

~ Notices ~

Concerts – Two concerts are scheduled for October and one for November so far:

Sat 23rd Oct - 7.00pm - Clare Music Makers Teachers Concert. St Columba's Church, Ennis

Sun 30th October 7.15pm – 'Harping on' with famed guitarist **Steve Cooney**, five harpists and others. St Columba's Church, Ennis, Tickets €10 from Custy's, Ennis or www.eventbrite.ie

27th November 7.30pm – **Regina Nathan** – ticket details to be confirmed.

Prayers - 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.

Readers – This is an invitation to join a rota to give a reading in church and/or in the online service. Please do let me know if you might like the opportunity to read in church – if you haven't before don't worry – I am happy to arrange a practice session – otherwise, just go for it!

Advent Course – For those who remember back to February of 2020, we had started the course 'Living the Questions', and we rudely interrupted by the pandemic. Depending upon interest expressed, I intend to start again this November as an Advent course, to be held in the parish room of St Columba's (rather larger for social distancing than the Rectory). Please indicate on the sign-up sheet whether you would like to join us – we can always come back to the Rectory in the New Year.

Harvest – We shall be keeping Harvest Communion Services this year on Sunday 24th October at both Kilnasoolagh and St Columba's, Ennis. Whilst it will be a more subdued celebration this year, we can still give thanks for the resurgence of community life this Autumn, the hard work of farming, retail and distribution industries during the last long months of pandemic, and the hope of better days to come.

Christmas – Whilst the Christmas Tree Festival cannot proceed this year (although we need to start planning for Christmas 2022 – it is too important to lose) we need to start planning and preparing for Christmas celebrations for 2021. A Carol service of some kind will be possible, whether it features a small ensemble singing, or full congregation with masks, or musicians playing instrumental versions. I am asking either for volunteers to play or for recommendations of friends/family who might play as part of a team of musicians for a 'Carols around the Christmas Tree' event.

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans

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

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19th Sunday after Trinity (Year B) 2021

Readings and Hymns

Collect: Faithful Lord, whose steadfast love never ceases and whose mercies never come to an end: grant us the grace to trust you and to receive the gifts of your love, new every morning, in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns: *In conjunction with the online service you might like to view these hymns on YouTube - with internet links and lyrics so that you can sing along:*

- 1) Thy kingdom come, O God
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oe-Vy5LkYEes>
- 2) O God, our help in ages past
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsHlwXTjAOU>
- 3) Lord, thy word abideth
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nASbR4QwiP0>
- 4) Glorious things of thee are spoken
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQJUrk5vh4g>

Amos 5:6-7,10-15

Seek the Lord and live,
or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire,
and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.
Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,
and bring righteousness to the ground!
They hate the one who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.
Therefore, because you trample on the poor
and take from them levies of grain,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not live in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.
For I know how many are your transgressions,
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and push aside the needy in the gate.
Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;
for it is an evil time.
Seek good and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,
just as you have said.
Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Psalms 22.1-15

Teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart.
Turn, O Lord! How long?
Have compassion on your servants!
Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
and for as many years as we have seen evil.
Let your work be manifest to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.
Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us,
and prosper for us the work of our hands—
O prosper the work of our hands!

Hebrews 4: 12-16

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested* as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Mark 10: 17-31

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother." ' He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money* to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' They were greatly astounded and said to one another, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'

Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'

Commentary

Amos

In about 750 BC, Amos heard the Lord calling him to prophesy to the northern tribes. He leaves Tekoa, a village just south of Jerusalem, and travels to the north. Israel has split into two kingdoms. Times are prosperous, but society is corrupt and God is largely ignored. This book is our only source of knowledge about Amos. He speaks as a voice independent of the royal court. He predicts God's punishment upon Israel, Judah and the surrounding nations. He foretells that Israel will fall. Within a few decades, the northern kingdom will be conquered by Assyrian armies.

Psalms 22:1-15

Jesus quoted the opening words of this psalm on the cross. In his suffering, the psalmist feels deserted by God, despite his cries for help day and night (v. 2). Even so, he convinced that God is "holy" (v. 3). His forebears trusted in God (as he does), and God helped them (v. 4), so may God help him now

(v. 5). His misery is aggravated by those who mock him; they see his suffering as a sign of God's ineffectiveness: they jeer and grimace ("make mouths", v. 7) at him. But he is convinced that God has been with him since his infancy (vv. 9-10); only God can help him now. His detractors behave like savage animals, seeking to devour him (vv. 12-13). (Bulls from "Bashan" were particularly strong.) His suffering (v. 14-15) may be physical and mortal: his dry "mouth" may be due to fever; it leaves him weak. His detractors are so sure he will die that they have already auctioned off his clothes (v. 18). May God help him soon (v. 19). When God restores him, he will spread the word of God in the community and will praise him in the "congregation" (v. 22), the Temple. God will rescue him, and all "nations" (v. 27), and those who have died (v. 29). "Future generations" (v. 30) too will be told of God's saving deeds, and will proclaim them.

Hebrews 4:12-16

The author has written that Christ, the sympathetic and trustworthy "high priest" (4:14), took on being human in every way, being tested by suffering. Through his death he is able to restore us to oneness with God, freeing us from the power of evil forces (2:14-18) – as his readers are now tempted to desert the faith.

Now he continues: the "word" (4:12, *logos*, essence, principle) of God produces life ("living") and is "active": it is able to differentiate between the faithful and the errant. It has properties only God has: it can judge our innermost beings ("intentions of the heart"). "It" (God) knows each of us and sees us clearly; we "must render an account" (4:13) of our fidelity to him. If (and when) we err, God has provided a remedy for our sin, through Jesus, the "great high priest" (4:14), who is transcendent ("passed through the heavens"). So we should "hold fast" to our (baptismal) creed ("confession"). Jesus is a very special "high priest" (one who makes sacrifice to obtain our union with God), for he can "sympathize with our weaknesses" (4:15), because he has been "tested as we are", but without erring. So let us confidently present ourselves before God ("throne of grace", 4:16), to receive both forgiveness of past sins and his gifts to help us now and in the future.

Mark 10:17-31

Jesus continues to teach about what it means to follow him. The man kneels as to a master; such a show of piety is abnormal. (People stood to pray.) Perhaps Jesus' response (v. 18) is a careful one. Rabbis (teachers) were not usually addressed as "good"; only God is good. The man insists that he has always kept those of the Ten Commandments which deal with relationships among people (vv. 19-20), and Jesus believes him ("Jesus ... loved him", v. 21), but what about his relationship with God? Jesus seems to recognize that the man puts his trust in his own piety and wealth, in his achievements, but wealth stands in the way of his gaining oneness with God – so Jesus tests him (v. 21). The man's shock and departure (v. 22) show that Jesus is correct. Wealth was seen as a sign of God's favour, but in the man's case, it gets in the way of true discipleship.

But we cannot save ourselves – only God can save us (v. 27). It is "impossible" for humans to enter the Kingdom through their own efforts, even when blessed with God-given possessions, as v. 25 says in a grotesque image. Peter's words in v. 28 carry with them a question: what is the reward of those who are faithful now? Jesus answers: those who have given up their possessions and natural family for the sake of him and of his mission will receive much: in this life, they will share in the Christian community (although they may suffer); in the "age to come" (v. 30, in the kingdom), they will have eternal life. Finally v. 31: the "first" are those who have status now; the "last" are those who have left everything. In entering the kingdom, the "last" will be God's obvious choice for admission.