

12th July 2026. 6th Sunday after Trinity.

Prayer for today: Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love towards you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Among those who are sick we pray for Rosemary Belshaw, Will Sadler, Brenda Clark, Elizabeth Wood, Nigel Baty-Symes Andrew McKendrick, Kate Marris, Maureen Stevens, Prue and Nancy, Ned Ryan, Daniel Bosman, Suzie Dent, Nick Cook, Christina Baldwin, Lorraine Dodd, Kathleen Lee, Carol McKendrick, Stuart Bell, Maggie Bennett, Elizabeth Sambell, and Heather Loughhead.

Among those who have died we remember Leo Pyle, and also Robbie Hutchinson, Enid Taylor, Mary Capes, Pauline Stephenson, John Moore, Mary Crowe, John Calderbank and Kate Shilling, whose year's mind is about this time.

Readings:

Isaiah 55: 10-13

As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth:

it will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

¹² You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.

¹³ Instead of the thorn-bush will grow the juniper,
and instead of briers the myrtle will grow.
This will be for the Lord's renown,
for an everlasting sign,
that will endure for ever.'

Psalm 65: 9-13

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it:
thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, *which* is full of water:
thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

¹⁰ Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly:
thou settlest the furrows thereof:
thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

¹¹ Thou crownest the year with thy goodness;
and thy paths drop fatness.

¹² They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness:
and the little hills rejoice on every side.

¹³ The pastures are clothed with flocks;

the valleys also are covered over with corn;
they shout for joy, they also sing.

Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.'

¹⁸ 'Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to

someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.'

Thoughts on today's readings

There is much time and energy, not to mention finance, being employed in renewed efforts to transport human beings to the moon and perhaps even to Mars, with plans to establish settlements on those seemingly inhospitable and lifeless worlds, grow food there, and look for treasure in the form of rare and valuable minerals. Whether this is something which ever has much relevance to the lives of ordinary people is hard to calculate. Let's just hope even more ingenuity and resources are being invested in the care of the world we know and in which we spend our lives.

Last night as at last the rain fell upon the dry earth, bringing life to the grass lands and the woodlands, I felt the words of today's readings were well illustrated in what the skies had provided. The word of God is likened to the rain: we did not create it, we do not control it, it is given, it is sent. The word has its origin in God, and it

is God, who is life itself. The word of God comes from God, spark and source of life, expression of God's purpose. Here is the assurance we are given: God's purpose will be fulfilled; the word will not return to God empty.

Yet, considering the parable of the sower, which of us can say that we have truly understood the word? Which of us is not overshadowed by pressures, concerns and distractions which hinder the growth of the harvest? God willing we are not shallow ground, and whether we have tended and prepared that field ourselves, or are here through the labour of others who prepared the ground, that living word may yet take root and bear a harvest to feed a hungry world.

We cannot tell how good that harvest will be: its purpose is found in that others are fed, as once we were fed by others. And God is in the word, in the seed, as God is in its life.

For some 38 years it has been my privilege to share that word. I had no particular talent: all I ever had, anything that I have achieved I was given, and I am grateful beyond words for the life I have been given. It's not possible to judge how effective or otherwise my years

have been, yet I know how many joys there have been along the way.

Last night in the Parish Hall I looked at the great throng of people dancing together, old and young, children and adults, all of them people who have become friends and have allowed me into their lives, and knew I have been blessed. The first dance we organised here, for my 40th birthday, was planned by Carole, and so was this one. It underlines that I would not have done any of this without her; she spoke of how joyful she felt last night. For me it was a moment spent in the fulfilment of God's promises, a joyful vision, but God alone knows what yet may be.