

# The Smestow Vale Team Ministry

St Benedict Biscop and the Venerable Bede

Keeping in Touch with our Church Family

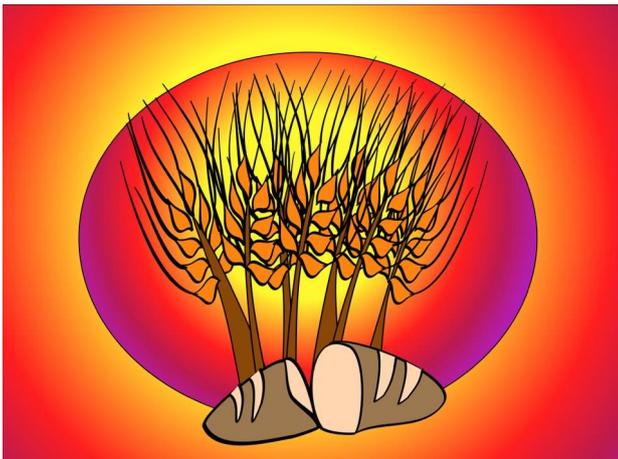
Sunday 29th August 2021

Trinity 13

Almighty God,

You search us and know us:  
may we reply on you in strength  
And rest on you in weakness

Now and all our days:  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.



## A reading from the letter of James

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act – they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

*James 1:17-end*

## Jesus talks with some Pharisees.

When the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they

thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' Jesus said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines." You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.' Then he called the crowd again and said to them, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'

*Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23*

## A reflection on the Gospel from Laurie Gainer

Who remembers our Prime Minister initiating the people into the mysteries of "Two Happy Birthdays?" The first instruction we were given as the pandemic reached our shores was: "Keep washing your hands!" A lot has happened since then and many other precautions have been advised. The Pharisees of Jesus' time were also very keen on hand-washing, but with them it did not serve any real

The Churches of the Smestow Vale Team Ministry Bobbington Himley, Swindon, Trysull and Wombourne

purpose for keeping healthy, as Moses had intended; but had become simply a tradition, which had been carried to extremes.

Jesus uses their compulsive behaviour to point out to the crowd (and to us) that they should be more concerned about their spiritual health. Mark gives us a long list of actions that the crowd would surely condemn as being wicked, and says that all these originate in the desires of the heart (or in our terms: of the mind). Before any evil action can be put into effect it has to be thought about. Sometimes that may only be for a few seconds, but we often see extreme cases where much planning has gone into it. Most recently, we have seen the tragic events in Plymouth. It is not fully clear yet what inspired the perpetrator to act as he did, but it is clear that he had fed his mind with evil thoughts and hatred, particularly against women, over a long period of time.

I suspect that most of us have ugly thoughts at times, but we recognise them for what they are and do not let them mutate into ugly words or actions. I was always taught to count to ten before making a sharp response or doing anything that would make a bad situation worse (something I always try to do, but don't always succeed). Perhaps we can adapt the Prime Minister's idea and sing Two Happy Birthdays to ourselves - a spiritual washing of the hands whenever such thoughts come.

*Laurie*

### **Prayer During the Week**

#### **Sunday**

Pray that our concern may be to seek inner cleanliness. (Mark 7: 20)

#### **Monday**

Pray for girls in Afghanistan, that their education may continue.

#### **Tuesday**

Pray for victims of Long Covid and for all researching the condition.

#### **Wednesday**

Thank God and pray for our emergency services, for safety and efficiency.

#### **Thursday**

Pray for peace in our troubled world.

#### **Friday**

Pray for all endeavours towards developing alternatives to fossil fuels

#### **Saturday**

Pray for all who suffer persecution as they seek to follow Jesus Christ.

### **Please remember those who have asked for our prayers**

Lisa, Joy Waistell, Sarah Aldridge, Heather Gent, Joan, Geoff Truby, Delma Scriven, Maureen Boyce, Olly Cadman, Miriam Hackett and Barrie Taylor

### **Those who have died**

Joan Hawthorn, Dorothy Brewerton, Mabel Schneider and Reginald Williams

Please send requests for prayers to the Parish Office.

### **This weeks Services**

#### **At St Benedict's**

8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Parish Communion

Tuesday 9.30am Holy Communion

#### **At the Ven Bede**

9.00am Parish Communion

Thursday 11.00am Holy Communion.

Don't forget to book your place with Hilary for the Sunday Services by 12noon on Saturday either by email [hilmoore@gmail.com](mailto:hilmoore@gmail.com) or telephone 892856.

### **Sunday Club**

Sunday Club re-starts on the 5th September

### **Thank you**

To those who contribute to our work by Standing Order, and by Stewardship Envelopes and for those who are saving their envelopes at home until they feel safe to come to Church.

### **Pastoral Visitors.**

Flyers for our introduction to Pastoral Visiting course are now available in all our churches. Please continue to remember the course in your prayers.

### **Prayer Group**

Our Tuesday evening Prayer Group will meet at Holy Cross Bobbington on 31st August starting at 7pm. Please let Sue Watson know if you hope to join us.

