

Dear all

Tomorrow is the 6th Sunday of Easter. It is also Rogation Sunday. The word 'Rogation' comes from the Latin 'rogare' and means 'to ask'. Traditionally, it has an agricultural context, looking forward to harvest, and asking God for the blessing of a good crop. But in the past, it has also had elements of pleading for protection against disaster, often seen as a consequence of the wrath of God.

The role of God in natural and other disasters is a huge discussion, that we don't have time to cover here. My brief take on it is that, while God does have the power to intervene, He usually does not. The miraculous is, by definition, very rare. God's people throughout the ages have not been miraculously whisked out of the misfortunes that befall humanity. Most of the saints throughout history have suffered for the faith, and God did not even spare His only son. We are not promised an easy life, but we are promised the power and presence of God as we walk those dark paths – a God who has walked that path Himself in the person of Jesus.

There is a cartoon which also gives a different perspective. A man and Jesus are sitting next to each other on a park bench. The man turns to Jesus and says "when you look at all the pain and suffering in the world, why don't you do something about it?". Jesus replies "funny you should say that. I was just going to ask you the same thing!".

Nick Fawcett posted a prayer earlier this week, which speaks something of this last thought:

May your deeds be sparked by God,
reflecting his love and mercy.
May your words be used by God,
spreading hope and peace and joy.
May your hands be opened by God,
extended in love to the vulnerable and oppressed.
May your thoughts be filled by God,
focused on what is good and pure and kind and true.
May your feet be guided by God,
that you may walk in his way.
May your fears be conquered by God,
his strength made perfect in your weakness.
May your dreams be realised by God,
all things made possible through him.
May your prayers be heard by God,
your entreaties answered in full.
May all who you are,
everything you think and say and do,
be blessed by God,
constantly renewed
and daily transformed
through his awesome power
and unfailing love.
Amen.

The readings for tomorrow's service will be Acts 10: 44-48; 1 John 5: 1-6; and John 15: 9-17.

We will be singing the hymns 'For the fruits of His creation' and 'The Kingdom of God is justice and joy'.

[For the Fruits of His Creation, Thanks Be to God \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

[The kingdom of God is justice and joy — RSCM Hymn for the Day #84 - YouTube](#)

The Psalm for the day is Psalm 98 (now that sounds familiar!)

Firstly, Anglican chant:

[Psalm 98 "O Sing unto the Lord a New Song" - YouTube](#)

And, for total contrast, a Christian take on the Psalm:

[Psalm 98 - Sing Unto the Lord - by Shane & Shane \(Lyric Video\) | Christian Worship Music - YouTube](#)

The Bible study group continues on Thursday, and we will be looking at Mark's Gospel, chapter 7. New members are welcome. It is not a particularly academic study, though occasional insights are shared. More important is the discussion of how the text impacts and applies to our everyday Christian life. The link is <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8109399155?pwd=STVVTU44RzJxTFFHbTY1MnI0bjJZz09>

Meeting ID: 810 939 9155

Passcode: 1w2C9a

A reminder that the Church of England has initiated a 'Novena' (9 days) of prayer from Ascension Day (13th May) to Pentecost (23rd May), under the title **Thy Kingdom Come**.

This year, support materials include a Prayer Journal, encouraging everyone to pray, and note down their thoughts as they do. I would wholeheartedly support this. We have enough copies for all, and some that can be given away, with a bookmark.

For children, there is a Digital Adventure Prayer Map (They are reusing 2020 maps, which could not be used due to COVID—there is a sticker to make them 2021 maps!). Again, we have plenty of copies to take, as well as some left over to be given away.

They can be found at the back of the church when it is open for private prayer. Alternatively, I am happy to deliver to anyone who would like copies.

Today's musical offerings, around the theme of 'Love', which is the main theme of the readings (apologies for adverts – it's how they are able to make content free!):

[Ubi Caritas - Maurice Duruflé performed by Octarium - YouTube](#) (with some very arresting images!)

And the Taizé version:

[Ubi Caritas Taizé - YouTube](#)

Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity - Herbert Howells

[Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity - Herbert Howells - YouTube](#)

I am with you always - John Rutter

[I am with you always - John Rutter, Cambridge Singers, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra - YouTube](#)

Greater Love Hath No Man – John Ireland

[Greater Love Hath No Man - YouTube](#)



Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark