**St Barnabas Church: 13th June 2021, 2nd Sunday after TRINITY**

**“BLT” - BREAKFAST, LUNCH and TEA**

**SUNDAY BRUNCH -** *prepared by Andy Gandon*

**Gathering**

The world belongs to God, THE EARTH AND ALL ITS PEOPLE.

Love and faith come together, JUSTICE AND PEACE JOIN HANDS.

If Christ’s disciples keep silent, THESE STONES WOULD SHOUT ALOUD.

Open our lips, O God: AND OUR MOUTHS SHALL PROCLAIM YOUR PRAISE.

Creating God, Maker of all: BE WITH US THIS DAY.

Jesus Christ, Servant of the poor: BE WITH US THIS DAY.

Holy Spirit, Breath of life: BE WITH US THIS DAY.

**Collect** Faithful Creator, whose mercy never fails:

 deepen our faithfulness to you and to your living Word,

 Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

**Gospel: Mark 4.26-34**

*26 He also said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27 and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28 The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.’*

*30 He also said, ‘With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.’*

*33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34 he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.*

**Reflection**

Do you enjoy your garden? Margaret and I do, though not all of the time!

Like when we’ve planted some seeds, and they take an age to become seedlings, or they never do, and I don’t know why. Did the birds get them? Or were the seeds out of date? Or did I overwater, or has the soil got too much clay in it?

Like when we give a well established shrub a good cut back at the end of the growing season, and then come next Spring it becomes clear it has died.

Like when we seem to be in constant battle with different bugs (greenfly, blackfly etc) which just turn up and attack the honey suckle, most of the fruit trees and bushes, and usually the beans as well!

But sometimes, the seeds just grow, and quickly! And some which we were ready to give up on suddenly show their tiny little heads. For instance parsnips can take up to 8 weeks to germinate. And the zinnia seeds we planted last year took ages to get started, but then gave us an amazing show of riotous colour that lasted for months! And again and again, we look round and feel so thankful for a lovely garden that in many ways was well-established long before we turned up.

Of course you may be a more experienced gardener, and know better than me how to avoid some of the challenges above. But when I read today’s gospel, I can’t help but wonder how much Jesus knew about things that grow in gardens and fields.

“Someone scatters seed on the ground..” – so the parable goes – and apparently it just grows, until the grain is ripe and ready to be harvested.

There’s no mention of any weeding or watering, only that he does not know how it happens. Of course there is a power and a mystery in how the created world works for our benefit, and perhaps this is part of what Jesus is teaching here about the kingdom of God. It can and often does grow mysteriously.

And then there’s his story about the mustard seed, which grows into “the

greatest of all shrubs”, large enough for all manner of birds to build nests in it! Jesus must have had a mighty big smile on his face when to told this tale, for the very idea is preposterous! Clearly either Jesus knows very little about gardening, or else he’s deliberately concocting a crazy story to make a point (or more than one) about his favorite topic, God’s kingdom.

So what do YOU think the point is? Jot down a couple of answers. Discuss them with someone else if you’re looking at this together..

What and where is the kingdom of God today?

**Prayer**

We pray for the coming of God’s kingdom today ..

* for seeds to be sown where they will grow ..
* for the faith and vision we need to see where it is growing
* .. and not to be surprised when a small mustard seed starts to become something bigger
* for patience to wait when seeds do not grow fast enough
* and perseverance when they do not grow at all to plant others
* for the openness and generosity we need to ensure the kingdom is always inclusive ..
* where all sorts of people can find shelter, acceptance and a sense of belonging

Lord Jesus, we ask you to make us diligent through study and discussion, alone and with others, to unpack the stories of the kingdom, as you did with your first disciples.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

**Closing Responses**

In work and worship: GOD IS WITH US.

Gathered and scattered: GOD IS WITH US.

****Now and always: GOD IS WITH US.

*Sources: opening and closing words from Iona Abbey worship book*

**SUNDAY TEA**

*Prepared by Revd Julieann Watson*

The Lord grant us a quiet night and a perfect end to the day.

*From Psalm 34*

The righteous cry and the Lord hears them
and delivers them from all their troubles.
The Lord is near to the broken-hearted,
and will save those whose spirits are crushed

Many are the troubles of the righteous,
but the Lord will deliver them from them all.
He keeps all their bones;
not one of them will be broken.

You O Lord are in the midst of us and we are called by your name: leave us not, O Lord our God. *Jeremiah 14:9*

Think over the day - the morning....the afternoon....think of two things for which you can give thanks. Thank you Lord.

Gracious and holy God, give us the patience to wait for you, perseverance to seek you; eyes to see and ears to hear you; and a life that speaks of you.

In the name of our friend and brother Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

In peace we will lie down and sleep

for you alone O Lord make us dwell in safety.

Abide with us, Lord Jesus, for the night is at hand and day is now past,

As the night watch looks for the morning, so do we look for you, O Christ.

The Lord bless us and watch over us

The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us

The Lord look kindly on us and give us peace. Amen

*Sources: Common Worship©The Archbishop’s Council 2000, 2005*

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