

Words of Faith.

We believe in one God, who is Creator,
maker of all we see and all we don't see;
Who is Ruler of the universe:
Source of all creation!

We believe in one God, who is Jesus Christ,
God from God, Light from Light, true God and true human.
He is one with the Creator; the Word made flesh, our Messiah:
Saviour of all creation!

We believe in one God, who is Holy Spirit,
Breath of God moving among us.
Who is one with the Creator; one with Christ; our enabler and guide:
Comforter of all creation!

Lord Jesus, Messiah,

Son of the living God
Have mercy upon us.
When we are in trouble, save us.
When we are in danger, protect us
When we do wrong, forgive us.
When we forget you,
lift up our eyes to see you in the world around us.
May your kingdom come
And your will be done.
Amen.

A Blessing

Let us travel on with courage, trusting in God's presence
and eager to do God's will.

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be among you and within you
wherever you find yourself this week. Amen

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Sunday August 23rd, 2020: The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity The Benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe "Keeping in Touch" Edition 22 "Who do you say that I am?"



Annette writes:

Greetings to you all and hoping that whatever your circumstances, you have been enjoying the sunshine in between some heavy downpours. I'm sure we all wish youngsters well who have got caught up in the complex narrative of exam results and outcomes for their future studies. Covid-19 has had many implications for so many people and this time of year is traditionally one of anxious waiting for youngsters without the added complications 2020 has brought.

In our churches we continue to open up as often and as safely as we can. Two weddings are booked for August at Little Paxton and although there are restrictions in place, we trust they will be very happy occasions. I am taking bookings for baptisms again with numbers restricted to 30 and sadly requests for funerals continue which are mostly held at local crematoria. We send our prayers and love to those going through bereavement at this time.

Sunday's gospel reading is rather dramatic. Jesus asks his followers just who do they think he is? It's hard enough for us to describe quite who we are to someone else – who amongst his followers could put words to who Jesus was and what he meant to them?

Do join us for worship on a Sunday – although numbers are limited, there always seems to be enough room for those who come. If you would like to talk about the restrictions, do give me a ring.

With love and prayers, Annette. 01480 211048.

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PAGE ONE

The Gospel Reading for The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

Matthew Chapter 16 Verses 13-20

When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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.

Services/Church opening as of Sunday August 23rd, 2020.

Little Paxton.

9.15am – 9.45am: Morning Service with readings and prayers.
Open Wednesdays 2.00pm to 4.00pm for quiet time/private prayer

Great Paxton.

10.30am - 11.00am: Morning Service with readings and prayers.
Open from 11.00am to 4.00pm for quiet time/private prayer

Southoe and Diddington Churches

Both are now openly daily. Please observe social distancing and use hand sanitizer if visiting.

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Reflections on the Gospel Reading from Annette

Jesus and his disciples arrive in a place called Caesarea Philippi, an ancient Greco-Roman City at the base of Mount Hermon in Northern Israel and near to the river Jordan. For a variety of reasons such as its traditions of Greek rituals and animal sacrifices to gods, it was regarded in Jesus' time as a sinful place. But nevertheless, he took his disciples there – and chose the location as the place where he revealed his true nature. Crowds were hearing about and seeing the amazing things that Jesus was doing. We have read about some of them in Matthew's action-packed gospel over the past few weeks. Feeding 5,000 people, healing a woman's daughter. The whispers were going around. Who is he?

Surely, he must be like an OT prophet – maybe Elijah has returned? Or the fiery Jeremiah? Or even, somehow, could he be John the Baptist re-appearing? Jesus will have heard all the rumours flying around so he asks the people around him directly – who do you say that I am?

With no hesitation, Simon, who has stuck faithfully with Jesus for so long, cries out: You are the Messiah! The Son of the Living God! We can imagine the scene – maybe a sudden silence fell on the crowd as Simon makes (what we call) his confession in this city known for its dubious past.

Messiah literally means "anointed one" – someone chosen by God to save the Jewish people. They had been waiting for him for so long – the person who would rescue them from their many enemies.

Was Jesus pleased with Simon's confession?

He certainly was – and tells him he is blessed, because His father in Heaven had given Simon the insight as to who Jesus truly was. At that point he renames Simon – and calls him Peter – which means, simply, "rock". Jesus continues '*on this rock I will build my church and even hell will not defeat it. And I will give you the keys of heaven*'.

That was a huge acknowledgement of the esteem in which Jesus held Peter, for all his faults, and these verses are a turning point as the disciples, led by Simon Peter, realise just who Jesus is and where his divine origins lie. Strangely, at this point, Jesus says to them please keep this a secret. Maybe he didn't want the crowds to get too excited at the prospect of the Messiah having come to earth and upset the political authorities of the day who might fear a riot.

I wonder, who is Jesus for you? What name would you use to describe your relationship with him? Maybe take some time out to think through the answer in the coming days.