



Today is Fathers Day, for many families this is a day to give thanks and show appreciation for the love, care and support fathers bring to family life. Father's day this year will, for many, be a difficult day. A day some fathers and their children cannot be together because the safe distancing rules caused by the virus will not let families be together. For others this will be a painful day, the first Fathers day for a child without their dad or a dad without their child that has passed away this year, we remember especially today those who have lost their dads or child to the virus. To them we send an assurance of our love, support and prayers.

In our Genesis reading, Abraham (whose name means 'Father of many'), finds himself in a situation that would distress many fathers, when, he has to cast out one of his sons from the family home. Typical of the time Abraham had more than one wife and bore a son to both. Sarah wanted Hagar, the slave wife out and to Abrahams distress he had be parted from his son. God assured Abraham that all would be well for the son that had to go, Abraham trusted in God and all was well in the end.

God, as the father of Jesus is only too well aware of fatherly responsibilities and Sunday by Sunday we are reminded in the words of the Lords prayer, 'Our Father who art in heaven' that God is still the father to all of us today. Later we will hear a short poem reminding us of how God is our heavenly Father and of everything he does for us that all good fathers do for their children.

## Collect for the day

Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sakes, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

## A reading from the book of Genesis

<sup>8</sup> The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. <sup>9</sup> But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. <sup>10</sup> So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac." <sup>11</sup> The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. <sup>12</sup> But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you. <sup>13</sup> As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring." <sup>14</sup> So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

<sup>15</sup> When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. <sup>16</sup> Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. <sup>17</sup> And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. <sup>18</sup> Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him." <sup>19</sup> Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

<sup>20</sup> God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. <sup>21</sup> He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.



### A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

<sup>24</sup> “A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; <sup>25</sup> it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

<sup>26</sup> “So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. <sup>27</sup> What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. <sup>28</sup> Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup> Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup> And even the hairs of your head are all counted. <sup>31</sup> So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>32</sup> “Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; <sup>33</sup> but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.



<sup>34</sup> “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

<sup>35</sup> For I have come to set a man against his father,  
and a daughter against her mother,  
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

<sup>36</sup> and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

<sup>37</sup> Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; <sup>38</sup> and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it

### Words from Fr Rodney

I’m sure that most of us are longing for the day when things can return to something like normal, and that we can feel safe to take up again the life that God has given us. For us as Christians that life is rooted in our faith, and at the heart of our life of faith is coming together on Sundays to worship and pray together to meet with God and one another. Most of us are longing for the day when we can again meet again in our churches to hear God’s Word, to celebrate the Eucharist, and to renew our fellowship with one another, and I’m sure we are all asking how long it will be before that way of life can be restored. As many of you will be aware, the government has now allowed churches to re-open in a limited way, but only for individual private prayer. This may be fine for the cathedrals and the town and city centre churches who have a full time or regular voluntary staff, and who have a tradition of being open each day for people to pop in to pray, but it is not for the many ordinary churches where Sunday worship is at the heart of their weekly life. The choice to open for individual private prayer, and all that that involves, lies with each church’s PCC. Like most of the ordinary parish churches we feel this is not appropriate for us, and so we will continue as we are until we are given permission to open for Sunday worship and we can again come as Christian communities to worship and fellowship together in our churches.

# I'VE A FATHER IN HEAVEN

By Rev. Dean Beaty

I've a Father who hears me whenever I call.  
I can bring Him my problems whether they're great or small.  
And I know that He hears and He's touched by my tears  
For my Father in heaven is the great 'king of kings'.

I've a Father who keeps me, I'm held in His hand.  
Though life's trials may test me, He will help me to stand.  
All the burdens and care, He will help me to bear.  
For my Father in heaven, is the great 'king of kings'.

I've a Father who loves me, though sometimes I fall.  
He remembers my weakness and that I am frail.  
But He walks by my side, as my comfort and guide.  
With my Father in heaven, I'm a child of the King.



## Let us pray

As we come together today to worship from the safety of our homes we give thanks for the many ways our lives have been touched by your love over the past week, often manifested in the actions of others. We ask for wisdom and strength for our church leaders and members as we continue to adjust to the challenges before us. We pray particularly for all those churches and congregations who are struggling to care and support one another through the current situation. Amen

We pray today for our world, its leaders and peoples. We particularly think of all those areas struggling to meet the challenges of the pandemic without the resources that they need. We also pray for healing in all those communities where hatred and prejudice cause division, inequality and violence. Inspire us and our leaders to work for peace, justice and tolerance so that we emerge from the present situation with the will to create a world in which we are kinder to one another. Amen

Today we bring before you our communities facing many difficult decisions at the moment; particularly our government and local authorities as they attempt to move us forward, safely. We pray for those who are returning to work, for pupils and teachers returning to school and for those reopening businesses, as well as those who are fearful and anxious about the changes being made. We also continue to give thanks for all those key workers who have made such a difference to our lives in recent weeks and pray for their protection. Amen

We continue to pray for our families, especially today we pray for fathers, for the love, care and guidance they give. We pray for friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all the acts of kindness we have experienced this week, which remind us that in so many ways we live our lives in the fellowship of God. We also pray for all those living in isolation, those who are lonely and those who are vulnerable and we think particularly for all those we are separated from and ask that we be united soon. Amen

We pray for the sick and suffering in body mind or spirit, especially any we wish to pray for today... we continue to pray for all those suffering in the pandemic and their loved ones, help them to find the faith, comfort and strength they need to sustain them through their darkest times. We thank you for the work of all those working to care for the sick and we ask you to bless them and the efforts of all those working to develop treatments and vaccines. Amen

Today we also bring before you all those who have died recently, those who have died in the pandemic, those whose anniversaries are around this time and any we wish to remember today. We pray especially for Fathers who are no longer here to celebrate with us. We thank you for their love, their lives and the memories we have of them. We also pray for those who grieve and ask that they are comforted in the knowledge that the ones they hold dear now live their lives in fellowship with their Father in heaven.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

*In a moment of silence bring your own prayers to God*

The Lords prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.  
Amen.