

Open Benefice Churches August 2nd, 2020:

Little Paxton:

Sundays: 9.15am Morning Service with readings and prayers.
Open for quiet time/private prayer: Sunday 10.00am to 12 noon.
Wednesdays 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

Great Paxton:

Sundays: Public worship at 10.30am for 30 minutes
Then open for quiet time/private prayer from 11.00am to 4.00pm.

Southoe:

St Leonard's Church is now open daily.

Please observe social distancing and use hand sanitizer if visiting.

Prayers for Today.

Loving God, as You once fed the hungry crowds with five loaves and two small fish, we ask that You again fill those who are empty this day.
Pour out Your Spirit on all who hunger and thirst.

We pray for those who are physically hungry and facing critical food shortages; who are suffering the effects of malnutrition and starvation;
Pour out Your Spirit, so that they may be filled.

We pray for those who are emotionally empty; who are lonely and long for companionship and love; those who are caught in the grip of depression, grief and anxiety.
Pour out Your Spirit, so that they may be filled.

We pray for those who are spiritually empty, troubled, and don't know where to turn; who long for purpose and meaning, but don't know where to look;
Pour out Your Spirit, so that they may be filled.

God, we praise You for Your abundant gifts in our lives. Pour out Your Spirit on us as well. Fill us with Your compassion and love, so that we would share our abundance with those who have need.
Pour out Your Spirit, so that we may be filled.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who came so that all of humanity might come to know the abundant life that comes from You. **Amen.**

Sunday August 2nd, 2020

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe
"Keeping in Touch" Edition 19: The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.
Matthew 14 v 13-21: The Feeding of the 5,000
Always enough to go around!



Annette writes:

Greetings again as we move into August.

This month is often a time for holidays but of course with the restrictions of Covid-19 many of you won't be having the holidays that you hoped for. Some might have been cancelled or postponed, some may be "up in the air" as to whether they will happen, and maybe some folk have decided just to stay at home – a staycation as it's called. Whether at home or away, having some time off from our usual routine can bring refreshment and rest. I do hope that you can find that rest if you feel you need it or at least take some time out each day to take a break.

After all, this is what Jesus often did. I will be reflecting on the story of the feeding of the 5,000 which came about as Jesus tried to find some space from the crowds after a busy schedule. But they sought him out, desperate for his healing touch and life-giving words. We can see what happens in the following pages.

Above is a picture of Jimmy Bear and his father Zebedee getting into the mood of the story – with their fish and loaves at the ready. You can find this week's You Tube video - with the bears - if you are online, by simply googling You Tube and once on the site typing in "Canon Annette Reed". All our videos since mid-March are available to view.

Keep well and look after yourselves. These are still challenging times.

With love and prayers, Annette.

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The Reading for The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

Matthew 14 v 13-21

Jesus withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.'

Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.'

Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children

A Prayer for the Day

God of our hopes and dreams,
we are empty, and long to be filled;
we are hungry, and long to be fed;
we are lost, and long to be found.

Gather us into your love,
and pick up the pieces of our lives,
just as Jesus gathered up the fragments
of the five loaves and two fish
that remained after feeding the five thousand.

Call us anew to eat our fill
and to find our true nourishment in Jesus,
the bread of heaven.

Reflections on the Reading.

So, crowds had flocked from the towns to hear Jesus, even though he was tired and had tried to get away to a quiet spot for a rest. He could have just ignored them, but we read that he had compassion and cured those who were ill. People were still there with him in the evening and

they were getting hungry. Jesus' disciples could see there was no way they could be fed where they were.

They needed to be told to move away and walk to find food. Wouldn't you have loved to have been there? Because what happens next was, simply, a miracle. Jesus says to his disciples: *they need not go away ; you feed them! You do something about it!*

But how were they expected to do that? The only food they could find were five loaves and two fish. How was that meant to feed 5,000 people?

Jesus orders them all to sit on the ground. He takes the food, looks up to heaven, blesses it, breaks it and... somehow it multiplies. There is enough to feed everyone – and 12 baskets full left over. We call it the feeding of the 5,000; but it was 5,000 men plus women and children.

Quite how did that happen? Is it a made-up story? The miracle comes just after Jesus has found that his cousin John the Baptist has been killed by King Herod. He must have been despondent as well as being tired. But the passage suggests that Jesus' own sorrow increases his compassion for those around him. He can't send them away. He is faced with the basic human need of hunger. The response of the disciples is that it's too great a need to do anything about, rather like we may feel when we hear of famines or disasters which leave great swathes of people hungry.

But Jesus throws it back at the disciples (and us all these years on) asking them and us to do something about feeding the hungry.

Were there really just a few loaves and fish? Were there really 12 baskets left over? There is no need to question that because at the heart of this miracle is an amazing demonstration of Jesus' endless compassion for the peoples of the world. His world and our world. All that food was like Jesus' compassion; *always enough to go around.*

I will leave you with the fact that the world already produces more than one and a half times enough food to feed everyone on the planet. Hunger is caused by poverty and inequality, not scarcity. Over 800 million people can't afford to buy adequate food and become malnourished, not least those in rural areas in developing countries. We can imagine Jesus saying today to the human race: you do something about it, and your efforts will be blessed. Governments and world leaders have the responsibility to end poverty and hunger. Many imaginative projects, some supported by charities, are making a big difference and let's hope and pray that **zero hunger** by 2050 becomes a reality.

