

All Saints' Church

Cottenham with Rampton



Pastoral Letter #17

8th July 2020

Dear Church Family,

During my sermon on Sunday, I talked about the need to lean on God and on each other in times of need. And that, out of those 'lean-to' moments, a sense of hope often emerges - a pause from the pain, a bit of strength to sustain us, a little guidance for the future or a touch of happiness. This week, I want to share with you a story that I came across last weekend from the Farallon Islands, off the coast of San Francisco, California.

A female humpback whale had become entangled in a spider web of crab traps and lines. She was weighted down by hundreds of pounds of traps that caused her to struggle to stay afloat. She also had hundreds of yards of line rope wrapped around her body, her tail, her torso, and a line tugging in her mouth. However, a fisherman spotted her just east of the Farallon Islands and radioed for help. Within a few hours, a rescue team arrived and determined that she was so badly off, the only way to save her was to dive in and untangle her, a very dangerous proposition. One slap of her tail could kill a rescuer.



Undaunted by the risk, they worked for hours with curved knives and eventually freed her.

When she was free, the divers say she swam in what seemed like joyous circles. She then came back to each and every diver, one at a time, nudged them, and pushed gently, thanking them. Some said it was the most incredibly beautiful experience of their lives.

The rescuer who cut the rope out of her mouth says her eye was following him the whole time, and he will never be the same.

When I read this story, it's obvious that, in order to be freed, the whale needed to allow herself to become vulnerable in receiving the help of the rescue team. She had to trust them, without knowing the outcome. And in trusting them, they untangled her from the physical rope and netting that was binding her.

The story also made me think about the things that often bind *us* – the scars of a tough childhood, difficult relationships, unforgiveness, unanswered prayer – and what it is that helps to untangle us from the ongoing impact of such experiences. We rest in the knowledge that we have a Heavenly Father who lavishes us with unconditional love, and who can bring hope and healing out of any situation. But that requires us to be vulnerable, and to ask for help – from God in prayer, and from people we trust. May we be those who lean on God and others and, in doing so, become untangled from the things that bind us, with the result that, like the whale, we experience the joy of freedom. A good verse to remember -

'Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.' (2 Corinthians 3: 17).

If you do not have access to the Internet (but have a DVD player) and would like a DVD recording of the online service, please let Graham Appleby know (07803 932453).

Services and events happening online this week are:

Fri 10th July at 2pm – Bible Study on Zoom led by Frances Horgan.

Sun 12th July – Online service available on Facebook and YouTube from early on Sunday morning. Watch at whatever time is convenient to you.

Sun 12th July at 11am – coffee and chat after the service using Zoom. Do join us and catch up with one another.

Sun 12th July at 6pm – Evening Prayer using Zoom led this week by Cheryl Lowe. If you want to join, please let Cheryl (cheryl@cynewulf.co.uk) know, and she'll send you a link to the service. Over the summer we are going to be focusing on the Apostle's Creed.

For your prayers, please could you remember the following:

- Those known to you who have recently lost loved ones
- Those who are unwell and their families caring for them, in particular Joan Marsh (Mike's mum) and Sheila Howarth (awaiting surgery on 15th July)
- Those who continue to shield so are unable to have much contact with family members
- All those working in the NHS and care homes
- For wisdom for the government, and all in authority, during these difficult times.

If you are using the 'Prayer and Worship from Home' resource, these are the Lectionary (set) readings for the week ahead:

Sat 11 th July	Judges 18: 1-20, 27-end; Luke 19: 11-27
Sun 12 th July	Romans 8: 1-11; Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23
Mon 13 th July	1 Samuel 1: 1-20; Luke 19: 28-40
Tues 14 th July	1 Samuel 1: 21 to 2: 11; Luke 19: 41 to end
Wed 15 th July	1 Samuel 2: 12-26; Luke 20: 1-8
Thurs 16 th July	1 Samuel 2: 27 to end; Luke 20: 9-19
Fri 17 th July	1 Samuel 3: 1 to 4: 1a; Luke 20: 20-26

I will be on leave from Mon 13th to Sun 26th July inclusive. If you need any assistance during this time, please contact Graham Appleby, Churchwarden, in the first instance. The online services will continue, led by Alison Wedgbury and Cheryl Lowe.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Best wishes, Lynda.

Rector of All Saints Cottenham with Rampton

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