

We are the church.

Sunday 26th July
Trinity 7



Notices:

ISingPop - **Excellent Resource for Family**: look at their latest content.

‘Supervised Private Prayer’: every Wednesday 3pm-4pm

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:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96766775950?pwd=ZlZjVnk4MG0rMmorOTVhN3VEZ3Zadz09>

Meeting ID: 967 6677 5950

Password: 080328

Black Lives Matter part 5 – 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 5

(Emmual Acho looks at the tensions associated with interracial relationships)

... all these videos are about 4mins ... give them go

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*)

[Father I Place into Your Hands](#)

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

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,

We are the church.

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.

Generous God,
You give us gifts and make them grow;
Though our faith is as small as a
mustard seed, make it grow to your
glory and the flourishing of your
kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.*

We are the church.

Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" ¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah's eyes were weak,^[a] but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. ¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." ¹⁹ Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." ²⁰ So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." ²² So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. ²³ But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. ²⁴ (Laban gave^[b] his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) ²⁵ And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" ²⁶ Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷ Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years." ²⁸ Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. ²⁹ (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.) ³⁰ So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 - The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

We are the church.

Jacob our main character is on the run: he has just cheated his brother's (Esau) inheritance from him, and not being strong or brave, he runs away from his father and brother. There are further deceitful family dynamics, it was Jacob's mother who orchestrated the plan to cheat and deceive the inheritance from Esau and husband (Isaac).

However, the story doesn't end with him running away. His mother insists that he runs away to her family where he will be safe, which is where we find Jacob in our Genesis story. Jacob arrives with Laban, his mother's brother, and instantly falls in love with Rachel the younger of the two daughters of Laban, Leah is the sister. We are told v17, "Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance", Rachel is the pretty one, and Leah is not. Laban agrees with Jacob, for 7 years labour he can marry his daughter. However, the plot thickens and Jacob the cheater and deceiver becomes the cheated and deceived – the tables have turned on him.

The story is unique in the wider Genesis narrative. The main characters in the story are Rachel, Leah, Laban and Jacob, God is not overtly part of this story, we have four corrupt, deceitful, and manipulative characters. All the characters in the story are con artists: Jacob cons his brother, Laban cons Jacob, and Rachel and Leah must have been involved with the con for it to work. He married Rachel, but then Rachel and Leah swapped roles, Rachel giving way after the wedding ceremony, for Leah to continue the wedding celebrations.

You would not be wrong in asking the question, where is God in this story?

This marks a huge shift in the narrative of Genesis, until this point God had spoken to characters in bold and clear ways. We now see God speaking through his providence. God is still an ever-present source in the story, but he is working in the background, through situations and events to draw people into a deeper relationship with him.

During lock-down, when we saw the daily death toll raising towards nearly 1000 a day, or hearing stories of care workers working without correct PPE, or hearing of families struggling with parents not being able to work, did you ever think, 'where is God in all this'?

Sometimes it is hard to know and experience God's presence in all situations, but that is where faith kicks in. God's promises and truths are timeless, and in times of trouble, or doubt we need to lean into them:

*Proverbs 3:5-6 trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean
not on your own understanding*

The next time we find ourselves asking the question, 'where is God in the chaos of this situation or friendship?'

*Remind yourself "we know that for those who love God all things work together for
good, for those who are called according to his purpose"
Romans 8:28*

*OR "Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your
worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a
sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and
settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the
center of your life" Phil 4:6-7*

We are the church.

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)*

Thou Art the Way

We are the church.

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

As we begin our prayers of intercession, let us take a moment to think of all the people with whom we would, in "normal" times be joining our prayers this morning. Let us remember that Jesus has promised to be with us till the end of days, and He is with us now, wherever we are.

Heavenly Father, send your spirit on your church and everyone who acknowledges you to be their God. Inspire your church leaders and readers as they sow the seeds of your Word among your people. Here at St George's we ask you to bless Mike, David, Gordon and Louisa as they guide and encourage us on our faith journeys.

Lord in your mercy ----- Hear our prayer.

Loving Lord, as your world battles with this pandemic, we pray for all those who are suffering as a result of the disease, or as a consequence of the lockdown. We pray for all those who are grieving over the loss of a loved one who has died from it, for all the nurses, doctors and care workers and all the scientists working for a cure or for a vaccine. Lord, show us some good from what appears to be a totally negative situation.

Merciful Lord, as the country moves further out of lockdown, give courage to all who are fearful and show them how they can begin to emerge from home in safety. At the same time, Lord, increase the awareness of all those people who think that there is no longer any danger and who flout the regulations and guidelines.

Lord in your mercy ----- Hear our prayer

As we pray for our families, friends and neighbours, we ask you to bless everyone who has recently moved into our area. Show us what we can do to make them feel welcome. We pray too for all the community organisations in and around Brockworth, especially now as many are making arrangements to restart normal activities.

Lord in your mercy ----- Hear our prayer

Father, comfort everyone who is sick in body mind or spirit. Especially today we hold in our prayers, Pat Wood and Erica, as well as all those on our hearts this morning, and those known only to you.

Lord in your mercy ----- Hear our prayer

Thank you, Lord, for those who have touched our lives and who have died. We remember before you any who are on our hearts today.

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

We are the church.

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*)

God is Working His Purpose Out

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?**