



ST MARY THE VIRGIN, WESTWOOD

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15 MAY 2022 THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Welcome to our Service today! And welcome if you are reading this at home! We are delighted that we are now able to keep the church open again every day.

NEXT WEEK

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

11.15am – Holy Communion

SUNDAY LECTIONARY READINGS

Acts 16. 9-15

John 14. 23-29

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

PSALM 148

FIRST READING

Acts 11. 1-18

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." But I replied, "By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth." But a second time the voice answered from heaven, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, "Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved." And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I

remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God? When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

GOSPEL READING

John 13. 31-35

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

HYMNS:

372 – O Jesus I have promised

137 – For the beauty of the earth

303 – Light's abode, celestial Salem
(omit vv4 & 5)

25 – Alleluia, Alleluia hearts to heaven

NOTICES

NOTICES FOR BULLETINS – please send any messages to Joanna.

COPYING, PRINTING – please contact Aylene: beneficeoffice@htboa.org

PARISH NEWS – please contact the Editors: ht.parishnews@gmail.com, and any contributions for future issues would be welcome. **MAY** edition out now! Available in church or at www.htboa.org ('Parish News').

CHURCH SERVICE TODAY – Welcome to our Service of Morning Prayer! We are keeping our Covid precautions in place and so would ask people kindly to continue to observe these to help keep one another safe. Please join in with the hymns if you wish, with masks.

- Please keep your face-coverings on throughout the service.
- There will be no collection but a plate at the door.

SUNDAY, 29 MAY – there will be no service at Westwood but a Benefice Eucharist at Holy Trinity at 9.30am.

SUNDAY, 5 JUNE – there will be a special and celebratory Platinum Jubilee Service at Westwood!

WINGFIELD JUBILEE CHURCH & SCHOOL FÊTE
- Saturday, 4 June, 2.30-5pm in Church Lane. A fantastic event not to be missed, and their first Fête since 2018! Further details in the May *Parish News* (p11).



UKRAINE EMERGENCY – please take a prayer booklet and there is information about how to give support via USPG/ Diocese of Europe and DEC/Christian Aid on the back page.

THIS WEEK @ HT

CANTAMUS CONCERT 'GLORIA' – **TODAY!** at 4pm – with music by John Rutter, Chilcott, Macmillan & Mealar.

MAINLY MUSIC – Tuesday @ 10.30am – fun & friendship for pre-school families

(contact Marlene on 864412 if you'd like to come).

SAXON CLUB – Tuesday @ 2.30pm – fun & friendship for 'seniors' (contact David on 865314 if you'd like to come).

MOTHERS' UNION MEETING – Wednesday @ 2.30-4pm – 'Sudan' from Sheila Soper.

FORGET ME NOT CAFÉ – Thursday @ 11am-12.30pm.

'CELEBRATION OF SONG' CONCERT with the combined Songways & Clarity Choirs – Saturday @ 4pm – FREE ENTRY with retiring collection for the DEC Ukraine Appeal.

MORNING PRAYER (8.30am) will be said daily apart from Tuesday.

FUTURE EVENTS @ HT

ASCENSION DAY SUNG EUCHARIST – Thursday, 26 May at 7.30pm.

FOR OUR PRAYERS

Please pray for all who are sick, remembering especially any known to us in this parish: Betty Hancock & Doug Hancock.

Pray for all those who mourn and for those who have recently died.

Please *always* let Joanna, Sarah or Graham know of any pastoral need – any kind of pain or loss, illness, hospitalisation, loneliness – or simply cause for prayer.

FOR PRAYER THIS WEEK

- St Mary's Wingfield & APCM
- Christian Aid
- The people of Zimbabwe

- The people of Sri Lanka
- The bereaved, separated & fearful of Ukraine
- Students facing public exams

A new commandment

Today's words from St John's Gospel come at the turning point of the Last Supper. Judas has just left and now there is no going back. A sense of urgency seems to take over Jesus after this; supper is over and Jesus begins to talk, as though he is trying to make the disciples understand at last, and to explain some of the things they need to know. But whenever one of the disciples does speak in the verses which follow this reading, they only manage to show how puzzled they are, and how little they really understand.

Now Jesus begins his 'farewell discourses' as they are called, (13:31-17:26) to the remaining disciples, who will, by their own testimony later on, enable others also to believe in him (17:20-24). Judas will act quickly, and 'the hour' of Jesus' arrest, trial and execution is now very near, so that those whom Jesus loved must now understand that with his imminent departure (of course that means *death*), 'the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified' (12:23).

The two themes of this Gospel reading are related. Now that Judas has gone about his business, and the road to the cross is inescapable, Jesus talks about glorification, the first theme. In all of John's writing the cross is the moment of illumination, when God is seen in Christ and Christ is to be seen in God. The second theme is that of love - the new commandment that he gives to his disciples. These themes are connected because what is revealed in the cross is the love of God in Christ. In the cross we see that love is the whole nature of God in his dealings with us.

The commandment to love is not exactly new. Most of Old Testament law is designed to make Israel a loving community, so that it

will treat its members and those who come into contact with it with justice and care. But here in John's Gospel the connection is made in a way which cannot be avoided - it is explicit. Just as Jesus shows us the nature of God, so we are called to show each other the same nature. This overwhelming great 'new commandment' can fill us with a sense of hopelessness and failure if we don't read John carefully. We know we are completely incapable of showing God's love, but let's remind ourselves that this commandment is given to the disciples who don't understand a word Jesus is saying, and who are shortly going to betray him. Jesus' love for his disciples is completely realistic. He knows the kind of people he has chosen. They are ordinary fallible people, just like us. To these people Jesus entrusted himself, and continues to entrust with his message. They are worthy because they are loved. This is the Christian disciple's only qualification for the task which we are given. We are worthy because we are loved.

The disciples are given the 'new commandment' to love one another - 'new' because it is rooted in and shaped by Jesus' own love 'to the end' (13:1). By understanding that Jesus' departure was his glorification, his followers can continue his work of making God's love visible in and for the world. Knowing that we are loved and trusted by God is the beginning of fulfilling this new commandment. We do not have to generate this love ourselves, because it is given to us. We know that God has loved us and trusted us, well before we were ever lovely or trustworthy. Jesus on that night wanted his followers to become a further embodiment of the love which he showed them. The fire which Jesus lit in the hearts of his disciples that night was to be the first in a line of beacons, stretching out into the future and out into the world. They are evidence of the true God and his love for the world, and of the accomplishment of his work in Jesus.

Sarah