

**SERVICE SHEET
19th July
6th Sunday after Trinity**



Canticle

A song of God's splendour

**Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

**Sing to the Lord and bless his name;
tell out his salvation from day to day.**

**Declare his glory among the nations
and his wonders among all peoples.**

**Honour and majesty are before him;
power and splendour are in his sanctuary.**

**Ascribe to the Lord,
you families of the peoples;
ascribe to the Lord
honour and strength.**

**Ascribe to the Lord
the honour due to his name;
bring offerings
and come into his courts.**

**O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth tremble before him.**

**Tell it out among the nations
that the Lord is king.
with righteousness he will judge the world and the peoples with his truth.**

Psalm 96.1-3,6-10a,13b

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Collect

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

New Testament

Romans 8.12-25

¹² So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³ for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ ¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Psalm 139.1-11

1 O Lord, you have searched me out and known me;
you know my sitting down
and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

2 You mark out my journeys and my resting place and are acquainted with all my ways.

3 For there is not a word on my tongue,
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

4 You encompass me behind and before and lay your hand upon me.

5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, so high that I cannot attain it.

6 Where can I go then from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?

7 If I climb up to heaven, you are there;
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.

8 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

9 Even there your hand shall lead me,
your right hand hold me fast.

10 If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will cover me and the light around me turn to night,’

11 Even darkness is no darkness with you;
the night is as clear as the day;
darkness and light to you are both alike.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Gospel Reading

Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43

²⁴ He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" ²⁸ He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" ²⁹ But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' ³⁷ He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸ the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴² and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!'

SERMON TEXT

"Where, then, did these weeds come from? " ask the slaves of the householder.... Who has not at some point asked that question, or, if not in so many words, wondered along similar lines?

Where then, did this pandemic come from ? President Trump has his own ideas but the consensus is that it originated in the live animal markets of Wuhan. But behind that answer are deeper answers, answers that speak of economic poverty and unsanitary conditions; answers that point to a corrupted relationship between human beings and the rest of creation

During lockdown there has been a very sharp rise in incidences of domestic abuse.

Where, then, did these weeds come from ?

The unexpected and prolonged confinement of family groups 24/7, with its attendant frustration and boredom, the lack of work, and anxieties about the future, have revealed cracks in relationships, through which the weeds of anger and abuse have sprouted..

Behind the answers are further answers; answers that point to human weakness and vulnerability

We often live with the assumption that if we do good, work hard and behave decently, everything should work out as we want. That's the illusion with which the slaves in today's parable live. "Master", they ask the farmer, " did you not sow good seed in your field ?" Of course he did. They know he did. That's why they are so surprised when they discover the weeds. The weeds shatter their illusion. This isn't supposed to happen.

Where, then, did these weeds come from ?

There's an urgency to their question. They wanted to know who was responsible. So do we. That's what we want to know when we discover weeds in our fields. We want an explanation and someone we can blame, hold accountable, even punish.

It is this seam that has been mined by populist politicians in recent years, across the globe. Minority groups, economic migrants, entire countries, are conveniently scapegoated to provide lightning rods for the residual anger and fear that so many feel, for a myriad of reasons.

And the anger sprouts up, like colonies of weeds, in all areas of our public life; on the streets, in the papers and particularly on social media. The saddest and surely the most depressing story of the week was the arrest of a 12 year old boy for the vile racist abuse of a Premier League footballer on social media. What soil had that child grown up in that they should seek to choke another person with their hatred ?

But the urge to blame, to punish, is not a driver for the householder in the parable any more than it was for Jesus, whom the householder represents in the story.

When asked about the weeds, he simply says "An enemy has done this ". That's it. He doesn't explain it. He doesn't name or identify the enemy. He isn't focussed on bringing the enemy to account or issuing punishment.

But how about the weeds ? What's to be done about them ? Surely something ?

" Don't you want us to gather them up ? " ask the slaves

"No", comes the reply, "for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them". This is a particular kind of weed, called *zizania*. It's sometimes known as darnel or false wheat. It grows with the wheat. It looks like wheat. Its roots intertwine with the roots of the real wheat. The difference between the two is not always apparent.

As in nature, as in life. The separation between the wheat and the weeds, the fake and the true, the good and the bad, is not as clear cut as Twitter, the media, our politicians and our personal opinions would often have us believe.

The reality, according to Jesus, is that our lives and our world are a field in which good and evil, life and death, joys and sorrows, that which we want and that which we don't, grow side by side. The wheat and the weeds are intertwined in our world and in each of our lives.

That Jesus says, is what the kingdom of heaven is like. That's good news for us because it means that despite the weeds in and around us, the kingdom is still here. The weeds do not prevent God's presence and activity.

Everyone's experience of living with this pandemic has been different but I would guess that for the vast majority of people it has not been entirely negative or entirely positive. For many of us there may well have been some tangible blessings to help compensate for the obvious deprivations. And even if our personal experience has been bleak, the collective experience has not entirely been negative. Everyone has benefited from dramatically improved air quality, many have been the beneficiaries of unconditional acts of kindness and care. We have been reminded of who the key workers are in our society and we have joined together in showing our appreciation for them as never before. As churches we have discovered new and creative ways to worship together, to care for one another and to bless our communities. God has not been absent and his Church has not gone AWOL. The kingdom has been breaking in, in unexpected ways.....

So , "let them grow together until the harvest" . Jesus shows more interest in growth than extermination. He is willing to wait and be patient. If we are his followers, we too will wait and be patient amongst the weeds of our life.

So do we do nothing? Just be passive? That's never the message of Jesus' parables. There is always a challenge to our way of thinking, seeing, livingan invitation to live a bigger, more generous life

The words that are translated as "let them" in the parable can also be translated as 'forgive them'. It's the same words Jesus spoke from the cross when he said " Father, forgive them". Even on the cross, Jesus was unwilling to pull up the weeds.

There is no place in the gospel for Christian vigilantism, by word or action, against another. The only weeds which should concern us are those that are within ourselves, choking our ability to be compassionate, to be understanding, to be loving.

Perhaps it is through love and forgiveness that, in the field that is God's kingdom, the wheat begins to disentangle its roots from the weeds, and shows itself to be one rather than the other, to have a distinctive Christian identity and a fruitful calling.

Amen

+Clive Wulfrun

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

ST MICHAEL

Those newly in need of prayer

Nick Rutter, John and Sonia Doidge, Jeyan Anketell.

Those in continuing special need of prayer:

Anthony Staples aged 6, Audrey Egleston, Colin Eastwood, Yvonne Harper, Ian and Judith Watson, Alison Cox-Toplis, Julian & Wendy, Jamie, Gary and Denise, Sam Bassett, Mark Berry, Dorothy Clayton, Jo Cobb, Dottie Collins, Robert Harris, Bill Hill, James Knight, Marielouise Oliver, Arthur Palin, John Tipper, Sheila Vaughan, Renee Wellings, Felicity Woodfield

Those who have died

Reg Kirk, Ralph Werrell

ST JOHN

Those who are ill and their carers:

Pat Crowe, Jo Hearn, Ann Kinson, Allan Law

Post Communion

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Prayer Requests

You can text prayer requests to 07388 529020

CHURCH NOTICES

A VERY WARM WELCOME BACK to everyone here today.

AIDS TO WORSHIP

- ~Large print orders of service & hymn books
- ~Hearing Loops at St Michael – Please set your hearing aid to ‘T’ to listen.
- ~Gluten-free wafers are available.

WORSHIP NEWS

SUNDAY WORSHIP IN CHURCH

St Michael's and St John's will be open for worship at our usual times of 8.00am and 10.00am.

It is a great delight for us to welcome people back into church for worship. We must also remember and support those who are not able to attend. Our recorded readings and sermons will continue to be sent out as we have been doing. In that way we will be able to maintain our unity and fellowship around the Word of God whether we are in church or at home.

The form of the service in church will be said Holy Communion and seats and pews will be arranged in such a way that social distancing can be maintained. The seats used for Sunday services will not be used again until the next Sunday.

Communion will be in one kind only – the bread – and will be received standing.

There can be no singing at present, but there will be music.

We have produced a full set of local guidelines to help everyone who is organising our services. These conform with the government and Church of England guidelines. You may wish to look at them [here](#):

To make things easier here are a few bullet points to remember when you come to church for worship.

- Sanitise your hands on the way in – sanitisers are available
- Keep a proper distance at all times
- Sit only in seats as indicated
- Leave the church as instructed by the clergy and do not stay in church for conversation
- Conversation may continue in the open space of the churchyard
- Take with you the Sunday service sheet when you go
- You may wear a mask if you wish, but it is not required
- Be aware of others at all times
- Children are welcome but there will be no toys or activities provided

WORSHIP BY ZOOM

We will be holding live worship by Zoom on the first and third Sundays of each month.

These services bring together those who can attend church and those who are unable to do so. They are an important way of keeping our fellowship together. If you have not joined in one of these services before, please do. The next service is on. **Sunday 19th July 6.00pm.**

You can join the service from 5.45pm. The service will last about 40mins. There will be readings, prayers, a short address and hymns.

If you would like to join in visit the [Our Diary](#) page on the church website and find the date of the service. You will find a link there to click on to join the service.

**If you have already joined a Zoom service, you should receive the link a few days before.
If you have not had a link by Friday at 11am please contact the office
office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk**

CHURCHES OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER Our churches are now open for private prayer **St Michael's Lichfield is open between 2.00pm and 4.00pm and will be open at this time every day. The church will be staffed during opening hours.**

St John's at Wall is open on Wednesdays and Sundays from 10.00am to 4.00pm. The church will not be staffed during opening hours.

In both churches there is provision for hand sanitization, cleaning and social distancing. We are delighted to be able to open our churches, but we also want to make sure that everyone is safe.

ST MICHAEL'S STUDY WEEK LECTURE SERIES

The Church of England: Where have we come from and where are we going? We are pleased to announce that from 17th – 21st August we will be holding an online lecture series. On each day a speaker will present a paper for discussion which will focus on past, present and future trends on a particular topic.

Each session will begin at **2.30pm**. Papers will last approximately 30-40 minutes, followed by discussion.

If you would like to register for one or all of the sessions, please email Rev Dr Melanie Clark at revdr.melclark@gmail.com, stating which sessions you would like to attend. We hope to see you there.

Please see our website for further details: <https://www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/study-week.html>

Monday 17th August: Biblical Interpretation

Revd Dr Stephen Barton: Landmarks in the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians

Tuesday 18th August: Education (School Focus)

Mary Hawes & Murray Wilkinson: Called, Committed and Connected – a canter through 200+ years of serving church, school and community.

Weds 19th August: Inter Faith Relations

Bishop of Lichfield, Michael Ippgrave: Where we have come from, and where we are going: the church's relations with other faiths.

Thursday 20th August: Social Justice

Rev Canon Dr Ellen Loudon – Social Justice and Activism

Friday 21st August: Liturgy

Rev Dr Sarah Brush: - ways forward in liturgy in our current uncertain climate

OTHER NOTICES

ENGLAND'S SAINTLY LANDSCAPE

Trevor James has recently published his book "England's Saintly Landscape" and has made 20 copies available to St Michael's for sale, at £10, proceeds go into Church funds. To buy a copy of Trevor's excellent book please 'phone Lyn Shiel (01543/320437) for details.

LICHFIELD FOODBANK In the quarter April 10 June 2020 St Michael's donated the equivalent of 848 meals. Thank you for supporting the Foodbank and please continue to give generously.

BIBLE STUDY – WEDNESDAY 22nd JULY at 10.30am We will be looking at and discussing the book of **Daniel** – which contains some well-known stories we all remember from Sunday school! The sessions will include an introduction and discussion. The text for the week and the questions we will be talking over will be posted on the website the weekend before each session. Anyone is welcome to come along and join in or simply listen and take in what is going on. If you would like to join in please contact Angie in the office.

OFFICE

Angie is now back in the office every morning. The church and office will still be closed to visitors on a Thursday. If you need to visit the office please use hand sanitiser as you enter the building and be aware of social distancing, especially in the vestry. Many thanks.

PARISH DIARY

Sunday 19th July

8:00am	8:00am	8:00am
10:00am	10:00am	10:00am
10:00am	10:00am	10:00am
11:30am	11:30am	11:30am
6:00pm	6:00pm	6:00pm

Monday 20th July

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
2:00pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

Tuesday 21st July

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
2:00pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

Wednesday 22nd July

All day	Private Prayer	St John
8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
10.30am	Bible Study	Zoom
2:00pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

Thursday 23rd July

OFFICE CLOSED

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
2:00pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

Friday 24th July

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
2:00pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

Saturday 25th July

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
2:00pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

Sunday 26th July

8:00am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
10:00am	Holy Communion	St Michael's
10:00am	Holy Communion	St John
11:30am	Private Prayer	St John