

Dear friends,

Sunday morning was a joy. It was so lovely to be able to worship together again after three months. 75 people turned up for the service at St. Peter's and 28 at St. Michael's – much better than expected. Everything ran smoothly within the guidelines. I experienced it personally as a moving and spiritual experience which I know was shared by many because they have told me so!

### Next Week's services

Karen is still on holiday, All Saints East Budleigh is opening up this week and St. Michael's missed out on hearing John Archibald lead a service of the word (normally the first of the month) so the following schedule is what is proposed for this coming Sunday.

**9.30am.** Holy Communion at All Saints presided over by Rev. Chris Cant.

**10am.** Holy Communion at St. Peter's presided over by me.

**11am.** Service of the word at St. Michael's led by John Archibald

This will be confirmed in my email that will again be sent out on Saturday.

### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> – Trinity 5 – Proper 10

**Isaiah 55: 10-13.** Isaiah's prophesy of the active word of God coming to fruition employs wonderful symbolism taken from the natural world. The specific world event being foretold is the return of the Jews in exile in Babylon, and the joy that return elicits is beautifully expressed. This return from exile happened in 539BC after an edict issued by the Persian King Cyrus the Great

**Romans 8: 1-11.** This most famous of the chapters of Romans is spread over three Sundays. He starts by recollecting that there is "now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" and then introduces the theme of living either according to the "flesh" or the "Spirit." These are two different mindsets, rather than two separate moral choices. It means either living your life according to the values and standards of the world in rebellion against God or living your life with your mind set on the Spirit of God which is life and peace. The Spirit is God's not ours and he is given as a gift which we can choose to unwrap or leave in a cupboard on a shelf. But the Spirit of God will raise us just as it raised Jesus from the dead.

**Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23.** This parable and explanation of this extraordinarily incompetent Farmer's efforts mirrors closely the experience of the church both then and now. Flat rejection by some, short-lived enthusiasm from others which melts away quickly when trials and the pressures of life weigh them down, but also success, when people believe with joy, understand the message and let it flourish in their lives

**Pretty** wrung out but elated after the services on Sunday, and intending to make the most of the relaxing of the lockdown, we retired to Otterton Mill for

a light lunch (Portobello mushrooms stuffed with Mediterranean veg since you ask) and then it was a trip out to the Blackdown hills and the village of Dalwood for an absolutely gorgeous but strenuous walk (lots of steep ascents) in glorious rolling countryside, gushing rivers, wooded hillsides and a vineyard (!) on the outskirts of Dalwood itself and then a pint in the Tuckers arms. A perfect end to a perfect day.



18<sup>th</sup> Century bridge over the river Yarty

### **Musical interlude!**

It's been couple of months now since mum died. And although I became a punk in my teenage years (just imagine!) I was brought up listening and loving my mum's love of classic American music – Ella Fitzgerald, the Mills brothers, her all-time favourite Frank Sinatra, Fred Astaire, the Platters and the like. I love this one by the Platters about a man covering up loss and loneliness with a smile and it became a comfort after my first wife died much later and still tugs my heartstrings and it is pure class. "The Great Pretender" by the Platters. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEzfhclKO8Q>

### **Thought for the day**

Making the sign of the cross is a simple way of externalising and showing your faith. I do it quite a lot nowadays and curiously it makes me feel good. Quite a change from when I first started going to church at quite a low church, where making the sign of the cross would have been seen I think as highly suspect and "catholic". But making the sign of the cross is a universally acknowledged and understood way of incarnating your faith. By the way, Orthodox Christians make the sign of the cross from right to left across their chest whereas Westerners go from left to right. You will sometimes also see Orthodox priests

in church touch the ground after they have crossed themselves to “ground” their faith. “Claiming our bodies for God” is a rather grandiose way of putting it I suppose – much like kneeling before God (if we are still able to of course!) but I also think it also acts as a powerful corrective to the heresy that Christians sometimes think that the body and its functions are dirty or evil. Because God created us as “very good” and became incarnated in a human being, Jesus Christ. Jesus becoming human means that the human body is valuable and is capable of being dedicated to God.

**The Prayer for Today** was the prayer on the bookmark that Teresa of Avila used.

**Trust in God**

**Let nothing disturb you**

**Let nothing frighten you**

**All things pass.**

**God never changes.**

**Patience achieved**

**All that it strives for.**

**He who has God**

**Finds he lacks nothing.**

**God alone suffices**

Love and peace,  
Martin

Please note my new email address is [vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk](mailto:vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk)