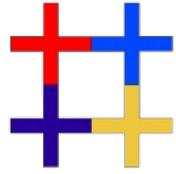


# United Benefice

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## Introductions to the Readings

**August 2015**

(Page numbers refer to the pew bibles at St Margaret's)

### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August – Trinity 9

*2 Samuel 11.26-12.13a*

(OT p.294)

After Uriah's death, for which David is responsible, he takes Uriah's widow as his wife. For this he is taken to task by Nathan, the prophet. Nathan tells a parable by which David is outraged.

*Ephesians 4.1-16*

(NT p.191)

Paul has a wonderful gift of being able to chastise those to whom he writes and yet encouraging them at the same time. Clearly, the Ephesians have been lacking in humility, gentleness and patience but Paul here seeks to lift them to a real deepening of their faith by coming to a realisation of the importance of their gifts to the life of the church. He encourages them, and us, to take responsibility for the life of the church.

*John 6.24-35*

(NT p.94)

In John's gospel Jesus works *signs* so that the people might be brought to faith. These signs serve the same purpose as the parables in the synoptic gospels. Here the people have missed the point. They saw Jesus feeding the crowd but failed to see the meaning of the sign,. They will not find faith until they come to understand what Jesus is revealing of God. Jesus does not simply *give* the people bread; he himself is the *bread of life*.

## **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August – Trinity 10**

*2 Samuel 18.5-9, 15, 31-33*

*(OT p.302)*

Absalom, David's son, has led a rebellion against David, proclaiming himself king at Hebron. War ensues and David's forces are victorious. David has warned his generals to spare the life of Absalom but he is killed in blackly comic circumstances. David's reign is assured but he is inconsolable for Absalom.

*Ephesians 4.25-5.2*

*(NT p.191)*

Paul's advice here is practical and direct. The squabbles and factions among the Ephesians are harming the community and Paul reminds them of how they need to behave towards each other.

*John 6.35-41-51*

*(NT p.95)*

The whole of chapter 6 of John's gospel is a reflection on *Jesus the bread of life*. The people who do not understand who is are stuck in the old ways which can bring only death. Jesus, the bread of life offers eternal life to those who are fed by him.

## **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August – Trinity 11**

*1 Kings 2.10-12; 3.3-14*

*(OT p.313)*

Following the death of his father David Solomon becomes king of Israel. His request for wisdom meets with God's favour, for which he is rewarded with wealth and a long life, is emblematic of his whole reign. Solomon is remembered as a wise and good king. Perhaps David and Solomon together represent the perfect king – the one brave and impetuous, but faithful and the other wise and just.

*Ephesians 5.15-20*

*(NT p.192)*

Paul calls for the Ephesians to be focussed on what is important. They should not be distracted by the things of the world but set their sights on God and his will.

*John 6.51-58*

*(NT p.95)*

Jesus continues to explain what his being the bread of life means. This bread is for all eternity, he says. In this way he compares this bread with what the Israelites received on their journey from Egypt to Canaan. Whereas those who ate the manna died, those who eat the bread of life will live for ever.

## **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August – Blessed Virgin Mary**

*Isaiah 61.10, 11*

(OT p.702)

Isaiah rejoices in God who has blessed him with salvation. God will cause *righteousness and praise* to spring up on the nations. In the same way he chooses Mary to be the means by which he will bring salvation to the world.

*Galatians 4.4-7*

(NT p.186)

Through Jesus, born of Mary, we have received adoption as children of God. We cry, *Abba! Father!*

*Luke 1.46-55*

(NT p.54)

Mary sings the hymn of praise we know as the *Magnificat*. God will act to raise up the lowly and oppressed.

## **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August – Trinity 12**

*1 Kings 8.22-30,41-43*

(OT p.321)

Solomon has built the temple in Jerusalem and has brought the Ark of the Covenant into it. Israel's religion is now centred on Zion. He makes this prayer to God when the temple is consecrated.

*Ephesians 6.10-20*

(NT p.192)

Paul understand Christians to be involved in a spiritual battle. They need to be equipped for this conflict with truth, righteousness and faith. They need to proclaim a gospel of peace and find their motivation from the Spirit and through the word of God.

*John 6.56-69*

(NT p.95)

The teaching is hard, the disciples complain. But Jesus rebukes them. He says that those who reject it will themselves be rejected. It is not meant to be easy.

## **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August – Trinity 13**

*Song of Solomon 2.8-13*

(OT p.635)

The Song of Solomon is a love poem and has always been understood as a parable of the relationship between God and his people. The people of God longs for him and only God can satisfy their desires.

*James 1.17-27*

(NT p.226)

The letter of James is very practical. Here, as elsewhere, he emphasises the importance of living out our faith. The fact that we are Christians should be obvious from the way we live our lives.

*Mark 7.1-8,14,15,21-23*

(NT p.40)

When the Pharisees criticise the disciples Jesus in turn draws attention to the fact that their religion is all show and does not honour God.

## **Together4God in August**

*1 Kings 3.3-14*

(NT p.315)

Solomon is rewarded by God for asking for wisdom rather than riches and long life. He will receive wisdom *and* long life and wealth.

A copy of this leaflet is available on the Benefice website at [fourcrosses.weebly.com/hymns-and-readings.html](http://fourcrosses.weebly.com/hymns-and-readings.html) and the introductions for each week are published on our Facebook and Google+ pages each Thursday. Visit the website for links.

