

We are the church.

Sunday 12th July
Trinity 5

Notices:

ISingPop - Excellent Resource for Family: Their latest content looks at the really important topic of “Reconciliation” - coming out of lock down this is really good resource for children.

Foodbank: please use the supermarket collection points while the church office is closed, and our movement is limited. Also, donations can be made direct to Gloucester Foodbank, through their Giving Page.

‘Supervised Private Prayer’ every Wednesday and Sunday 3pm-4pm, starting this Sunday 21st June.

Mid-Week Gathering: a group of us have starting meeting online through Zoom on Wednesday mornings at 930am. It is very informal, and we would love you to join us. The Zoom details are:

For sound and engaging biblical teaching check out [bibleproject.com](https://www.bibleproject.com)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96766775950?pwd=ZEZjVnk4MG0rMmorOTVhN3VEZ3Zadz09>

Meeting ID: 967 6677 5950

Password: 080328

Black Lives Matter part 3 – racism or discrimination of any kind has no place in our communities and in our society. We can stand together in unity to end the injustice of racism. It is not simply enough to say nothing, we as a community declare that we love God, and love our neighbour, whatever their skin colour, as ourselves. Acting out of love and fighting injustice is what was modeled and taught to us by Jesus. To help us **be more proactive** in our empathy, understanding, and compassion of racism, systemic racism, social injustice and the hurt black people are feeling today, please can I encourage you to watch this video:

Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man **PART 3**

(this episode involves the whole family, children to adults, and looks at the question, 'should we be "colour blind" when it comes to culture and the colour of people's skin?)

We are the church.

In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Grace, mercy and peace
From God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all – wherever we are.

Sing: (*click on the song title, and it should open up and play in YouTube*)

[Come, Ye Thankful People, Come](#)

Almighty God,
To whom all hearts are open,
All desires known,
And from whom no secrets are hidden:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
That we may perfectly love you,
And worthily magnify your holy name;
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

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Gathering our thoughts, we remember and confess:

Our Lord Jesus Christ said;
The first commandment is this;
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only
Lord. You shall love the Lord your God
With all your heart, with all your soul, with all your
Mind, and with all your strength.'
The second is this, 'Love your neighbour
as yourself.' There is no other commandment
greater than these. On these two commandments
hang all the law and the prophets.

Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.

Almighty God,
send down upon your Church
the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in all who minister the
gospel your countless gifts of grace;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are the church.

Almighty God,
Who in Jesus Christ has given us
A kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
Forgive us our sins,
Open our eyes to God's truth,
Strengthen us to do God's will
And give us the joy of his kingdom,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Take a few moments to sit and think about receiving that unconditional offering of forgiveness through grace.

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9 & 18-23

A wonderful message from Gordon Clifford ...

Parables are disturbing stories, specially designed to awaken hearts that have grown dull and ears that are hard of hearing. They are sometimes referred to as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Jesus relied heavily on story telling and he did not say anything to the people without using a parable (Mark c4 v 34), but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Today we hear a parable from Matthew's Gospel. There are 30 parables in the synoptic gospels, but none are found in John's Gospel. The internet says that there are about 100 parables in the Bible, but some theologians see over 250.

Sitting in a boat at the lake shore, Jesus preached this gospel story of the sower to the crowd, seated at the water's edge against a backdrop of fertile fields and rocky hillsides. He uses the experience of his countrymen who worked the land and knew all about rich soil, stony ground and scorching sun to convey this important message about spiritual growth. In Palestine sowing becomes before ploughing. The planter sows the seed lavishly, scattering it through stubble, and along the stony pathways studded with thorny plants, weeds, rocks and briars knowing that some of it will fall in the most unwelcoming of places. When the sowing operation is completed the ground is then ploughed and the growth of the seed depends on the quality of the soil it has come to rest in. After all this hard work the sower can do no more and must leave everything in the hands of mother nature, waiting patiently until reaping time and hoping that his labour will yield an abundant harvest.

Between watering, weeding, feeding and protecting from harsh winds and frosts any gardener will tell you that caring for plants is a full time occupation.

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If seedlings are to put down healthy roots that will push up strong shoots, they need as much care as young children. There are no short cuts

or quick fixes in the world of nature. Jesus tells us that it is no different in the all-important matters of the heart and spirit. The story prompts us to think of God as The Master Gardener who has sown the seed of his word on the earth and scattered the sign of his presence generously throughout creation. He even gives the most unlikely places the opportunity of receiving his word and responding to it. If God's presence goes unnoticed the problem is due to a lack of welcome on our part, either because we are not listening or our hearts are elsewhere. It is not because he is absent.

The word of God will take root and bear fruit in our lives depending on the welcome we give it in our hearts. There is a saying in the Bible that we will ultimately reap what we sow. All of us, by the manner in which we live our lives, plant seeds for good or evil through the values we impart to our families. The word of God bears fruit not only when it is grown but also when it is shared and handed down.

As we listen (or read) to this gospel we may well stand back and ask ourselves if our faith has deep roots and if our hearts are centred on God. Are we trying to live out in our daily lives the beliefs we claim to profess in church or the e-service on a Sunday morning? Maybe we have lost touch with ourselves and have a sense of running on empty, of something deep within us withering away because we have become choked with materialism and are no longer hungering for the things of the spirit! In our better moments we genuinely want to answer God's call but we get caught up in worldly activities that on the surface appear to be more profitable. The end result is a shortfall between what is expected of us by God and what we know to be true of ourselves. Many of us have grown accustomed to compromising our principles and have settled for superficial lives of comfort and pleasure. There are periods in our lives when we feel that there has been no growth at all.

The parable of the sower assures us that despite all the frustrations we may encounter as we go through life, the miracle of growth will take place. The grain, which is scattered by the heavenly sower, will yield a return out of all proportion to what was sown. God's kingdom will arrive and the result will be a bumper harvest. God's ways, though mysterious, are ultimately successful. The plan he has for all of us may not be to our liking. It may be extremely hard to accept, but in the end he will carry us on eagles' wings and lighten our load. God is our loving Father, our creator and our support. Our lives are special for he created us in his image and likeness. Life is a God-given gift to treasure and enjoy. Neither the power of evil nor the selfishness of the human heart will deter God's desire to fill the world with his bountiful presence. Our lives can be changed by calling on God to make his home in our hearts and asking him to nourish us with the bread of his word.

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Allow me to finish with prayer. Just as the sower scatters the seed in the hope that it will take root where it falls, we pray to God the Father asking him to lavish his blessings upon our lives. Heavenly Father, help us to recognise the seeds of your word at work in our lives.

Let us declare our faith with confidence:

Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.
We believe in God the Father,
who created all things:
for by his will they were created
and have their being.

We believe in God the Son,
who was slain:
for with his blood,
he purchased us for God,
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:
the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'
Even so come, Lord Jesus!
Amen.

Sing: (*click on the song title, and it should open up and play in YouTube*)

[Lord Thy Word Abideth](#)

We are the church.

Liz Ashenden leads as we pray for the world, the church, and for our family, friend's & our neighbour's:

As we begin this part of our service, during this unsettling period of self-isolating and self-distancing let us take some moments to think of all those with whom we would in "normal" times be sharing our prayers. Let us remember that Jesus promised to be with us till the end of days and He is with us now, wherever we are.

Loving Father; As some restrictions are being lifted, inspire all church leaders and councils as they work out how to enable as many of their congregations as possible to worship together again safely, inside church – and how they can make all those who are still isolating feel included.

Thank you, Father for all key workers, particularly those who have been working tirelessly within our own community. We pray for the health workers, care workers, schoolteachers, shopworkers, faith leaders and volunteers. Bring them comfort and rest when they need it.

We pray for the leaders of governments around the world that they may work together for the benefit of all; to eliminate this Corona virus, to alleviate poverty, to reverse climate change and to bring peace to all nations. Show us Lord anything we can do, (in addition to prayer,) to help bring any of this about.

Bless our community in and around Brockworth and help us, as your church in this place, to look out for anyone who may be feeling lonely, unloved or excluded. Help us to sow the seeds of faith in the hearts of those who do not know you and let them know that they are all your precious children.

Father, bring comfort to all who are suffering in any way at the moment. We hold in our hearts anyone known to us who is sick, grieving or worried about someone they love. Bring them healing, Lord, or if that is not your will in this life, bring acceptance and the reassurance that you are alongside them in their pain.

Thank you Lord, for all those who have touched our lives and have gone before us. We bring before you those on our hearts today.

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We know that we must all die: help us to overcome any fear of dying and strengthen our faith in the knowledge that, thanks to His death and resurrection, Jesus has opened the way for all who believe in him to rejoice with him forever, in your presence.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your son Jesus Christ. Amen

We pray with confidence as our saviour has taught us:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

Sing: *(click on the song title, and it should open up and play in YouTube)*

[To God be the Glory](#)

Why not have a look the Rend Collective worshipping about God's Kingdom ... Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be Done.

[Rend Collective – Build Your Kingdom Here](#)

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Numbers 6:24-26 *The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

Until we can come together in worship & witness be strong in the Lord & in his mighty power. (Eph6:10)

– **AMEN?**