**The Parishes of Topcliffe, Baldersby with Dishforth, Dalton and Skipton on Swale**

**Benefice Pew Sheet w/c 12th July 2020**

**Fifth Sunday after Trinity**

The situation in the Benefice at the moment is that Baldersby have opened their church for private prayer whilst Topcliffe, Dalton and Skipton-on-Swale remain closed for the time being. The Area Dean, Revd Fiona Mayer-Jones is having discussions with the wardens of the churches in the Benefice with the possibility that the starting point for resuming worship could be to have services on alternate weeks at Topcliffe and Baldersby. The Area Dean would be able to arrange cover for these services.

The Area Dean has kindly agreed to answer any questions about our situation and the Covid-19 guidance. If you would like to make any comments, please send them to vicar@cofe-northallerton.org.uk .

Richard Byas

**Collect, Readings, Reflection and Blessing for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity**

**Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity**

Almighty and everlasting God,

by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church

is governed and sanctified:

hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,

that in their vocation and ministry

they may serve you in holiness and truth

to the glory of your name;

through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Readings for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity.**

**Genesis 25. 19-end**

These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. The children struggled together within her; and she said, ‘If it is to be this way, why do I live?’ So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her,

‘Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger.’

When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. Afterwards his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

When the boys grew up, Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.



Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau said to Jacob, ‘Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!’ (Therefore he was called Edom.) Jacob said, ‘First sell me your birthright.’ Esau said, ‘I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?’ Jacob said, ‘Swear to me first.’ So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way.

Thus Esau despised his birthright.

**Romans 8. 1-11**

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

**Matthew 13. 1-9, 18-23**

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: ‘Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!’

‘Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.’

**Reflection**

Jesus’ parables require more than just superficial thought to understand them. They require meditation or deep thinking. A parable is story, an allegory, that illustrates a moral or spiritual lesson. Those who have no interest in learning to obey God will not understand them and will not meditate on them. Those who have the desire can ask God for understanding.

And the question that Jesus asks us to consider in the familiar ‘Parable of the Sower’ is what sort of people are we really?

Are we deep or shallow? Do we give up easily as soon as things get difficult or do we last the distance? Are we choking in worldly cares? Do we receive the word of God? Is it fruitful in us?

Maybe now it the time to carefully look at this reading again and be truthful with ourselves about the answer.

**A prayer for the Nation as the Covid-19 restrictions are eased**

God of hope,

**Blessing** The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,

And the blessing of God Almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

in these times of change,

unite our nation

and guide our leaders with your wisdom.

Give us courage to overcome our fears,

and help us to build a future

in which all may prosper and share;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**A Letter from Susanne**

Dear Friends,

What can I say but Thank You? An enormous and heartfelt Thank You for the kindness and overwhelming generosity of your leaving gift to me. I really don't know what to say! I shall think carefully about what I need (nice new rug for the snug; better beds for the grandchildren, when they come to stay) and what would be a real treat (a good holiday somewhere, maybe on one of the Scottish islands) ... I'll let you know in due course. Such a generous amount needs some thinking about! Whatever, it will be something that will remind me of you all, your friendship and fellowship, and the times we've spent together. Thank you.

I look forward to being able to be with you for The Party in due course, whenever in the future that may be possible, but for now

Stay Well,

Go Well,

and may the God of Peace be with you.

With my love and every blessing,

*Susanne*

**Baldersby St James Church** have decided that the Book Sale we hold every September will have to be cancelled this year.

We are going to re-schedule the sale for Spring 2021 and will publish the date as soon as it is arranged. However, we are still collecting books and I know many of you have been having a "book shelf" clear out over the past weeks. Please leave books in the church porch and they will

be stored until spring when they can join our bumper sale! We are already collecting lots of books and we may have a second sale next year in September to get us back into our annual routine and help you fill those shelves up again!

Many thanks to everyone who donates and buys books, it funds many repairs to the fabric of our church, perhaps one day even an improved heating system.

**St James Church Book Sale Gang.**

**St Swithin’s Day – 15th July**

In our secular society, many people are unaware of most of the Saint’s days possibly with the exception of St Swithin’s (or Swithun’s) day and they may be familiar with the popular Elizabethan verse:



“St Swithin’s day if thou dost rain

For forty days it will remain

St Swithin’s day if thou be fair

For forty days will rain na mair”

The English have a preoccupation with the weather and today that continues with the more violent and unseasonal weather we have had over the past few years.

In folklore however the English summer is determined by a long dead Anglo-Saxon Bishop, Swithin.

St Swithin’s Day on the 15th July is the feast day of a ninth century Anglo-Saxon Bishop of Winchester who died in 862 AD. Swithin was born in the Kingdom of Wessex (an Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in the South-West and the precursor to the unified Kingdom of England) and educated in Winchester, the Kingdom’s capital.

There is little contemporary evidence about Swithin’s life although he is said to have been the spiritual adviser of Æthelwulf, King of Wessex, who donated much of his royal land to Swithin to build and restore numerous churches.

The legend is that with his dying breath Swithin requested that his final resting place be outside, where his grave could easily be reached by both members of the parish and the rainfall from the heavens. Although is immediate request was met in 971 Æthelwold of Winchester, the then Bishop of Winchester, and Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, decided that Swithin was to be the patron saint of the restored Cathedral at Winchester where an impressive shrine was built for him.

Swithin’s body was removed from its simple grave and interred in the new Cathedral on 15 July 971. A shrine to the Saint remains in the modern Winchester Cathedral to this day.

According to the legend, forty days of terrible weather followed, suggesting St Swithin was unhappy with the new arrangements! Ever since, it has been said that the weather on 15 July determines the weather for the next forty days.

The story of Adam and Eve was carefully explained to a Sunday School class.

Following the story, the children were asked to draw a picture to illustrate the story.

One small boy drew a picture of a car with three people in it. In the front seat was a man and in the back seat, a man and a woman. The teacher was at a loss to understand how this illustrated the lesson of Adam and Eve. Little Bobby was prompt with his explanation. “Why, this is God driving Adam and Eve out of the garden!”





The Parishes of Topcliffe, Baldersby with Dishforth, Dalton and Skipton on Swale

There is currently no Vicar of the parish. Until one is appointed, please ring our Area Dean, The Revd Fiona Mayer-Jones

Tel: 07450 402953 or revdfmj@gmail.com

*Items for next week’s Benefice Pew Sheet should be emailed to Richard Byas at richard@sandhillvet.co.uk*