



**Church at Home 19
for Abridge
Sunday 19th July 2020**



*'Teach me, Lord, what you want me to do,
and I will obey you faithfully.'*

Psalm 86: 11

The picnic/open air service last Sunday was blessed by wonderful weather and a great team. It was a fitting farewell to the Mitchell family as Nick beguiled us once again with his illusionary skills. It went so well, and the venue is so perfect that we are thinking of another event later in the Summer. Ideas on a postcard please.



We have been reflecting on the past 4 months of lockdown and in particular how the churches in Abridge have worked together to produce **church-at-home materials**, which have been fantastic, and we hope have been of benefit to all our readers. As shielding comes to an end at the beginning of August and Stapleford Abbots and Lambourne Churches start services on Sunday 2nd, we wonder what form the Church at Home should take, which would be helpful both to those back at church and to those who are not able to get there. Again, we would be really interested in your comments.

We wonder if you still have your dedicated space for church-at-home? It would be great for each home to have some ongoing practical reminder of God's links with them. Over the weeks we have suggested various items that you might add to your focus table. However, this week I do not know what you want to do about the weeds!!

Today's readings: Isaiah 44: 6-8 (reflects on the power of God compared with our own frailties); Psalm 86 : 11-17 (someone was sharing how helpful the Psalms have been during this pandemic as they too reflect the turmoil and uncertainty of living and the feelings that emerge from all the issues involved); Romans 8:12 -25 (Paul, having recognised the wheat and weeds growing within himself, and the groaning of creation looks forward in hope. Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43 (Jesus tells another farming story of the wheat and the weeds)

Before we sing, read or pray, pause to remember and name those who would normally be sitting alongside you in church this morning. We are separated physically but nevertheless united by our love and prayers through the Holy Spirit given to each one of us.

Suggested hymns to sing along to: [Do not be afraid](#) , [All my hope on God is founded](#)

Unlike last Sunday's parable of the sower which is found in Matthew, Mark and Luke, today the story and the explanation are found only in Matthew. It was obviously a really heartfelt situation for the farmers in the crowd. All the hard work of clearing and sowing and caring threatened to be undone by the weeds that always seem to grow faster than the crop. Again, it is the disciples who are not very bright and ask for an explanation. Hopefully it reminds us that we do not need to have all the answers to qualify as a disciple but to keep on asking questions.

Sorry: Let's use the parable to reflect on our week just gone, thinking of; the weeds we see growing around us and our temptation to get out the sickle; our blindness to God's creation all around us and the good wheat growing in our midst; our need to say thank you more often and to live in hope . **Pause**

There understandably seems to be a plethora of TV programmes on hospitals and paramedics recently. I was watching BBC 1's Ambulance last week, which featured the North West Ambulance service which included Liverpool. It was obviously filmed before lockdown. The Shift was Saturday night and Sunday

morning. I forget how many thousands of calls came in. There were two particular waves as the pubs shut and then the clubs early on Sunday morning. I do not know the percentage of calls that were alcohol or drugs related including violence. However, amongst all those calls were the elderly having strokes, or accidents in the home or dementia patients wandering the streets.

The wheat and the weeds were clearly there and the ambulance crews dealt with all in exactly the same way with the same care and compassion. They did not judge but left that to others.

It seemed to me a parable for our time. Are we too quick to identify the weeds and want them pulled up and cast away? Do we fail to see the wheat in amongst the rest? Can we leave the judgement to God and get on with living in the field?

As you reread this story today, ask yourself:

Is there something new that you have noticed perhaps for the first time?

What are the weeds that get you most annoyed?

How can you encourage the good and healthy to flourish in this situation?

How do we offer hope to others through the Lord of the Harvest?

To help you explore the Gospel further, there is a **reflection sheet** and also **all-age activities linked to the passage**, that you might like to use, if you have access to the internet. You can find these resources on the websites of the two churches and here are the links:

www.lambournechurch.com www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org

For our prayers, let us remember:

- All front- line staff that they may be strengthened to cope with each situation that confronts them, however hard that might be.
- All those returning to work after lockdown that they may be safe, and for all those who have no job to return to that they may be supported.
- The increasing numbers who are at risk of exploitation and slavery around the world, one of the results of the pandemic.
- Our leaders as they face the challenge of balancing the public health and the economic concerns of our nation
- Those who continue to struggle with health issues, disrupted plans and the pain of bereavement as a result of the crisis
- People we know overseas or countries on our hearts where.... locusts have eaten the seeds, wars have stopped the harvesting, illness has diminished the workforce and natural disasters have robbed people of the soil
- Ourselves and our families

Add any particular people and situations that The Holy Spirit brings to your mind as you have been praying and then say our family prayer, **The Lord's Prayer**.

End your time of church-at-home by saying out loud the words of **The Grace**, reaching out your hands to include in your imagination all those you know and love, who live here in the village and beyond

Final hymn suggestion: [Father, I place into your hands](#)



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NOTE:- An invitation to Calmness and Faith this Summer, please see following page.

Chigwell and Chigwell Row Team Ministry



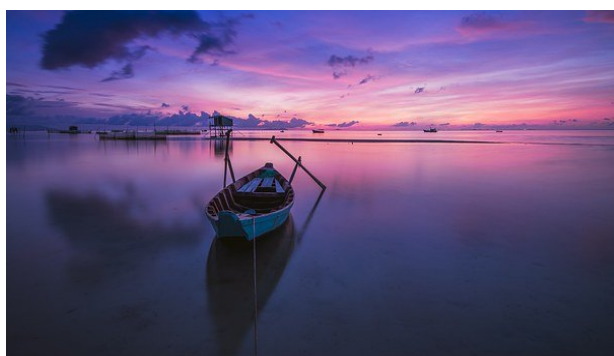
An invitation to Calmness and Faith this Summer

De-Stress Wednesdays 8.15 to 9pm

All Saints' Church Chigwell Row, IG7 4QD

An opportunity to absorb the beauty of the church building on a summer evening; slow down, receive peace, listen to some prayer and reflection pray and have some quiet and space for your own thoughts. Simply turn up and relax, no need to say anything, no religious knowledge or affiliations expected.

15th and 22nd July, 12th August to 9th September inclusive.



Life Issues: a low key series of short services for people of all ages. **Sundays at 4pm for about 45 minutes** All Saints' Church, Chigwell Row IG7 4QD

A time to look at a Jesus centred response to the issues that cause many of us stress from time to time: money worries, ill health, trouble in relationships, sex, divorce, employment problems.

19th July, 9th, 16th and 23rd August, 13th September.

Further information from The Revd. Paula Preston:
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