

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 46

Wednesday 12th August 2020

'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'

Welcome

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

Scripture Passage

Acts 6:1-8

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.

And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word."

What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.

They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

Reflection

I have a new role. It comes with a new title. I (and indeed all our PCCs) are 'venue managers'. If I am honest this is not a title which I have particularly sought after or, to be honest, one to which I feel a particular sense of calling.

Indeed the role of a 'venue manager' is no sinecure. For this is how government legislation and guidance tells us that we may return to our churches safely. The venue manager, for instance, is responsible for undertaking a detailed Risk Assessment and making sure that any measures highlighted by the Risk Assessment are implemented. There are some real responsibilities and some quite fierce penalties if these responsibilities are not taken seriously.

And so I ask myself am I really called to be a 'venue manager'? Perhaps the apostles felt rather like this when they had to listen to the complaints of different groups in their congregation that the food was not being distributed fairly. These complaints, by the way, reminds us that there never was a golden age in the church's life when all was peace and harmony.

But the apostles decided on a fairly radical solution. A solution based on their own sense of calling. They decided that it was not right for them to neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. And so they needed to find other people who could sort out the problem of the food distribution.

This text is often used to support the principle that delegation is not simply a good managerial technique but has a biblical basis.

And that no doubt is true. But as I reflected on the appointment of Stephen and the others to wait on tables I was struck by how little the administrative role Stephen was given defined him. For he, just as much as the apostles themselves, was someone who was dedicated to the word of God and to prayer. So he does 'great wonders and signs among the people' and later on Stephen's powerful witness to Christ led him to become the first Christian martyr.

Perhaps we should not be surprised by this as we realise that Stephen was chosen to sort out these difficulties in the Christian community not simply on the basis of his administrative ability necessary though this was. Rather this choice was based first of all on character. He was someone 'full of the Spirit and of wisdom'.

And so we cannot keep Stephen in a box marked 'practical helper'. He also clearly had the gifts of preaching, evangelism and healing. Perhaps one of the blessings of this time of pandemic is that we can be given roles that we are not familiar or comfortable with. And as this happens we can become aware that we have gifts that we were previously unaware of.

So, yes, performing the routine and often complex work of Risk Assessments is also a form of service. A work that we can offer up to Christ and ask that it be done well.

As I thought further about this I was drawn to consider our curate Anna's coming ordination as priest. She has already been ordained a deacon and in it she stands in a long line of Christian servants which begins with Stephen and the six others chosen to be deacons and to serve at tables. When she is ordained priest she will stand in a still longer line of Christian servants which begins with the apostles themselves.

And yet when she is ordained priest her ordination as a deacon does not cease but rather continues side by side with her new role. We are reminded in this way that the practical and the spiritual cannot be separated from one another but they are all part of the whole way in which we serve and love God.

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ
- For further services in the Group planned in August
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- For Martin and Lizzie's wedding today
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Services of public worship in August

Please see the following schedule of services of public worship planned for the rest of August. This does not include all of the monthly services across the Group held pre-lockdown. So if a service in the Group which you

regularly attended is not included in the schedule you are of course most welcome to attend any other service within the Group. However, because of the limitations on capacity in the various churches through the need for social distancing it would be appreciated if you could in these circumstances let the relevant churchwarden know in advance of your intention to do this.

Please note that the 11.00am Sunday Worship on Sunday 23rd August at St Mary's Yarlington is an addition to the previously published schedule of services. Any further additions to this schedule will be notified as and when they arise.

Sunday 16th August

9.30 am, Communion, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot

11.00 am, Sunday Worship, St Michael's North Cadbury

11.00 am, Communion, St Peter and St Paul, Maperton

Sunday 23rd August

9.30 am, Communion, St Thomas a Becket, South Cadbury

9.30 am, Communion, St John the Baptist, North Cheriton

11.00 am, Communion, St Michael's North Cadbury

11.00 am, Sunday Worship, St Mary's Yarlington

Sunday 30th August

6.30 pm, Evening Service (Common Worship), Galhampton

Reopening churches for private prayer

The commencement of a number of services across the Group means that the arrangements for private prayer will now change. The arrangements for August are as follows:-

Sunday morning openings

Sunday 30th August

North Cheriton open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am

Compton Pauncefoot open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am.

Midweek openings

Wednesday afternoons, August 5th, 19th, 26th

North Cadbury, open from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm (please note there is no opening on Wednesday 12th August because of a wedding on that day.)

Galhampton

Wednesday afternoons, 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm followed by Celtic Worship led by Alison at 7.00 pm.

Our Bishops

Bishop Peter is stepping back from his duties for the moment in order to undergo treatment for leukaemia. Please pray for him and his family in this challenging time. Please pray also for Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Bishop's Staff as they take on the oversight of the diocese in his absence.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)