

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 60**

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot. Below I reflect on another of the topics raised by our study of the book of James, that of holding our future lightly.

## **Scripture Passage**

*James 4: 13-17*

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.” Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

## **Reflection**

*Holding the future lightly*

This series on the book of James has touched on a wide variety of practical subjects. However some seem particularly topical and relevant. Among these is the subject of today’s reading ‘Holding the future lightly.’

It makes me think first of all of the turmoil which so many wedding couples have had to face as they have needed to re-evaluate and often rearrange the plans for their weddings. And then I think of the disruption and financial pain which has been suffered by so many businesses in this time of crisis. And then of many other family gatherings which now simply cannot take place. The list could probably go on indefinitely.

In the light of this we might be excused for thinking what is the point of making plans in the first place if the future is so uncertain. And does God actually want us to make plans or should we just take life entirely as it comes?

In this passage from James we meet some business people who have most certainly made plans for the future. They say to themselves, *“Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.”* But is it the simple fact that they have a plan for their future that troubles James?

For I think that plans are important even if they are disrupted by unfolding events. For planning can indicate a confidence in the future and also demonstrate a sense of hope and purpose. And these qualities are marks of the Christian life which are also shared more widely in our society at large. The Bible explains to us that we have been put in a place of stewardship by God and we are responsible for the use we make of the resources which we have been given. As the Psalmist puts it,

*The heavens are the LORD’s heavens, but the earth he has given to human beings. (Psalm 115:16)*

And planning for the future forms an important part of exercising these responsibilities wisely.

But if that is true why is James so critical of the plans of these business people? I think his issue is the way in which their plans have been made.

James speaks of boasting and arrogance. In their planning they have been relying on themselves rather than on God. There seems to have been no place for humble open prayer to ask what God wants.

But their attitude is not a wise one. For how can they be sure that they will be able to go to another town for a year and make money? How can any of us in our current circumstances know that any of our plans will in fact take place?

And yet from a wider perspective the difficulties of our current circumstances simply bring more sharply into our consciousness a truth which underlies the whole of our lives all the time. Whoever we may be and wherever we are we always need to hold the future lightly. For from the perspective of eternity our entire lives are so fleeting and uncertain. As James puts it, *'What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes'*. We can never be sure of even what tomorrow will bring.

So this leaves us with two truths to reconcile. On the one hand it is important to have plans for our lives. We have responsibilities given to us by God to fulfil and we need to ask ourselves how we are going to do this. And yet on the other hand these plans are always uncertain. We can never be sure whether they will or will not be fulfilled. How can we hold these different perspectives together?

One response is to ensure that, unlike the example that James gives us, our plans are always made prayerfully. We may know what we want for ourselves but is this what God wants? It may be but then again it may not. The ideal for which we aim is that our plans for our lives correspond with God's plans. For God does indeed have such plans. As Jeremiah puts it, *'For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope'* (Jeremiah 29:11).

And then again however prayerful and well thought out our plans may be we always need to remember that in the end they are always provisional. There must always be room for God or indeed circumstances to change them. It is in this way that we must hold the future lightly saying to ourselves as James advises us, *“If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that.”*

*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 this month and particularly for Harvest services
- For Anna’s ordination as priest (please see below)
- 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
- Preparations to avert or minimise a second wave of coronavirus
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- For North Cadbury Church Primary School and Marchant Holliday school in our benefice remembering also Horsington school as they proceed with their new school year
- 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.

## **Forthcoming services of public worship**

Please see the following schedule of forthcoming services of public worship. 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.

Any further additions to this schedule will be notified as and when they arise.

### Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Communion (Anna will preside)

11.00 am, St Peter and St Paul Maperton, Communion (Anna will preside)

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

6.30 pm, St Mary's Yarlinton, Evensong

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October (clocks go back)

8.00 am, St Michael's Blackford, Communion (Anna will preside)

9.30 am, St John the Baptist North Cheriton, Communion

9.30 am, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot, Matins

11.00 am, St Michael's North Cadbury, Communion (Anna will preside)

11.00 am, St Mary's Yarlinton, Sunday Worship

11.00 am, St Thomas a Becket South Cadbury, Harvest Service

3.00 pm, St Nicholas Bratton Seymour, Harvest Service

4.00 pm, Galhampton, Evening Service

## **St Nicholas Bratton Seymour**

A Risk Assessment for St Nicholas Bratton Seymour has now been completed and the first service to be held there following lockdown will be the Harvest Service on 25<sup>th</sup> October at 3.00 pm. This means that all the Camelot churches will then have returned to public worship following lockdown.

## **Reopening churches for private prayer**

North Cadbury and Galhampton churches are normally open for private prayer on Wednesday afternoons. North Cadbury is open from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm and Galhampton from 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm followed by Celtic Worship led by Alison at 7.00 pm.

## **Update on Bishop Peter**

Bishop Peter thanks everyone for all the cards and other expressions of support which he has received. A card was sent to him on behalf of the Camelot Parishes as a whole. He says that he has been lifted on 'eagle's wings' through the love and prayers of others and he thinks that the treatment for leukaemia is going well. He is grateful that potential donors for a bone marrow transplant have been identified and he is preparing for such a transplant later this year. Please continue to 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.

## **Anna's ordination as priest**

Congratulations to our curate Anna who was ordained as priest on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September at St Cuthbert's Wells by Bishop Ruth.

Anna presided at Communion for the first time at 11.00 am on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October at St Michael's North Cadbury. We know that there will be others of you who will wish to support Anna in her new role. So, the rota will enable Anna to preside at Communion in as many of the Camelot churches as possible in the month following her priesting.

*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)