

The Dunster Benefice
Carhampton, Dunster, Timberscombe,
Withycombe with Rodhuish, Wootton Courtenay
Newsletter 20th November 2020



In this issue:

- York Minster-Stories from the East Window
- Readings & Collect for Sunday 22nd November
- Rector's Note

Sunday 22nd November (Christ the King)

Readings & Collect

God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory. Amen.

Common Worship Collect taken from Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England © The Archbishops' Council 2000

Advent Webinar Series from York Minster Apocalypse Now (and then): Stories from the Great East Window
Starts 26th November. Free webinars - live so booking essential. Speakers are: Prof. John Swinton, University of Aberdeen; The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell; Dr Paula Gooder; The Bishop of Hull, the Rt Revd Alison White. Click [here](#) for more details and booking on the York Minster website.



Ezekiel 34.11-16 and 20-24

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Matthew 25.31-end

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

Although public worship has been suspended during lockdown most churches will be open for private prayer on a Sunday or some other day of the week, please keep an eye on the notice boards.

Rector's Note

We all like stories. Indeed, we carry around with us the stories of our own lives in which we are the hero or heroine and the principal character. One of the characteristics of being an adult is the recognition that our family members, especially our parents, have their own narratives too. We are a principal part, but not, in fact, the central figure. Other people have lives of their own. "Everyone's odd except thee and me", as the saying goes, "and I'm not all that sure about you". It's a surprise and a disappointment that other people do not always care about what we care about, whether it's food (marmite and sprouts) or music (country and western and choral) or faith – take your pick.

When we are urged to mission by the church, all sorts of ideas about attracting people to come to faith or at least be open to God speaking to them, are thought about. Lots are tired, we have, in my time in this benefice, tried messy church and Bible studies, talks and quiet days. Some people have come. None have really taken off and this is particularly apparent when we consider the young. Nearly all adverts for new vicars say specifically that the parish or benefice wants the new vicar to attract young people and families into church.

Of course, this is part of the pastoral responsibility of a vicar or rector, but these adverts seem to overlook the fact that the last vicar or indeed the one before came into the post with exactly the same brief. There are churches with enormous numbers of families and youngsters, but they tend to be in towns. It's very easy to think the vicar and the congregation have failed, when people do not come in the way that was hoped and prayed for.

God is good at failure. Christianity is founded on the apparent failure of Jesus Christ to achieve anything except three years of ministry and a shameful death. God honours our lives, the stories we tell, the people we try to be. Prayer is the way we tell God about it.

Caroline