

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

20 September 2020

15th Sunday after Trinity

Welcome to the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity edition of the *Viral Bulletin*.
Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.

For links to information and worship during the coronavirus restrictions
please visit: www.northburychurches.org.uk



SEASON OF CREATION

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Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Jonah 3:10-4:end **Matthew 20:1-16**

Whenever we use the Lord's Prayer, the prayer Jesus himself taught us, we pray for God's kingdom to hold sway 'on earth as it does in heaven'. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard is a parable of the kingdom, one in which Jesus sets out quite explicitly to tell us what that kingdom is like. It's a story telling us about God, about God's ways.

And we find those ways to be surprising and disturbing. We find that God's ways aren't entirely our ways. Well, it isn't fair, is it, to pay people the same whether they work all day under the hot sun, or just for an hour in the late afternoon? Simply, it doesn't seem fair.

Sometimes God seems to be inexplicable and out of order, presenting us with a disorderly, chaotic and unfair creation. We surely wouldn't have set it up that way ourselves. In this case, we'd like to see everyone properly rewarded, but the owner of the vineyard (God in other words) goes on all day hiring people, and gives everyone a full day's pay, no matter when they turned up.

He is generous to some, without being unjust to the others. Why resent the generosity? Our mindset has to change if we want to pray for the kingdom to come. "Know that the Lord is God, it is he that made us, and we are his." (*Psalm 100:3a, NRSV*) It is fair, because God is God - and generosity is always a cause for rejoicing. Generosity comes from God. Generosity reflects God. Creation reflects the generosity of God.

Jonah didn't think it was fair either. Today we heard the final verses of the book of Jonah, which is a satire, and quite different from any other book in the Bible. It tells the story of Jonah, a disobedient prophet.

First he tries to evade his divine mission. Then he complains to God that his mission to the people of Ninevah has actually, horror of horrors, been successful. He had hoped to be a spectator at their destruction but, most annoyingly, they have gone and repented. So now it seems that all God can be bothered to destroy is the bush he had provided to give Jonah a bit of shade from the sun.

Life for Jonah seems like a succession of practical jokes played on him by God. But the truth is that Jonah has an attitude problem. The underlying message is that God wants us to turn to him and that upon doing so forgiveness is immediate and complete.

God's concerns are universal, not narrowly racial or partisan, not limited by human horizons. His care is lavished upon those who do not know their right hand from their left ... (as the story goes) ... not just upon those who consider themselves chosen and seek to set themselves apart, and not just upon the insiders, those in the know, but generously upon all who turn to him and all who need him.

The final words of today's gospel sum it all up. "So the last will be first, and the first will be last." The kingdom of heaven offers us the lavish generosity of God quite unmatched by anything we can offer him. But if we think of these gifts as a right, we haven't got the point at all and we have a long way to go.

If we think that our status, or our service, however admirable, or our good behaviour, or anything else that we have or are, gives us any sort of priority with God or with one another ... then Jonah's surprising joker God, and ours, is likely to bundle us straight back to the end of the queue.

Doing so with a sharp little message in our ear: "Sorry, you've just not got the point." Everybody's best efforts are as nothing when set beside the amazing grace and generosity of God as shown to us in Christ.

That grace and generosity is for everybody. It is given to us so that we can give it away. It's not for us to sit in our booth, like Jonah, waiting to see what will become of all those people.

However unsatisfactory we may think they are, the message is that it is the unsatisfactory ones that God is most interested in. Those who don't know their right hand from their left.

We might, like Jonah, be rather horrified at the idea that we are called to reach out to them and carry God's care to them and for them.

But the message today is simply saying to us: "That meanness of spirit won't really do."

Adrian Mann

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sunday 20th September

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Lackford
9.00am	Parish Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Mattins (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Family Communion (CW)	Fornham All Saints
10.00am	worship@weststow	West Stow
11.00am	Parish Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Tuesday 22nd September

10.00am	Holy Communion (CW)	Fornham St Martin
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Wednesday 23rd September

5.30pm	Evening Prayer	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Thursday 24th September

9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
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Friday 25th September

7.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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Sunday 27th September

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Flempton
9.00am	Parish Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Family Communion (CW)	Culford
10.00am	Family Communion (CW)	Fornham St Martin
11.00am	Parish Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

CHURCH ZOOM GATHERING

Everyone is welcome to join our Church Zoom gathering at 11am on Sundays.

To do so, please email Claire for the link at clairerose1953@gmail.com

OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

St John the Evangelist, Bury St Edmunds	12noon-4pm daily
St Mary, West Stow	8.45-10.45am on Wednesdays and 9.15-11.15am on 1st and 3rd Sundays. For access at other times please contact Ian Hobley (01284 728745) or Paul Luke (01284 729654)
Fornham All Saints	open every day
St Andrew, Timworth	contact Alison Pettitt (01284 728379)
St Lawrence, Lackford	contact Harry Lidster (01284 728876)
Fornham St Martin	contact Beryl Dykes (01284 704109) or David Yates (01284 705157)
St George, Bury St Edmunds	contact the Revd Val Gagen (01284 361963)
All Saints, Bury St Edmunds	open for worship only
St Mary, Culford and St Catherine, Flempton	remain closed at present - contact numbers are in the porch



SEASON OF CREATION

8 BILLION REASONS TO SAFEGUARD NATURE

Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International introduces the Living Planet Report, published this month

As the world reels from the deepest global disruption of a lifetime, this year's *Living Planet Report* provides unequivocal evidence that nature is unravelling and that our planet is flashing red warning signs. Humanity's destruction of nature is having catastrophic impacts not only on wildlife populations but also on human health and all aspects of our lives.

A deep cultural and systemic shift is urgently needed, one that so far our civilisation has failed to embrace: a transition to a society and economic system that values nature. We must rebalance our relationship with the planet to preserve the Earth's amazing diversity of life and enable a just, healthy and prosperous society – and ultimately to ensure our own survival.

Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in millions of years. The way we produce and consume food and energy, and the blatant disregard for the environment entrenched in our current economic model, has pushed the natural world to its limits. COVID-19 is a clear manifestation of our broken relationship with nature, and highlights the deep interconnection between the health of both people and the planet.

It is time we answer nature's SOS. Not just to secure the amazing diversity of life we love and have the moral duty to coexist with, but because ignoring it puts the future of nearly 8 billion people at stake.

A better future starts with the decisions that governments, companies and people around the world take today. World leaders must take urgent action to protect and restore nature as the foundation for a healthy society and a thriving economy.

It's time for the world to agree a New Deal for Nature and People, committing to stop and reverse the loss of nature by 2030 and build a carbon-neutral and nature-positive society. This is our best safeguard for human health and livelihoods in the long term, and to ensure a safe future for our children.

Marco Lambertini



The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) was founded in 1961 by a group including the Duke of Edinburgh, Julian Huxley and Peter Scott. It is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

Living Planet Report 2020 - Bending the curve of biodiversity loss.

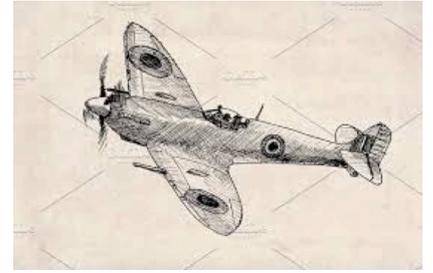
WWF (2020)

Almond, R.E.A., Grooten M. and Petersen, T. (Eds).

WWF, Gland, Switzerland.

The report can be downloaded at www.wwf.org.uk

*Val Gagen points us towards this sonnet
for Battle of Britain Sunday*



High Flight (an Airman's Ecstasy)

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew.
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee



Hildegard of Bingen 1098-1179

It is very appropriate that the Season of Creation includes the feast day of Hildegard of Bingen on 17 September.

Hildegard of Bingen OSB, also known as Saint Hildegard and the Sibyl of the Rhine, was a German Benedictine abbess, writer, composer, philosopher, Christian mystic, visionary, and polymath. She is one of the best-known composers of sacred monophony, as well as the most-recorded in modern history and one of the first identifiable composers in the history of Western music. There are more surviving chants by Hildegard than by any other composer from the entire Middle Ages, and she is one of the few known composers to have written both the music and the words.

From her earliest years she had a powerful visionary life, becoming a nun at the age of eighteen, much influenced by her foster-mother Jutta, who had set up the community and whom she succeeded as Abbess in 1136. Her visions of light, which she described as "the reflection of the living light", deepened her understanding of God and creation, sin and redemption. They were, however, accompanied by repeated illness and physical weakness.

About twenty years later, she moved her sisters to a new Abbey at Bingen. She travelled much on the Rhineland, founding a daughter house and influencing many, including the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. She was a pastor and teacher, seeing herself as "a feather on the breath of God".

She wrote visionary works, a natural history and a medical compendium. Hildegard's medicinal and scientific writings sprang from her experience helping in and then leading the monastery's herbal garden and infirmary, as well as the theoretical information she likely gained through her wide-ranging reading in the monastery's library. One of her key ideas is 'Viriditas', or the greening and life-renewing work of the Holy Spirit, which seems especially apposite for our time.

Hildegard of Bingen: a sonnet

A feather on the breath of God at play,
You saw the play of God in all creation.
You drew eternal light into each day,
And every living breath was inspiration.
You made a play with every virtue playing,
Made music for each sister-soul to sing,
Listened for what each herb and stone was saying,
And heard the Word of God in everything.

Mother from mother earth and Magistra,
Your song revealed God's hidden gift to us;
The verdant fire, his holy harbinger
The greening glory of *viriditas*.
'Cherish this earth that keeps us all alive'
Either we hear you, or we don't survive.

Malcolm Guite
from 'The Singing Bowl'
Canterbury Press

Illustration: *Tending the tree of life by Hildegard of Bingen*



HARVEST THANKSGIVING

a good time to support our local foodbank



Gatehouse works in partnership with other organisations, churches and individuals throughout Bury, supported by local County and Borough Councillors, providing three days of emergency food to local people in crisis.

Those in need are identified by local care professionals and they also signpost people to organisations able to help solve the longer term problem.

If you need help or know someone else who does, please contact 01284 754967 for details of the referral process and how to obtain a voucher.

Donations:

If you would like to donate items from the shopping list (to be found on the website), they can be delivered to Gatehouse, Dettingen Way, Bury St Edmunds or alternatively they can be placed in a collection bin at Waitrose, Out Risbygate Co-op, ASDA or Marks & Spencer.

Shopping List:

At the time of writing requested items were:

Breakfast cereal * Biscuits * Baked Beans (tins) * Coffee * Fish/tuna (tinned) * Fruit (tinned) * Fruit squash drink * Orange Juice (carton) * Meat (tinned) * Milk (UHT and powdered) * Pasta (dried) * Pasta sauce (jar) * Rice pudding (tinned) * Soups (tins and packets) * Sugar * Tinned tomatoes * Tea bags * Vegetables (tinned)

Email info@gatehouse.org.uk **Website** <http://www.gatehouse.org.uk>

Telephone 01284 754967

DO YOU HAVE any photos of your church and people which you can submit (with permission) as an email attachment?

Items for the VIRAL BULLETIN are very welcome and can include photographs and illustrations.

***Please send them to Adrian Mann:
adrian.mann@btinternet.com***