

Communion: Sunday March 14th – Christ Church, Totland

WATER

Introduction

For **Lent** I decided that all the ideas coming from the CofE/ Diocese regarding the Climate, were a bit overwhelming. So I decided simply to concentrate on Water.

- Drinking a glass of water with my lunch
- Not letting the washing up bowl run over with water
- I have also posted photos of water on my Facebook page.
- Yesterday Bishop Christopher was shown drinking water for a day amid stats for how much water it takes to produce coffee and tea.

Water is very topical as we fight the spread of **Coronavirus** and sing happy birthday twice/ The Lord's prayer or verses from various hymns all of 20 seconds in length whilst we wash our hands.

Our Bible readings and hymns today lead us to think of this essential element- water.

Do you have a favourite Bible passage/ narrative about water

OLD TESTAMENT

Creation/ Crossing the red sea

Elijah at brook Kerith- the name of the new church meeting at the Memorial Hall

Psalm 23 – He leads me beside still waters/ Ezekiel: waters up to ankles/ knees/ chest so could swim..

NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus' Baptism/ Water into wine

Jesus walking on the water/ Jesus stilling the storm

The miraculous catch of fish/ breakfast on the beach

For Israel particularly during their wanderings in the **desert**, water was a pre-occupation, and a source of moaning about their leader Moses.

When **Jerusalem** was established, getting water to a place on a hill was a priority- a bit like the well at **Carisbrooke Castle** which used donkeys treading the wheel to bring up the water.

WATER IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

Jesus is **baptised** in water by John. The Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove and God's voice affirms him as His beloved son. And John says that Jesus will baptise not with water but with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus shows his divinity in several **water-related miracles**:

Water into wine at a wedding;
He walks on water and encourages Peter to do the same;
He stills the storm and says "Peace be still" something we very much need today
He shows the disciples where to catch a miraculous haul of fish

Jesus has a number of encounters where water is mentioned:

With **Nicodemus**- you must be born again of water and the spirit
He rebukes **Simon** for not welcoming him with water to wash his feet,
and praises the woman who wet them with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

In **John 4** today's Gospel reading we meet a woman who is isolated, perhaps even self-isolated a term we have only recently learned; . The reason is that her pattern of living has given her a notoriety. Instead of fetching water when it is cooler and alongside the other women, she goes at mid-day deliberately avoiding others.

So imagine her surprise to meet not a woman, but a man; not a Samaritan but a Jew; not someone leading a sinful lifestyle but someone who is sinless; not just a person but God's own son.

Jesus deciding to go this way wanted to meet this woman and asks her for water. He reveals he is able to give her living water- which she initially takes literally- but discovers he can satisfy her spiritual needs with water that will bubble up to eternal life.

Jesus has crossed boundaries of gender and religion in order to speak with this woman. In our current world pandemic with coronavirus, it may be that we are called to cross boundaries to meet the needs of others. I am not talking about door thresholds in the event of someone or some people needing to self-isolate. But boundaries of age/ of church to community/ of wealth to poverty/ ability to disability.

We ourselves may not be asking for a cup of water, but a loaf of bread/ a bottle of milk; prescription drugs; In our asking for our physical needs to be met, we may find that someone's spiritual needs are addressed. We may be Christ to them in this encounter.

In these times when social and physical interaction are withdrawn or curtailed may we find alternatives; where a handshake or hug isn't possible, let's engage with our eyes and our smiles; when we can't see someone use the phone to keep in touch, or skype or Facebook if that's your medium.

WATER AND JESUS' LAST WEEK

As we move through Lent towards Holy Week and the great events of Maunday Thursday to Easter Sunday. I noted the ones where water is mentioned:

In preparing for the Last Supper, the disciples are to seek out a **man** carrying a jar of water. That in itself would be unusual in that culture where carrying water was women's work.

Pontius Pilate took water to wash his hands declaring himself innocent of this man's blood.

At the cross, a **soldier** pierced Jesus' side with his spear, and blood and water ran out.

REVELATION

Let's move from the cross where Jesus wears a crown of thorns, by way of the resurrection and ascension, to the accounts of Christ in glory in Revelation:

Rev 1:15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and **his voice was like the sound of many waters.**

Rev 7:17 for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to **springs of the water of life**, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, **like the sound of many waters** and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God

the Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and exult

and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his bride has made herself ready;

22:1 Then the angel showed me **the river of the water of life**, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”

And let everyone who hears say, “Come.”

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

This week we gave thanks for the life of Paul Bell- he is there in Heaven; as are others we have known and loved who have died in recent months and years.

The current pandemic is very frightening for many who fear losing a loved one or dying themselves. May we as Christians have the assurance that having drunk the living water Christ has offered, our place in Heaven is assured, we need not fear and we have peace.

May we take the opportunities we are given to share with others in isolation and in need, crossing whatever safe boundaries in order to do so.