's at 11.00am.

Deuteronomy 4: 1-2, 6-9. Fairly straightforward instruction given by Moses to Israel. The law is not just good because it comes from God but they are so self-evidently good that even non-Jews will recognise their goodness so that when the people follow them wholeheartedly they will recognise the goodness of the people of Israel.

James 1. 17-27. Be doers of the word and not just hearers of the word. Integrity might be the watchword of James' letter. Later James will write his famous words "Faith without works is dead". Martin Luther famously thought that this contradicted Paul's "saved by Grace alone" and called James "an epistle of straw". I'd say that people show their faith in being saved by Grace by being active doers of the law of love. There is no reward in heaven for acting with integrity, but the blessing is in the action itself.

Mark 7: 1-8,14-15,21-23. What is pure or impure was a live issue amongst early Christians and amongst Jews themselves. Mark reveals himself to be on the Pauline wing of the church which believed everything was permissible, Matthew on the more conservative side and Luke trying to unite the two factions. Mark accuses the pharisees of raising the oral law about washing your hands to a higher level than even the ten commandments. The modern church has no prohibitions that I can think of, but individuals have their own standards.

Gift day. The gift day for St. Peter's church is coming upon us soon. On Saturday the 14th September in the morning, I, our treasurer, and our gift aid overseer will all be in St. Peter's church ready to receive financial gifts to the church. I, Tony and Judith and others no doubt will be there to receive, ask questions and talk about the financial situation. While regular monthly giving is preferred (and there will be someone ready to sign you up if that's what you decide to do), many people like to give in one lump sum – or both! Whichever way it arrives, be sure we are truly grateful. As the largest church in Budleigh Salterton, we can only make sure that we can continue our ministry by ensuring that the gap between our annual expenditure and our income is narrowed considerably. Of course, we do have reserves but our reserves will not last forever.

Thought for the day

My thought for the day are the words of the poem/song by Nick Fawcett included in the “Hymns old and new” that we use at All Saints and St. Michael’s but has been dropped in the new version we use at St. Peter’s. It obviously didn’t make it as a hymn, but the words are beautiful and poignant nonetheless.

When days are touched with sadness
and nights are filled with pain;
when every waking moment
your faith is under strain;
when burdens weigh upon you
that seem too hard to bear;
remember then the promise
of Jesus, ‘I’ll be there.’

When all around forsake you
and you feel on your own;
when those you thought most loyal
have taken wings and flown;
when dreams like bruised and broken
and no one sheds a tear;
remember then the promise
of Jesus, ‘I’ll be there.’

When life is dark with shadows,
its sparkle long since gone;
when winter’s chill encroaches
where summer sun once shone;
when days that gleamed so brightly
are tarnished now with care;
remember then the promise
of Jesus, ‘I’ll be there.’

When everything you hoped for
lies trampled in the dust;
when there seems nothing solid
in which to put your trust;
when worry holds you captive –
a slave to every fear;
remember then the promise
of Jesus, ‘I am here.’

The Prayer for Today is I think a great companion prayer from St. Columba.

**Be thou a bright flame before me,
Be thou a guiding star above me
Be thou a smooth path below me,
Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,**

Today – tonight – and forever.

Love and peace,
Martin