



Sunday 4 October 2026
Trinity 18

Rev'd John Reeve Vicar
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Churchwardens:

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Sunday Worship

8.00am Holy Communion
11.30am Holy Communion

Reading the Bible (evening): Tuesday 6
October 7.00pm St. Mary's Copythorne.

Meditation Spa: the next sessions are
Monday 12 & 19 October at 7. 00pm.
Places booked with John. Booking is
essential.

All Souls' Memorial: Sunday 1st
November at 4.00pm when we
remember by name loved ones who have
died. The list of names used last year is
now in church – please either add names
or tick a name currently on the list in
readiness for this years' service.

Funding Church Hall: we are currently
getting together a small Funding hub to
locate grant making bodies and apply for
relevant funds to ensure the hall is
sufficiently funded for essential works.

The hall Foyer floor has just been
replaced and work on the ladies toilet
area begins this next week.

Flag-Pole in church car park: a big
thank you to Trevor for working on the
flag pole which is currently being treated
and worked on.

Netley Marsh Infant School Harvest
service will take place on Thursday 15
October at 2.00pm.

Church Harvest celebration: Sunday
18 October – do bring fresh goods &
packed/tinned goods. These will be
donated to St. James Homeless hostel in
Southampton.

Harvest Flowers – it would be great to
have donations towards the cost of the
harvest flower displays. If you would
like to do this please put your donation
into an envelope clearly marked
'Flowers' and leave in the collection
plate on Sunday. Thank you!

Café of Hope –The next Café is on
Thursday 5 November 10.00am-12 noon.

New Sound System in church: we are
currently in discussion with a local firm
to install and upgrade our current
provision. This will enhance the church
experience. We are indebted to the kind
gifts through legacies which has enabled
us to plan and finalise this initiative.

Community Lunch: St. Matthew's
Day lunch... 23 people attended lunch
to celebrate our special Saint. We had
a lovely quiche salad followed by
apple crumble. Thanks for coming...
and a big thank you to Clive, Sandra
and the Team who prepared, served
and looked after everybody.

Giving to Church: if you wish to give
regularly to the church please speak
directly to either Sheila or Ros our
churchwardens – or contact our David
Rigby our treasurer at
stmatthewsnetleymarsh@gmail.com

From John – our Vicar

Every so often the cry goes out to halt the slide in collective morality – something must be done. We heard this demand in the aftermath of the Twin Towers trauma – something must be done. When Hamas makes a deadly incursion into Israel on October 7, something must be done. Authority must be imposed, so order and ‘normal’ life can resume. It’s as though something has gone awry, and permission has been granted directly or indirectly to enable egregious actions to take place. Something must be done.

The parable Jesus gives of a landowner and his vineyard escalates stage by stage to the defining question, ‘what will be done?’ This landowner plants a vineyard with a fence enclosing it, a winepress dug into it and a watchtower. Immediately Jesus is placing the parable in the context of the prophet Isaiah 5 – where the Lord God plants his vineyard, digs a winepress and builds a watchtower (a temple). But the vineyard does not produce good fruit, there is no yield except briars and waste. The Lord God then wreaks vengeance upon the vineyard, bringing destruction and utter destruction upon the workers and inhabitants (the people of Israel).

Jesus’ parable follows a familiar route. The landowner sends servants to receive the produce, but they are killed by the tenants. It happens again, when the landowner sends more servants and they suffer the same fate. You see, in agricultural law at this time, the tenants if they could ward off the advancements of the owner for a period of years, then the vineyard would transfer to them. It would be in their material interest to rebuff the owner and not allow him access – both to the harvest and to the vineyard precinct. And then the owner sends his son, the heir. Surely, he thinks, they will take note of the son. Well, yes – if they are shrewd they will realise that to

harm the son could mean destruction for them if the owner decides in retribution to call in the militia. Or perhaps, the son is the heir – now the owner – and in that case the tenants will surely kill him to ensure the vineyard becomes theirs. Jesus tells us the tenants kill the son – outside of the vineyard. It would always have to be outside the vineyard or else the wine produced could only be sold to the gentiles at a reduced price (the vineyard had been desecrated by the killing).

Now the tenants are definitively portrayed as ‘stupid’. And Jesus gives the temple leaders the opportunity to provide the answer as to what should be done. And they answer according to the prophet Isaiah – utter vengeance will be wreaked on those miserable and stupid tenants. Once they give their answer, Jesus pauses. And Jesus concludes with a very different ending, ‘the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it’s amazing in our eyes’. Jesus provides not a shred of vengeance, but acclaims that the one rejected (the Son) has become the cornerstone of a new community, a new life, a new system and kingdom.

In this parable Jesus is foreshadowing the events of Holy Week and Easter. The Son will be rejected, killed and buried. But this Son doesn’t stay buried, he rises – not in vengeance and killing, but in peace and forgiveness: ‘Peace be with you’. This is how the new community, the dimension of God is formed and built. This is the template for us today to shape our responses and encounters with a violent, aggressive and selfish world system. Indeed, this is the calling of the church community – bearing witness to a genuine forgiveness and grace amid the faithlessness and stupidity of much public life. You see, forgiveness and mercy must ‘be done’.

Sunday 4 October 2026

Collect for Trinity 18

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; 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.

Isaiah 5: 1-7

I will sing for the one I love
a song about his vineyard:
My loved one had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
² He dug it up and cleared it of stones
and planted it with the choicest vines.
He built a watchtower in it
and cut out a winepress as well.
Then he looked for a crop of good grapes,
but it yielded only bad fruit.
³ "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and
people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
⁴ What more could have been done for my
vineyard
than I have done for it?
When I looked for good grapes,
why did it yield only bad?
⁵ Now I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge,
and it will be destroyed;
I will break down its wall,
and it will be trampled.
⁶ I will make it a wasteland,
neither pruned nor cultivated,
and briers and thorns will grow there.
I will command the clouds
not to rain on it."
⁷ The vineyard of the Lord Almighty
is the nation of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are the vines he delighted in.
And he looked for justice, but saw
bloodshed;
for righteousness, but heard cries of
distress.

Matthew 21: 33-end

'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'

Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes"?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.'

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Prayers for Trinity 18

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.

Confession

Let us make an act of confession.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you, through our own fault, in thought and word and deed, and in what we have left undone. We are heartily sorry and repent of all our sins. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your name. Amen.

The almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon for all our sins, time for amendment of life, and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

We sing!

1. At the name of Jesus
Ev'ry knee shall bow,
Ev'ry tongue confess him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

2. Humbled for a season
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners,
Amongst whom he came.
Faithfully he bore it,
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious
When from death he passed.

3. In your hearts enthrone him!
There let him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true.
Crown him as your Captain,
In temptation's hour;
Let his will enfold you
In its light and pow'r.

4. Kindred, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again
With his Father's glory,
With his angel train,
For all wreaths of empire

Meet upon his brow,
And our hearts confess him
King of glory now.

Prayers of intercession *(prepared by Joan Read)*

Lord God, we come before you today to offer our praise and to give thanks for your gift to us. Forgive us that so often we are more ready to turn to you in times of trouble and need rather than to thank you in the good times.

Lord in your mercy

Lord, we ask you to bless those who live in fear of famine, disease and hopelessness and upon those who live without faith or love, that they may feel your presence and your unending love

Lord in your mercy

We pray for our church and congregation and all who minister here at St Matthews. We also pray for leaders throughout the world. Grant them wisdom and guidance to make the right choices in difficult situations.

Lord in your mercy

We pray for all those who are suffering, those unable to find work and for the children that die every day from hunger, disease and war. Father, we pray that you will help those who live in fear and give them strength to survive and the knowledge of your loving presence.

Lord in your mercy

We thank you for those closest to us who share our daily lives and concerns. For our families and friends who know when we are troubled, sad or anxious. Surround them with your tender loving care, help them to love and care for one another in true affection and to look to you in all their needs. We place them all in your care knowing that your love for them is greater than our own.

Lord in your mercy

We think now if those in need in our own community, the elderly, the housebound and those in care homes, hospital and hospice. Also, for the lonely and those

who face a future with little hope or love.
As we pray for these, we also pray for all
who give up their time to care for them to
visit whether family, friend or the
professional services. We think now of
those who have asked for our
prayers.....

Please bring them your peace in their
pain, your strength in their weaknesses
and your comfort in their sadness

Lord in your mercy.

We remember those who have died in
recent days: **Barbara Smith, Vernon
Birkitt;**

And those whose anniversary of death
falls at this time: **Kathleen Haines (30th),
Peter Parker (1st), Paul Curtis (4th), Betty
Henry (7th);**

Rest eternal grant unto them Oh Lord **and
let light perpetual shine on them
Lord in your mercy**

Lastly, we pray for ourselves, as we go out
of your house today and start the week
ahead, we pray that in all we do, we may
walk more closely with you, aware that
you are always by our side.

*Let us draw all these prayers together as
we say together:*

**Merciful Father accept these prayers for
the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.**

We sing!

I danced in the morning when the world
was begun,

And I danced in the moon and the stars
and the sun;

And I came down from heaven and I
danced on the earth,

At Bethlehem I had my birth.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,*

*And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.*

I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
But they would not dance and they
wouldn't follow me.

I danced for the fishermen, for James and
John –

They came with me and the Dance went
on.

Chorus

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the
lame;

The holy people said it was a shame.

They whipped and they stripped and they
hung me on high,

And they left me there on a cross to die.

Chorus

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned
black –

It's hard to dance with the devil on your
back.

They buried my body and they thought I'd
gone,

But I am the Dance, and I still go on.

Chorus

They cut me down and I leapt up high;

I am the life that'll never, never die;

I'll live in you if you'll live in me –

I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.

Chorus

The Blessing

**The peace of God, which passes all
understanding, keep your hearts and
minds in the knowledge and love of God,**

**and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and
the blessing of God almighty, the Father,
the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among
you, and remain with you always. Amen.**

