



St Peter & St Paul's Church, Cranfield

## NEWS & DIARY

August 2020

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The editors reserve the right to make alterations where necessary.

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**For more information on Cranfield Parish Church look online at:**

[www.cranfieldchurch.org](http://www.cranfieldchurch.org)

## A Time For Every Purpose Under Heaven



I have long been an admirer of Ecclesiastes, the Old Testament teacher and preacher. Despite the fact that he is considered by many as a pessimist, I believe him to be a pragmatist. A dose of realism is often good for us!

For several hundred years Jewish scholars fiercely debated whether the book should even be included in the Old Testament, yet it has been said to be the greatest single piece of writing and the wisdom expressed in it to be lasting and profound.

For me, Ecclesiastes stimulates compassion for those who are trapped in despair and live in a meaningless world, alone, without God. I suspect there are many who are known to us who fall into that category and whose lives have been made even worse by the coronavirus. It is our duty as Christians to seek those people out and give them the good news!

The well-known words from chapter 3 give us a taste of Ecclesiastes' realism as he lists the fact that there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. He begins his list of fourteen opposites by reminding us that there is a time to be born and a time to die and finishes with a time for war and a time for peace.

I wonder what his advice would be right now as we begin to live in this post-pandemic new normal. Maybe, a time to stay indoors and a time to go out! But, I suspect he would say: "I have already given you my advice: a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to weep and a time to laugh."

For me his best advice is: "There is nothing better for men (and women) than to be happy and to do good while they live. That every one may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil – this is the gift of God."

*Trevor Dimmock*



# Lectionary Reflections

Now that we have a “Diary” (albeit limited – as all activities are either suspended or on “Zoom”) for the back page, we can still follow the Lectionary for August which takes us on quite a journey. Due to the shortage of space, the printed excerpts from the Bible will necessarily be limited and you will need to refer to your bibles to get the most out of this section. The Lion Handbook to the Bible points out that a story needs to be read as a whole, not only in small episodes as often happens in church services. The Old Testament story, of how Jacob’s descendants come to be in Egypt and how Moses is chosen to lead them to freedom, is one such. “The Bible story is more about what God has done with people, than what people have done.” Everything fits together like pieces of a jigsaw as His Purpose is worked out – as it was then and is still being worked out today.

Reading Paul’s letter to the Romans also requires us to look at the bigger picture. Paul wrote this letter from Corinth about AD 57. He had never had the opportunity to visit Rome. It is a letter proclaiming “The gospel of God” (*Romans 1: 1-6*). In chapters 9-11, writing to the Gentiles, Paul wanted to encourage respect for their fellow Jewish Christians and mutual respect between both Jews and Gentiles, pointing out that God shows no partiality.

Romans 12 speaks for itself!

The Gospel readings tell us of some of Jesus’ deeds and teaching, leading to the vital question: “Who do YOU say that I am?”



## Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August – The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

**Genesis 32:22-31** Jacob becomes known as “Israel”.

**Romans 9: 1-15** Paul is broken-hearted that most of his fellow Jews have rejected Christ.

**Matthew 14: 13-21** The Feeding of the Five Thousand. Did this show that if people shared what they had there was more than enough to go round? Or did it illustrate that all of our needs, both physical and spiritual, will be supplied?

## Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August – The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

**Genesis 37: 1-4. 12-28** Joseph’s brothers sell him to traders going to Egypt.

**Romans 10: 5-15** Confess with your lips and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead to be saved.

**Matthew 14: 22-33** Jesus walks on water and Peter attempts to do the same.



## Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August – The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

**Genesis 45: 1-15** Joseph, by then Pharaoh’s right hand man, reveals himself to his brothers.

**Romans 11: 1-2a, 29-32** (It is also worth reading vs 17-24 – how the wild olive branch is grafted onto the root).

**Matthew 15: 21-28** The healing of the Syrophenician woman’s daughter. This was an example of “absent healing” when our Lord didn’t need to lay His hands on the person. Our prayers for healing can be effective through His Spirit.

## Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August – The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

**Exodus 1: 8-2:10** The Israelites multiply and Moses is born. This is the story of how Moses is found in a basket among the reeds by Pharaoh's daughter.

**Romans 12: 1-8** Although we have different gifts, we are one body in Christ.

**Matthew 16: 13-20** Jesus asks His disciples: *"Who do you say that the son of Man is?"* (v 13). He then asks them, *"But who do you say that I am?"* Simon Peter answered, *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."* And Jesus answered him, *"Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."* (vs 15-18)

## Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August – The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

**Exodus 3: 1-15** God speaks to Moses from the burning bush on the Mount of Horeb.

**Romans 12: 9-21** *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* (v21)

**Matthew 16: 21-28** Jesus tells His disciples that he must go to Jerusalem to undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and scribes, to be killed and to rise on the third day. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, *"God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you."* But he turned and said to Peter, *"Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."* Then Jesus told his disciples, *"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?"* (vs 22-26)

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## The Burning Bush and St Catherine's Monastery

St Catherine's Monastery stands at the foot of Mount Sinai. My husband, Peter, and I visited it in 1997. I have found some old photographs, including one of the burning bush!

The monastery was built between 548 and 565 by the Emperor Justinian. It encloses the Chapel of the Burning Bush which was ordered to be built by Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, at the site where Moses is said to have seen the burning bush. Queen Helena was instrumental in the building of churches on holy sites in the 4th century, perhaps most famously the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Constantine decreed that Christianity should be the official religion throughout the Roman Empire. The living bush in the photo below has claims to be descended from the original.

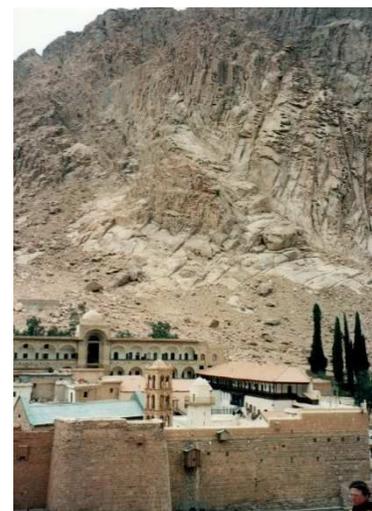
St Catherine of Alexandria was a Christian martyr. According to tradition, angels took her remains to Mount Sinai where they were found around the year 800 by monks from the Sinai monastery. Its name is still officially "Sacred Monastery of the God-Trodden Mount Sinai".

St Catherine's, a Greek Orthodox monastery, is one of the oldest working Christian monasteries in the world. It houses the world's oldest continually operating library which includes many unique books. It is also the home of many treasured works of art including religious icons.



It is a site of pilgrimage. Although you can climb to the summit of Mt Sinai, the bare rocky escarpment was a bit too challenging for us. It's just as well that Moses wasn't daunted when he returned to receive the ten commandments. (*Exodus 24*)

*Dr Marjorie Cotton*



## DIARY FOR AUGUST 2020

| Day                | Time              | Service/Event   | Venue                              |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday 9th</b>  | 9.00am<br>10.30am | Holy Communion (Lead: Rev Jennie Cappleman)<br>Holy Communion (Lead: Rev Jennie Cappleman)    | Hulcote Church<br>Cranfield Church |
| <b>Sunday 16th</b> | 9.00am<br>10.30am | Morning Prayer (Lead: Maurice Rust)<br>Family Service (Lead: Jo Stannage with Andrew Pearson) | Salford Church<br>Cranfield Church |
| <b>Sunday 23rd</b> | 9.00am<br>10.30am | Holy Communion (Lead: Rev Roger Stokes)<br>Holy Communion (Lead: Rev Roger Stokes)            | Salford Church<br>Cranfield Church |
| <b>Sunday 30th</b> | 10.30am           | Morning Prayer (Lead: Andrew Pearson)   | Cranfield Church                   |

Please check with the church website: [cranfieldchurch.org.uk](http://cranfieldchurch.org.uk) for updates on church opening times, material for personal worship and links to other services. Thank you to Revd Caroline Weaver for sending through a weekly reflection.

Our churches are cautiously opening for public worship but, for everyone's safety, strict guidelines need to be followed:

- ◆ Contact details will need to be taken on arrival to enable future tracing if required. Please come in good time and follow the sidesperson's guidance.
- ◆ Social distancing of two metres needs to be observed but household members will be able to sit together.
- ◆ Hand sanitiser is available and should be used on entering and leaving the building and after touching any surfaces.
- ◆ Hugs and even handshakes need to be put on hold.
- ◆ There will be no hymn singing. There will be no chalice, only bread for Holy Communion.
- ◆ Please bring a face mask in case numbers necessitate one metre social distancing.

Sadly there will be no refreshments afterwards. All are welcome to attend but please don't put yourself under any pressure to do so.

*God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4: 24) whether in church or at home or wherever you are.*

**Cranfield Church is open for private prayer at the following times:**

Sundays 14.00 - 16.00  
Tuesdays 10.00 - 12.00  
Thursdays 12.00 - 14.00

Please follow the guidelines on the welcome notice.

**Thank you to all who have offered to be stewards during these times.**

HYMN: "I do not know what lies ahead"  
*by Alfred B Smith and Eugene Clark*

I know who holds the future,  
And He'll guide me with His hand;  
With God things don't just happen,  
Everything by Him is planned.  
So as I face tomorrow,  
With its problems large and small,  
I'll trust the God of miracles,  
Give to Him my all.