



# The South West Ipswich Team Ministry

The Church of England in South West Ipswich

Easter 7 – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## Collect

Risen, ascended Lord,  
as we rejoice at your triumph,  
fill your Church on earth with power and compassion,  
that all who are estranged by sin  
may find forgiveness and know your peace,  
to the glory of God the Father.

## Post Communion

Eternal God, giver of love and power,  
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world  
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:  
confirm us in this mission,  
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## Readings

*Acts 1. 15 - 17, 21 - 26*

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people) and said, <sup>16</sup>Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold

concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus—<sup>17</sup>for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.'

<sup>21</sup>So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup>beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.'<sup>23</sup>So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup>Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.'<sup>26</sup>And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

*I John 5. 9 - 13*

<sup>9</sup>If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. <sup>10</sup>Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

*John 17. 6 -19*

Alleluia, Alleluia

I am the first and the last, says the Lord; and the living one;

I was dead and behold I am alive for evermore.

**A// Alleluia**

Jesus looked up to heaven and prayed

Father, 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; <sup>8</sup>for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and

they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup>I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup>But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. <sup>14</sup>I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. <sup>15</sup>I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

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**This week pray for the following roads in our parish**

Swansea Avenue, Swinton Close, Sycamore Close, Talmarsh Gardens,  
Teal Close and Tenby Road

**We remember those who have recently died.**

Les Howard, Roger Fern and Joy Watling

**We remember those whose anniversary of death fall at this time.**

Mary Burch (19<sup>th</sup> May)

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**In-Person Worship**

We continue to meet 'in-person' on Sundays at 9.30 am in St Francis and at 10 am in St Marys and on a Thursday in St Francis at 9.30 am. Places

are limited so you must book in advance either on-line, you can register via <https://switmparish.org.uk/switm-calendar/> or by contacting the office on 01473 603229 or [office@switmparish.org.uk](mailto:office@switmparish.org.uk), if you are then unable to attend you have the option to cancel yourself or by contacting Kay, Rob or Merv via e-mail and we can cancel for you. This is especially important as the maximum capacity of our churches is 28 (St Marys) and 14 (St Francis)

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## Ipswich Calling

The churches in Ipswich are combining to offer you an opportunity to explore how God is calling you to serve him now and in the future. This invitation can begin through a series of relaxed gatherings convened by Revd Charlotte Cook, Priest in Charge of Westerfield, Witnesham and Tuddenham, and with the support of SWITM and its member churches. The next 2 meetings are on June 8<sup>th</sup> and July 6<sup>th</sup>, between 7.00pm – 8.00pm.

Booking is via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ipswich-calling-tickets-153442202759> please contact Revd Kay if you require assistance to register.

The website describes the sessions in this way

“These are one hour long opportunities to meet with like minded people who are all asking the same question: 'What is God calling me to do next?'  
The hour will involve a person from the team sharing a bit of their own story, and then we will open it up for discussion and questions.  
All are welcome to come to one or all of the sessions.”

Please speak to Rob, Kay or Merv if you would like to know more

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## Revd Rob writes...

I am writing this on the eve of the feast of the Ascension, probably one of the 'Cinderella' festivals of the church's year, falling as it does on a Thursday evening. The practice in the Roman Catholic Church is for this to be transferred to the following Sunday but somehow this seems to miss the significance. It is hard to celebrate the Ascension which we are told in the bible took place 40 days after the resurrection on the 43<sup>rd</sup> day. During the summer of 2020 I was hopeful that I would be spending this years Ascension Day in Jerusalem, but as tourists are not allowed into Israel at the moment I am not able to do so.

The reason for my visit was to attend the Enthronement of the Most Revd Hosam Elias Naoum as the 15<sup>th</sup> Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem. Which, despite the latest turmoil and violence in the land we call Holy is still going ahead. Archbishop Hosam is a good friend of mine and his ministry is no easy task. His diocese covers Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel and Palestine which is no easy task when you cannot travel directly between some of the countries. While I, and many others, cannot physically be present with Hosam, his family and the people of the diocese through the joys of modern technology we can join in the service and assure them all of our prayers which I most certainly will have been doing during and after the service.

Our eyes are being drawn this week towards Jerusalem, both for the festival of the Ascension but also because of recent and current events on the ground. I have been saddened by two things in terms of people's responses to the loss of life and the violence we are seeing once again.

The first of these is that events in the Holy Land are viewed in a very black and white way, failing to recognise that events on the ground are very rarely so clear. The conflict that has been in existence since the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has become anything but simple and the first step on the way to realising a solution is to recognise this. In the words of one writer, it cannot be summed up in a single cartoon or photograph despite what people posting on social media might think.

The second is people using the phrase 'I am on x side and you should be to' as though this is a football game where you support one or another team to the final penalty. This is the bigger problem and challenge exactly because people get entrenched in a viewpoint and are not able to see other people's views or accept their experiences. For fear of sounding like a grumpy old man, as a society we are in danger of getting blinkered and seeing the world in absolutes. Yet the opposite is frequently the case, the more I experience the world and of life it becomes less clear cut and instead of black and white it is more grey scale.

I often feel that trying to hold a line that is somewhere in the middle and seeks compromise is becoming quite old fashioned. In the context of the conflict that continues to exist between Israel and the Palestinians we need to be less absolute and more inclined to see how this may be solved. And I say this as someone who absolutely supports the rights of the Palestinian people to self determination and a homeland of their own. Again, despite the narrative on social media it is quite possible to hold that view and that Israel as a right to exist peacefully within her own borders without descending into vile anti-Semitism. Which to avoid any doubt she most certainly does.

One of the challenges is that all too often we view the middle east with the eyes of a westerner and fail to recognise that there are cultural differences that need to be accepted and worked with. Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal in his book 'Caught In between' writes this which might be helpful. *'After the Six Day War in 1967 the Israeli Minister of Defence put his feet on the table and said, 'I'm waiting for the first Arab leader to come and sign a peace treaty'. None of course did, not because they necessarily wanted conflict but it as for the victor to show magnanimity in defeat and take the first step, not the one who was defeated'*. That remains the case today, the oppressed cannot make the first move towards peace because only the one who causes the injustice can remove it.

So, what then are we to do? How do we, as humanity, seek to solve a conflict that has blown for a century. Part of the answer was given to BBC Newsnight on Monday (10<sup>th</sup> May) when the representative of the

Palestinian people to the United Kingdom in an interview asked us to go back to the basics. In medicine there is a danger that a patient will be treated for the injury that is most visible. For example a person may be taken to Hospital with a broken leg which is treated with a cast and some painkillers and they are sent on the way. But what has caused the broken leg? It may be a simple case of cause and effect, or the person may have been riding a bike, had a blackout which caused them to fall off. Without treating the illness that exists behind the broken leg they stand a good chance of falling off their bike again.

So, it is with the conflict in the Holy Land, it is easy to see the current violence as being the illness when it is only a symptom. To address the illness, we need to take ourselves back to try to understand the root causes and seek to address them. This equally applies to lots of areas of life including the task of reconciliation and peace making. Papering over the cracks is never a long-term solution, even if it is a matter of political expediency.

At the heart of the conflict is an in-balance in power, where one group holds all the power, and one does not. Where a group of people are not allowed the freedom to live their lives in their own land, as part of their own nation free to move about. Where they feel neglected and forgotten about by the international community who they feel always sides with the aggressor. A group of people for whom the rule of international law is forgotten and ignored when it suits.

Only when the key issues that cause the conflict are addressed and dealt with in a fair and equitable way will peace have a chance. Peace without justice is never peace, it is simply an absence of conflict that allows the root causes to eat away.

This is what we are seeing in the most recent demonstrations in Jerusalem that have, predictably, spilled over into Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. None of the issues are new, in contravention of international law Palestinians are being forced from their homes in a part of the city of Jerusalem that is being occupied. Protests arise, they are stamped on so the protests get bigger and more violent and eventually terrorist groups

get drawn in and the response is harder still and so on, and so on. A cycle of violence that causes more and more deaths on both sides, where the trauma of rocket attacks and air raids terrorise people until another stalemate is reached and a tentative peace is reached until it all starts again.

In both Israel and Palestine there is a vacuum in political leadership which means neither side has a mandate to negotiate and seek to make hard decisions. In fact, while politicians' posture about their hard-line policies it benefits them not to have a lasting peace. Part of the challenge is that the giants of Israeli and Palestinian politics have gone, those who could command the respect of all parts of their communities are no longer around and it will fall to a fresh generation of leaders to seek to build a lasting peace that is built on justice and reconciliation. Maybe this generation that has seen the true cost of conflict will be more willing to step out and seek to extend their hands across the borders and to be more than simply the talkers of Peace but will build it one step at a time, who will bring Justice and reconcile the blood brothers. Jesus says, 'Blessed are the Peace **MAKERS**' those who build a society and world where peace is built on justice and humanity is reconciled to one another.

In the meantime what are we to do? yes we pray, we cry with all who mourn and we commit to keeping both sides in our prayers. In the words of a well known prayer from Christian Aid;

Pray not for Arab or Jew, for Palestinian or Israeli,  
but pray rather for ourselves,  
that we might not divide them in our prayers  
but keep them both together in our hearts.  
When races fight, peace be amongst us.  
When neighbours argue peace be amongst us.  
When nations disagree peace be amongst us.  
Where people struggle for justice let justice prevail.  
Where Christ's disciples follow let peace be our way.  
Amen.

I will be holding a session to help explore the roots of the conflict shortly, more information will follow in due course.