

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**Little Paxton Church**

**9.15am – 9.45am: Morning Prayer**

**Great Paxton Church**

**10.30am - 11.00am: Harvest Thanksgiving**

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**10.00am: Short Holy Communion at Little Paxton Church**

**Southoe and Diddington Churches are now open daily**

**Please observe social distancing, use a face covering and sanitize your hands when visiting one of our churches.**

**Thank you for your care and caution.**

**Follow us on Facebook @ ThePaxtonsBenefice.**

**Two prayers from the Diocese of Ely's website.**

Father God, as people and nations of the world, help us to realise our dependence upon one another.

We pray for healing among those who are ill, wisdom among our leaders, protection and effectiveness for health workers, and responsible behaviour by each of us as individuals.

Most of all, Lord, we pray that you dispel our fears, for you 'did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline' (2 Tim 1:7).

For Jesus's sake. Amen.

We praise and thank you, God of the journey,  
for all your gifts to us in the past.

We look to you as fellow-traveller  
and faithful companion on the way ahead.

Shelter and protect us from all harm and anxiety;

Give us grace to let go of all that holds us back;

And grant us courage to meet the new life you have promised us in  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**FOUR**

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020: Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.  
The Benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe  
"Keeping in Touch" Edition 29**

**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**



Greetings to you all,

We can be forgiven for maybe feeling downhearted this week as we learn of cases of Covid-19 rising across the world, not least in the UK and Europe. The prospect of more restrictions being imposed on some parts of the country at least is alarming for many in the hospitality sector and other areas of national life and we fear the increasing pressures again on our NHS services.

Whether we are people of faith or not, feeling anxious is a natural human reaction to danger and Jesus was only too aware of the rawest of human emotions. St Paul, who wrote many wonderful words to fledgling Christians in his letters, knew danger and fear. Though frequently his supreme confidence in the presence of the risen Lord Jesus broke through his circumstances and he expressed the deep joy he found in Christ. Our first reading today is from his letter to Christians in Philippi and you can feel his joy in Christ bursting forth despite the fact he was writing during a spell in prison.

**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**

My prayer for all of us is that we may feel Christ's presence through these anxious times and even catch ourselves rejoicing with Paul that we are never, ever alone. Thanks to Mel Eyeons who this week uncovers a little bit more about Paul's wonderful words in Philippians (see page 3)

**With love and prayers, Annette. 01480 211048.**

**Email [canonannettereed@gmail.com](mailto:canonannettereed@gmail.com)**

**ONE**

## Philippians 4:1-9

My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

### The Gospel Reading: Matthew 22 v 1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again, he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them.

The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so, the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" 'For many are called, but few are chosen.'

TWO

## Reflections on Philippians 4 v 1-9 by LLM Mel Eyeons

The pandemic has taken away all sense of normality, not to mention all the other bad news we've heard about through the year. In his letter to the Philippians, though, Paul calls on us to rejoice always, even though he himself was in prison facing the possibility of execution. So, he knew something about dealing with difficulty.

The German theologian Karl Barth once called the joy expressed in Philippians "a continually defiant 'Nevertheless'". This suggests it doesn't depend on what's happening around us but is about something else.

Imagine for a moment that an aeroplane has crashed on a small island in the Pacific Ocean. The survivors are panicking, and there's a riot over getting food from the plane. Some people, though, decide to explore the island. They find supplies left by a previous group of castaways. So, they return with food for all and share the good news with the others.

Both groups were in the same situation, but they told different stories about it to themselves. One group told themselves a story of disaster and deprivation, leading to panic and a desperate me-first approach. The other group told themselves a story about hope and possibility and could help both themselves and others.

What this means for us is that we're in a difficult situation, but we can choose how we react. We can believe that the bad news is all there is, and that only disaster lies ahead. Or we can offer God all the things that worry or scare us, and get the assurance that the Lord is near, that everything is in his hands, and that his peace is available to us.

Second, we can think about things that are good and positive. And as we fill our minds with good things then we start becoming more positive people, with faith, peace, confidence and optimism that we can share with others.

This will help us look outwards, find solutions to problems, adapt and show the world a better, richer, more fulfilling way to be. And in the process, we will come to realise that God is right here with us, in good times and bad, always present and stronger than the worst that life can throw at us.

So, as we continue to make our way through the challenges of 2020, may God give us the ability to say a defiant 'Nevertheless' and rejoice in the Lord always.

THREE

