



*Anglican Parish of
Linwood - Aranui*

PEW NEWS Sunday 5th September 2021



Welcome

A warm welcome to everyone for our “out of office” gathering service and newsletter.

Letter

By the time you read this we will have had our second Synod via Zoom. Last year we were in Level 2 and so were unable to gather to discuss all those things that relate to the life and governance of our Church. However, the Synod representatives were able to gather in their parish groups and those from our parish spent the day together at St Ambrose, watching the proceedings on a screen.

This year, being at Level 3, we are unable even to get into parish groups and so each of your Synod representatives will be watching and participating in their own homes, in two evening sessions of two hours each. It is then hoped that we will be able to have a one-day meeting in October when we will hopefully be back at Level 1.

The advantages of gathering together to discuss and vote on bills and motions is that fuller debate can be had, and the opportunity to get to know each other through hearing speeches and talking at the break times strengthens the bonds we have as the Anglican Church here in Canterbury. But, in times when it is necessary, we have learnt to do business in new ways so that the work of the Church can continue.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the first Sunday in spring and we give thanks for the new life that we see about us in various forms, new life that we feel within ourselves too as we welcome the lighter mornings, the warmer days, and the opportunity to do more outside. Each of us is part of the circle of life that takes us from one season to another, but do we recognise that and acknowledge our integral relationship with the world?

Service

Gathering of the Community:

Grace and peace to you from God
God fill you with truth and joy.

This is the day which the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden;
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may truly love you
and worthily praise your holy name;
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Amen.

God has promised forgiveness
to all who truly repent,
turn to Christ in faith

and are themselves forgiving.

In silence to call to mind our sins.

Let us confess our sins.

**Merciful God,
we have sinned in what we have thought and said,
in the wrong we have done
and in the good we have not done.
We have sinned in ignorance:
we have sinned in weakness:
we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry.
We repent and turn to you.
Forgive us, for our Saviour Christ's sake,
and renew our lives to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Hear the word of God to all. God shows love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Amen.

Sentence and Collect

Sentence:

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. *James 2: 12*

Collect:

**God, the giver of life,
whose Holy Spirit wells up within your Church:
by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ**

**and make us eager to do your will,
that we may share with the whole creation
the joys of eternal life;
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.**

The Bible Readings for today – 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Proverbs 22: 1-2, 8-9, 22-23

James 2: 1-10, 14-17

Mark 7: 24-37

First Reading: Proverbs 22: 1-2, 8-9, 22-23

Second Reading: James 2: 1-10, 14-17

Gospel: Mark 7: 24-37

Mark 7: 24-37

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, ‘Ephphatha’, that is, ‘Be opened.’ And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’

Reflection

Today we have a focus on spring, as we move into that lovely season of the year. Sometimes we use the phrase ‘the circle of life’ as we are strongly reminded of how things go around – in particular at this change of seasons as the contrast between winter and spring is so distinct.

Winter is cold and dark and colourless, and when the seasons change and we come into spring we rejoice at the lighter mornings, the warmer weather, the colours of the flowers that burst through the ground, and the increased activity as birds begin to be busy with nest building.

It seems to me that often we use that phrase ‘the circle of life’ in regard to the seasons but not in regard to ourselves, as if we are not part of it – which I believe we are. We are tied into the seasons,

dependent on them for the conditions we need to survive; after all the plants we depend on for food need all four seasons to be productive.

And we are also tied in because we are part of creation, we are part of this world and the whole cycle of life that depends on the rain and the sun and the resources of the earth. The new life of spring leads to the growth and bounty of summer, that goes on to autumn as things finish producing and begin to die off, and then into the cold, dark, brooding winter. At times our own spiritual lives mirror those seasons that sustain our physical lives. We can see it also in Jesus’ life:

- His birth can be seen as spring – the season of new life and hope.
- His ministry in announcing God’s Kingdom can be seen as summer the season of growth and abundance.
- In the time when people found the demands of the life he showed too hard and fell away, or betrayed or denied him, we can see autumn.
- His death and burial into the darkness of the tomb can be seen as winter.

However, we also know that things turned full circle as his re-birth, or resurrection, began the cycle again. Those of us who recognise that we are part of the circle of life know the turn of the seasons as we follow them through the Church year. And no matter how dark the winter seems, the new life is just there, waiting to burst forth. That is what we work for, to encourage and bring that new life forth, and to nurture and care for all those who are with us in that cycle of seasons. Because we believe that those who are with us are equally important as ourselves and that our delight and calling is to show that through loving action and defence.

Each of us, then, is part of the circle of life, whether we recognise it or not. And our readings give us some challenges to consider in regard to that.

In Proverbs we are told that a good name is better than riches; not that we are to purposely seek to build up a good name, because that grows out of the way that we live – which is generously, sharing our bounty with others and not seeking to further burden those who lives are already burdened. Actions such as sharing and working for justice build up a good name, one which identifies us as those who share Jesus' ministry and who work actively within the circle of life.

Those who instead work for their own advantage are not fully integrated into the circle of life, instead they have a small, exclusive circle of self, where whatever is of benefit to them is sought, regardless of the cost to others.

In James we are reminded yet again that faith without works is not an active faith. Faith has its' expression in deeds of love and consideration for others, deeds that see and treat all people as equal (which we are in God's eyes), and doesn't treat some people as more deserving of respect than others. Those who claim faith but don't apply it to how they live and act towards others remain in that circle of self.

In our gospel we are given examples of those fully active in the circle of life who care for others and work persistently to help them. The mother who was so determined that Jesus would help her daughter that she interrupted Jesus' solitude and debated with him in order to convince him that her daughter had the right to be healed was rewarded for her faith.

The community around the deaf man with the speech impediment were determined to help him to live a fuller life, one in which he need not be dependent on others but could know the joy of sound and speech and so participate in the circle of life.

These two groups wanted others to know fully what it is to experience the excitement and joy of new life that comes after a period of darkness and coldness in which we feel that nothing is sustaining us. What, that mother and those friends must have felt, what was the good of possessions and even status, if they did nothing to try and help others?

In both these cases Jesus did provide the healing the two people needed and they indeed then knew the joy of new life, of spring.

Today, then, when we acknowledge and give thanks for the new life of spring, it is a hopeful time for us all as we move into an easier level of lockdown and we dare to hope that this outbreak may be decreasing.

However, it is also a time when we hear stories of the troubles that some face who are prevented from coming home, from being with loved ones in hospital or who can't attend funerals – and those who are unable to work and so suffer financially. So as well as being a time when we see the signs of new life around us it is also a time when we are called to show the hopeless and those who are still experiencing winter that they are part of the circle of life with us and that we care. We do this through prayer, with practical support, in friendship, and alongside with encouragement, all works that demonstrate our commitment to being part of the circle of life.

Prayers of the People

Prayer is offered with thanksgiving and intercession for

- *the universal Church and the local Church*
- *the world and our nation*
- *the local community and the community of heaven*
- *those in need, and our ministries.*

Please make your own prayers based on the above.

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Closing prayer:

For the cycle of life
which brings death and rebirth
we rejoice in the promise of spring.

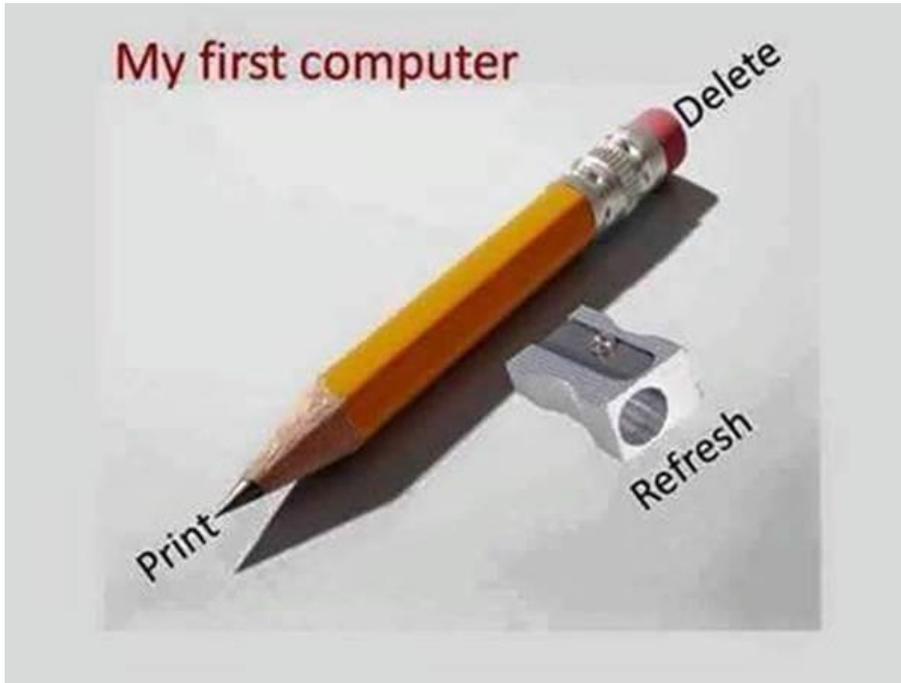
For lengthening days
and sunlight's warmth upon the soil
we rejoice in the promise of spring.

For a snowdrop's beauty
reflecting its Creator's artistry
we rejoice in the promise of spring.

For new born lambs
their joy and exuberance
we rejoice in the promise of spring.

For all of creation
and the majesty of its Creator
we rejoice in the promise of spring.
Amen.

Humour:



I have a pencil that used to be owned
by William Shakespeare.

But he chewed it a lot. Now I can't tell
if it's 2B or not 2B.

Notices:

1. Do you want to listen to some hymns on a Sunday while in isolation?

Then watch **Praise Be** on Sunday morning on TVNZ 1 at 7.45am to 8.15am; but please note that the time as shown here can change from week to week by up to 15 minutes. (You can always catch the programme an hour later by going to Sky channel 501, or Freeview channel 6.) There is also **Hymns on Sunday** on RNZ Concert program (Freeview 51, Sky 422, IHeartRADIO) at 7.30 am to 8.00 am.

2. **This Sunday a Service of the Word done by the parish** is available on YouTube and a link to it was sent to all those for whom we have an email address. It is an expanded version of this printed service. If you would like to receive future emails with the link in then please advise Brenda (brendabonnett@gmail.com) of your email address.
3. **The Parish has its own website**, please visit it on www.linwood-aranuianglicanparish.com - comments can be directed to Deacon Anne (email anne.adrian@xtra.co.nz).
4. **St Ambrose Church also has a Facebook page** – go to <https://www.facebook.com/stambrosearanui/> and check out the regular postings to that site.

5. **The Anglican Mission Board** is promoting a 'Get one, give one' scheme to help people in third world countries get a Covid vaccine. Information can be found at this link: <https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/get-one-give-one>

6. **We await an announcement** about a move to Level 2. When we do make that move our parish sites will be open with the appropriate restrictions, such as a limit on how many can gather, the use of contact tracing, physical distancing and communion in only one kind – plus other restrictions that may be announced, e.g. the use of masks.

7. **The Food Bank** at St Ambrose will open at Level 2, but not the Café.

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