

Dear all,



OULTON BROAD TEAM MINISTRY
ST. LUKE'S - ST. MARK'S - ST. MICHAEL'S

Welcome to the *thirteenth* newsletter that we've sent out since Public Worship was suspended. I hope this finds you all well—if a bit damp due to the recent rains! Having said that, I'm certainly not complaining as we were really needing it. It's been quite nice being able to sit in my summer house listening to the gentle rain tapping on the roof and watching the birds splashing in the birdbaths and flocking to the feeders. It's just a shame it's not usually raining at 6am so I have no choice but to take our dog Alfie for his morning walk instead of having a lie in!

This week I've taken over the newsletter so Helen could have a much deserved week off! I'm sure you all will join me in praying that it's been a time of refreshment for her and that she'll be rarin' to go once her break is over.

—Mandy Marler (Parish Administrator)

When Will I See You Again... As we have phone conversations or see you at a social distance we are very aware that many of you are longing for the day to come when we can worship together in our churches again. The ongoing social isolation is particularly hard for those who are living on their own or have no technology for joining the times on Zoom or Facebook. However difficult the technical hitches are from time to time seeing folks on the Zoom services does break the isolation. We are only too aware that it is important to keep up the phone calls and as the lock down is only gradually eased I hope we will all feel that we must continue to ring and talk, not only to those who we know, but others who come into our minds, as probably in need of a chat. Is

the Lord prompting you to perhaps ring someone you very rarely talk to? These are times which bring fear, sadness, perhaps a loss of hope as to the future. Our faith can be tested in so many ways. We are not alone and now more than ever we need each other and there are Bible verses that are a help and comfort too. So let's look at Psalm 42:4 "these things I remember as I pour out my soul; how I used to go with the multitudes leading the procession to the house of God with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng".

The psalmist is missing fellowship with other worshippers. He is Dry, Drowning and Disheartened. In modern speak "his mind is all over the place!". I hope you will take time to read this psalm 42 and I am fairly sure at the moment you may be experiencing, or have experienced, the same thoughts and emotions as the psalmist has.

BUT... after moments of gloom, despondent memories and longing the Lord brings the psalmist to a more quieter, hopeful spiritual and mental place.

Verse 8 "By day the Lord directs His love, at night His song is with me" and verse 11: "Why are you so downcast my soul? and why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God for I will yet praise Him my Saviour and my God".

May this psalm be a help to us as we pilgrimage on together and keep us alert and sensitive in our conversations and prayers. The fellowships within our Benefice are so precious so let's keep encouraging one another. —Jo Fowler

Next Sunday—Father's Day As part of our Zoom service on Sunday 14th June, Debbie Allsop would love to share some pictures of our dads. If you would like to take part, send your photo to her at alan_debbie@hotmail.co.uk

Zoom Sunday Worship is taking place at 10.30am each week, followed by Holy Communion at Midday. You can join us by landline, or mobile phone, if you call the following number: **0203 481 5240**. When prompted, you'll then need to enter this meeting ID: **588 877 574** and press the # key on your phone keypad. This call will cost you the same as any UK national call, which is often free. For others, joining the Sunday online gathering with video, the meeting ID is also **588 877 574**.

The hymns this week will be: *Be Still for the Presence of the Lord* (Mission Praise 50/Complete Anglican 67/Worship Today 34); *I, the Lord of Sea and Sky* (Complete Anglican 332); and *Rejoice!* (Mission Praise 572/Worship Today 357).

Midweek Communion on Wednesday 17th June will be at 10.30am via Zoom. The meeting ID will be: **838 0435 8791** and you can join by phone if you call **0203 051 2874**.



Zoomers! is a **Zoom gathering aimed at 5s-11s**, although children of any age are welcome to join in. It'll be fast moving and fun with action songs, crafts, stories and more starting at 9.45am and running to 10.15am each Sunday morning, with the same meeting ID as the regular Sunday Worship. For the craft activity this week, you'll need to have a your name in bubble writing and art and craft supplies to decorate or colour them.

St. Michael's 'Compassion' Child Rahel If you would like to contribute towards Rahel's funding, please could you place your cheque or cash contributions through Debbie and Alan Allsop's door at 12 Hollydene Close. Alternately you can leave clearly labelled cheques in St. Mark's letterbox. Money can also be transferred directly by BACS to: **Oulton St Michaels PCC; Sort Code 20-53-06; Account no. 50719323**. We will continue to collect until the end of June. —Debbie Allsop

A prayer in 'the middle years' of opportunity

Lord, help me now to unclutter my life,
To organise myself in the direction of simplicity.
Lord, teach me to listen to my heart;
Teach me to welcome change, instead of fearing it.
Lord, I give You these stirrings inside me,
I give You my discontent,
I give You my restlessness,
I give you my doubt,
I give You my despair,
I give You all the longings I hold inside.
Help me to listen to these signs of change, of growth;
To listen seriously and follow where they lead
Through the breath-taking empty space of an open door.

Taken from 'Celtic Daily Prayer—Book One'

Office Hours With the easing of lockdown, Mandy is now in the office on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 1pm, however please be aware that the office is not open to our congregations or the general public. It would be greatly appreciated that any questions or business with the office still be carried out via e-mail or phone. Thank you for your patience and understanding with this.

Newsletter Distribution If you know of people who are not currently receiving our weekly newsletter and you are happy to deliver it to them (following social distancing guidelines), please let Mandy in the office know how many copies you need and she would be happy to leave them in the porch for you to collect and distribute. For those of you who are already doing this, thank you so much for helping to keep our congregations in the know!

Open Prayer As you may have heard, the Church of England has now advised that churches may open for private individual prayer, however we will not be opening up just yet. We are still working through the advice that has been given and on putting appropriate safeguards in place. We know it's frustrating, but please bear with us for just a bit longer and we will share more information when we can.

Giving Last Sunday during our Zoom service our treasurer John Hunt said a few words about the importance of continued giving during this difficult time. If you would like to donate, please feel free to drop cheques or cash for St. Mark's or St. Luke's into the post box outside of St. Mark's. For St. Michael's donations, please drop them into Debbie and Alan Allsop. If you would like to arrange for a collection of envelopes, would like information about arranging a standing order or have any questions about giving in general, please don't hesitate to contact John on 01502 562301! To make direct donations via BACS the details are as follows:

Credit
St Marks Church PCC

Sort Code
09-01-54

Account no.
90104282

Credit
St Lukes Church

Sort Code
09-01-55

Account no.
82303087

Credit
Oulton St Michaels PCC

Sort Code
20-53-06

Account no.
50719323

For those who regularly give to St. Luke's, St. Mark's and St. Michael's and have continued to do so during this uncertain time, we thank you for your generosity and faithfulness.

So this wraps up yet another week's newsletter! Helen always closes out with a passage from the Bible, and I've done the same. Romans 8:38-39 has always been a verse I go to when I'm feeling at my lowest or furthest from God for whatever reason. It always reminds me that not all hope is lost, that nothing at all will ever separate me, or any of us for that matter, from his love through our faith in Christ.

I hope that you all have a wonderful week and know that my thoughts and prayers are with you all for God's richest blessings!

Mandy

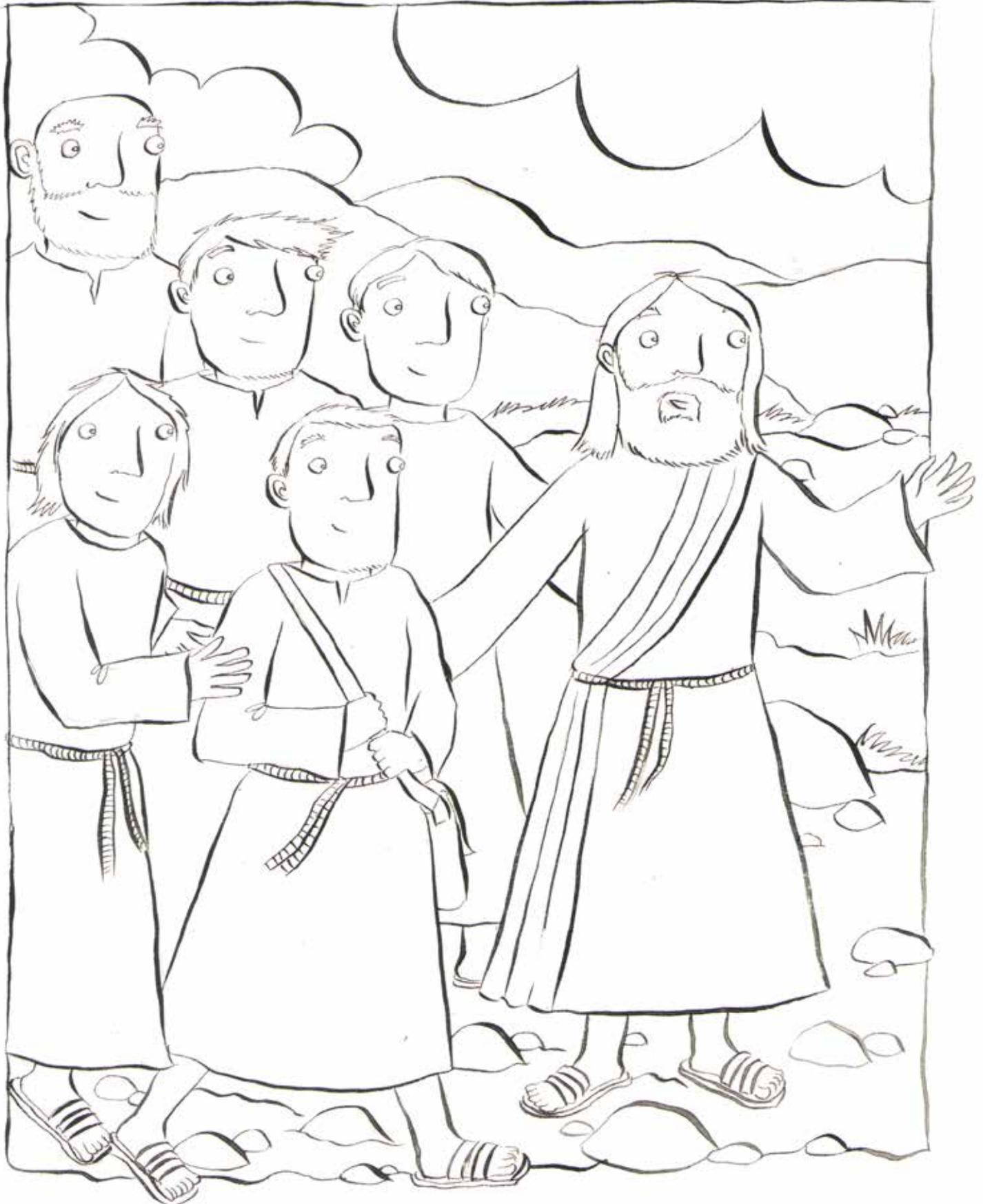
FOR I AM **CONVINCED** THAT
NEITHER **DEATH** NOR **LIFE**
NEITHER **ANGELS** NOR **DEMONS**
NEITHER **THE PRESENT** NOR **THE FUTURE**
NOR ANY POWERS
NEITHER **HEIGHT** NOR **DEPTH**
NOR ANYTHING ELSE IN ALL CREATION
WILL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US
FROM THE **LOVE** OF **GOD**
THAT IS IN **CHRIST JESUS** OUR **LORD**
ROMANS 8: 38-39

Name

14-20 June 2020

Colouring time

Jesus sends his disciples out to share God's love with everyone.



MONDAY
15 JUNE
1 Kings 21:1-16
Psalm 5:1-5
Matthew 5:38-42

TUESDAY
16 JUNE
1 Kings 21:17-end
Psalm 51:1-9
Matthew 5:43-end

WEDNESDAY
17 JUNE
2 Kings 2:1. 6-14
Psalm 31:21-end
Matthew 6:1-6. 16-18

THURSDAY
18 JUNE
Ecclesiasticus 48:1-14
or Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 97:1-8
Matthew 6:7-15

FRIDAY
19 JUNE
2 Kings 11:1-4. 9-18. 20
Psalm 132:1-5. 11-13
Matthew 6:19-23

SATURDAY
20 JUNE
2 Chronicles 24:17-25
Psalm 89:25-33
Matthew 6:24-end

REFLECTION

Our psalms this week map a familiar journey from penitence to assurance.

As we begin, there is a reminder that, simply in turning towards God, the psalmist is confirming an existing relationship: *“to you I pray...”* Sometimes ninety nine per cent of faith is simply turning up.

Even when we’re overwhelmed by failure and sin, what counts is to keep the conversation going. So the burdensome grief that weighs down the *“Miserere”* (which means *“have mercy”* rather than *“I’m very miserable”*; as one small chorister proclaimed) is balanced by a confidence that God can and will act to make things better. No matter what we’ve done, and how we might feel, the awesome God, whose power shapes creation, offers *“steadfast love”* to those who recognise that they belong to God’s family.

Sometimes, we seem to need to confirm our own credentials.

“Remember in David’s favour all the hardships he endured” is less a reminder to God than a reassurance to the psalmist that, despite everything, he has tried to get things right and God has made promises which will be honoured, come what may. Our hope is not in our human fallibility but in God’s faithfulness always.

PRAYER

Holy God, though we feel small and unworthy of your love, we trust that your promises stand firm for ever. Though we may deserve punishment, we know that your love is unshakeable, your forgiveness swift and sure. Keep us walking with you, and give us courage to turn to you, even when we despair of ourselves.



Stained-glass window depicting a square notation used in Gregorian chant. Benedictine monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania.

01420 88222 www.rpbooks.co.uk @redemptorist rp@rpbooks.co.uk

CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

PART IV – ENJOYING THE JOURNEY

John Witcombe continues his account of climbing Kilimanjaro.

The Lemosho route on Kilimanjaro winds through tropical rainforest before ascending through mountain heath, moorland, alpine desert and ultimately the completely barren summit zone, where nothing can grow except the hardiest lichens – some of the slowest growing and oldest living things on earth.

Starting out through the forest, we were thrilled with glimpses of the feathery tails of black and white Colobus monkeys in the trees. Steamy and teeming with life, this is like the beginning of any great journey, full of mystery and wonder. Giant tree ferns shelter extraordinary indigenous flowers, like the unique *Impatiens Kilimanjaro*, springing from the undergrowth. The going was quite easy, and at our first campsite we settled happily into our new tent homes.

Over the next eight days we made our way up and down the long south side of the mountain, acclimatising by *“walking high, sleeping low”*. Jackal droppings and buffalo tracks told of night-time visitors to our campsite but we never saw them. The mountain was often elusive, appearing in the early morning, yet swathed in cloud by ten o’clock. But the flowers were incredible, with giant lobelia hiding tiny purple flowers in huge succulent leaf heads, and *“everlasting flowers”* evolved to withstand extremes of temperature and lack of moisture, exploding with colour among the rocks.

I had not expected such variety, or such beauty. I thought this was a journey about a destination, but it turned out it was all about the journey after all. Looking around us, taking it all in, having to walk slowly because of the altitude, keeping pace with the music streaming through my *“magic beanie”* hat, I was in a new sort of heaven.

Journeys can be like that. We can be taken by surprise by the most mundane surroundings if our pace is slow enough to take everything in, to truly inhabit the gift of each minute. Guides on Kili say *“pole, pole”* (pronounced *“polay, polay”*) – it means *“slow, slow”*. For me, on this mountain, that was part of the gift.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



John on Mount Kilimanjaro

First week after Trinity

Monday 15 June to Saturday 20 June 2020

WEEK

Reaching out

Caroline Fletcher *reflects on* Matthew 9:35 – 10:8 [9-23]

Despite opposition from the Pharisees, Christ heads out, driven by heartfelt compassion, to take the good news to the cities and villages. The actual word translated as “compassion” in our reading is the strongest word the Greek language has for this feeling, denoting deep emotion. Unlike the Pharisees, whose attitude was one of judgement towards those they considered sinners, Christ was moved by love for people who were distant from God. And, rather than condemning ordinary folk for their lack of godliness, he held the religious leaders responsible for how they had drifted from God. He recognised the crowds as “sheep without a shepherd” – an unprotected, unguided and abandoned flock, as helpless

and vulnerable as sheep before wolves.

Jesus’ mission was to reach out to these lost people and bring them back to God. He believed vast numbers would be open to his message, proclaiming the harvest to be plentiful. But he needed help, and so he prayed for more people to join him in his work, before commissioning and sending out his twelve disciples. Indeed, Matthew emphasises that by doing this the disciples were actually continuing Christ’s work.

When we feel daunted by the task of continuing Christ’s mission, let us be encouraged by Jesus’ optimistic belief in the transforming power of the Gospel and God’s ability to work through and protect us, as we reach out with the good news. ☺



Lord God, thank you for your faith in us and the transforming power of the Gospel. Grant us strength, compassion and resourcefulness as we reach out to others with the good news. Amen.

Climbing Kilimanjaro – part I – the decision to go

by John Witcombe

Kilimanjaro is a 5,895-metre-high mass of volcanic rock thrusting out of the plains of Tanzania and Kenya to form the “roof of Africa”. I first thought of climbing it when I turned fifty. It would be another ten years before I stood on Uhuru Peak.

My day job is Dean of Coventry, and in 2019 I was granted a

sabbatical which coincided with my sixtieth birthday. Some of it was to be spent in libraries, exploring how God invites us into the universal work of reconciliation. But it was also about physical refreshment. I love to walk – what better way of marking a transition into a new decade than fulfilling a long-held dream?

Planning the adventure was both a spiritual and a practical challenge. How was I going to negotiate the inward journey, the spiritual discipline of maintaining my personal prayer life? What journey might God lead me on? This was a journey into the unknown, but, like jumping off a diving board, once I’d committed there was no turning back. ☺

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

by Christine Clark

Wednesday is World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. Factors such as climate change and the over-exploitation of land are the main causes of desertification, which is where land loses its bodies of water, vegetation and wildlife. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Gobi Desert in China are two of the biggest and worst-hit examples.

God gave us our wonderful world: it is up to us to look

after it. Rather than wait for a complete reversal of human activity that contributes to climate change and the exploitation of land, measures to combat desertification are being implemented on large and small scales. Examples are reforestation – the Green Wall of China will be 4,500 kilometres long by its completion in 2050. Farmer-managed natural regeneration (mulching to increase water retention and reduce evaporation) has produced successful results in Niger.

Charities such as Action against Hunger (www.actionagainsthunger.org.uk) help farmers and smallholders adapt their farming methods to get the best from the land. ☺

“Open wide the door of our hearts, that we may receive and entertain Thee with all our powers of adoration and love.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894), English poet