

~ Notices ~

Easter Vestry - Notice is given that the Easter Vestries will be held on the following dates and places:

Kilnasoolagh Church - 17th September 7.30pm (*changed*)

St Columba's and Christ Church Spanish Point - 20th September after 11.30 service at St Columba's

Elections will be held for the following posts: People's and Rector's Church Wardens, People's and Rector's Glebe Wardens, and other members of the Select Vestry; the Secretary and Treasurer will also be appointed. As this year marks the *Triennium* we shall also be electing the Parochial Nominators and Diocesan Synod Representatives. For a description of roles and responsibilities please see the Parish Handbook (available at the back of Church and also by emailing the Rector). **Please also ensure that you are on the list of registered members of your parish Church - see Church Wardens to check.**

Please refer to the Parish Handbook - displayed at the back of church (you may take a copy home). A copy of the Easter Vestry Report is also available at the back of church and via email.

Resumption of Services - A number of precautions are in place due to Covid 19 and we accept that this will mean some inconvenience and changes to our normal routine. Rather than worry people, we hope that these measures will reassure you that we are taking the anti-virus advice very seriously in order to ensure that our churches are as welcoming and safe as possible. The first few services will use a shorter liturgy with music but without hymns. Communion will resume later in the year.

Virtual Camino - I have been walking during August to raise funds for Focus Ireland, the charity that provides homes for the homeless across the country. I started on Scattery Island and have continued across the Burren and West and East Clare. Please support if you can - Covid is bad enough for those of us with the safety of our own homes - pity those who have nowhere for shelter or protection. I have almost reached the target but have been delayed by a few days due to awaiting the results of a Covid test and having to self-isolated - the walk will be completed in early September. The link to the Justgiving page is on the front page of our website: <https://clareanglicans.ie>

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

Online services - These are to continue each Sunday, in addition to the weekly meditations on Facebook. During this time away our website <https://clareanglicans.ie> has significantly developed, so please do scroll down the opening page to explore the new sections and information. There are six new sections with more to come:

- Worship - a number of videos of services
- Pray - leaflets and resources on ways of praying
- Explore - videos of some inspiring speakers
- Think Question Believe - a parish podcast
- Viewpoint - videos on the basics of Christianity
- Rector's Blog - articles, thoughts, opinions

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721

New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org> The Common Worship psalter is © The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England, 2000. Common Worship texts are available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources>



13th Sunday after Trinity (Year A)

Readings and Hymns

Collect

Almighty God, you search us and know us: may we rely on you in strength and rest on you in weakness, now and in all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

- 1) Christ the Lord is risen again
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2u_2yMfHLY
- 2) Angel voices ever singing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nFEjJKuDe4>
- 3) For the fruit of all creation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbBUFSOkbdM>
- 4) God, How Can We Forgive
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuBTuh4CsyE>

Exodus 12: 1-14

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

Psalms 149

Alleluia.
O sing to the Lord a new song; ♦
sing his praise in the congregation of the faithful.
Let Israel rejoice in their maker; ♦
let the children of Zion be joyful in their king.
Let them praise his name in the dance; ♦
let them sing praise to him with timbrel and lyre.
For the Lord has pleasure in his people ♦
and adorns the poor with salvation.
Let the faithful be joyful in glory; ♦
let them rejoice in their ranks.

Romans 13: 8-14

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Matthew 18: 15-20

'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

Commentary

Exodus 12:1-14

God has assailed the Egyptians with nine plagues: turning the water of the Nile to blood; infestations of frogs, gnats, and flies; terminal illness of livestock; boils; thunder, hail and fire; locusts; and darkness for three days: all this to convince the Pharaoh to "Let my people go, so that they may worship ... [God]" (9:1). The Pharaoh has refused to listen; he has refused to come to the knowledge that "I am the Lord" (7:17). God continues to act in history to the benefit of his chosen people. As is the case for the other plagues, the preparation for the last plague is described at length, but the plague itself occupies only a few verses. A lamb or goat is to be kept in safekeeping ("keep it", v. 6) until close to the full moon ("the fourteenth day"); then "the whole assembled congregation" will slaughter it: here all take on the role of priests. The priestly role extends further: the animal is to be "roasted" (v. 8, not boiled), and it is to be completely consumed (v. 10): a perfect ("without blemish", v. 5) and complete sacrifice. When eating it, the people are to be ready to travel (v. 11) and it shall be eaten "hurriedly" – but also (per another translation) in trepidation. In v. 12, God will do to the Egyptians more than what Pharaoh tried to do to the Israelites: "strike down every firstborn", male and female. The people are to "celebrate it as a festival to the Lord" (v. 14), and also as a pilgrimage. This is the origin of Passover, the commemoration of how God rescued his chosen people. Easter, too, is an event of rescue: God rescues us from sin. In vv. 29-32, God brings the tenth plague on the Egyptians, killing all their eldest children. The Pharaoh has had enough: he says "Rise up, go away from my people ... Go, worship the Lord ... And bring a blessing on me too!" God has made his point. In v. 37ff, the Exodus begins.

Psalms 149

This psalm was used in a liturgical setting: note "assembly of the faithful". Worshipers are invited to sing "a new song", perhaps new because God continually reveals more of himself to the faithful. V. 3 tells us that hymns were accompanied by "dancing", the "tambourine" and the "lyre". Praise him because he delights in his people and gives

victory (in some sense) to those who hold him in awe. (In v. 5 "glory" is a divine title.) May "the faithful" even "sing for joy" in their homes ("on their couches"). Vv. 6-9 appear to be a call to battle, to a holy war: may God's people execute on "nations" (v. 7) and "peoples" the "judgement decreed" (v. 9) by God.

Romans 13:8-14

In vv. 1-7, Paul has written about the obligations we Christians have to civil authorities; he now continues his instructions on ethics for Christians. The only thing we Christians should "owe" (v. 8) others – Christians and non-Christians – is love: this sums up the obligations of the Christian in life. But as Christians, love is part of the deal rather than an obligation, and can never be completely discharged. Love among Christians is something special: it is mutual. Then vv. 9-10: if we love our neighbours, we will treat them as the Ten Commandments ("the law") requires: this flows naturally out of our love for them, e.g. we will not offend them by adulterous behaviour. This is why "one who loves another ... [fully satisfies] the law" (v. 8). In v. 11, Paul tells us another reason why ethical behaviour is important for Christians. We know that we are living both in the present and in the age which is after the first coming of the Messiah and before the second: "salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers". Paul expresses it in terms of night and day: we should awake, pass from darkness to light, from evil to good. The image of armour is also found in Jewish contemporary writings about the end of the age; in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul tells us that the "armour of light" (v. 12) is faith, hope, charity, fidelity, uprightness, etc. "Let us live" (v. 13), he says, as if the Day of the Lord is already here, "honourably", not in ways that harm ourselves and our neighbours. Rather, let Christ be our armour, and let us not give in to the temptations of the flesh. (In baptism, we have already "put on", v. 14, Christ, but life in Christ is something that grows with experience. As we grow in the faith, we are more and more able to resist sinful opportunities.)

Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus has just told the parable of the lost sheep. When one sheep gets lost, he says, doesn't the shepherd "go in search of the one that went astray?" (v. 12). And, if he finds it, doesn't he rejoice "over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray"? (v. 13). So, in the church, how should a "member" (v. 15) who has strayed, i.e. sinned, be treated? First, try taking him (or her) aside and "point out the fault" to him. Do not humiliate him by having others present. But if he doesn't listen, face him with his misdemeanour before a few witnesses. Sharing the reproof adds weight to it. If the person still refuses to listen, bring the matter before the whole assembly of the (local) church. If "the offender refuses to listen even to the church" (v. 17), consider the person an unworthy outsider: in Jewish parlance in Jesus' time "a Gentile and a tax collector". Expel him from the church (as Paul did at Corinth, where a man was living with his father's wife.) Then, in v. 18, Jesus broadens what he said earlier of Peter (16:19); "you" (the whole assembly) have the authority to "bind" (here, condemn) and to "loose" (here, acquit). Their decision will be ratified by God. Finally, in vv. 19-20, Jesus tells us that in common prayer, study, and in decision-making, however small the group, if we ask God for anything seeking to know his will and do it ("in my name"), he will do it, because Jesus, God the Son, is there in the community.