

On a regular Sunday our pattern is to use only 2 of the readings set for the day, often with only 2 readings there seems to be no link to a theme. For our zoom worship we have been using 3 readings and the links are even harder to find but not the case today, all 3 readings point to the same message, our love for God and for each other.

Our love for one another has been tested over the last 7 months. During the lockdown, households were forced to be together 24/7, relationships were pushed. When we could not meet with our loved ones, family and friends, we began to realise just how much they mean to us and how much we take them for granted. It has been through the many acts of kindness and good deeds that we have seen the true meaning of Jesus words, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' and of peoples love for one another.

Not being able to meet together as a church has been difficult, yet we found ways to continue to show our love for God by being together virtually Sunday by Sunday. We can now meet in church and share in the Eucharist and, though at a distance, we can once again meet with our church family and friends. We pray this can continue over the coming weeks and months as we face the possibilities of further restrictions.

As we sing Abba Father, the words serve as pray of rededication and a reminder that the greatest commandment is to Love our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind. It is in our actions and our care for others that we show our love for God

### Collect for the day

God the giver of life, whose Holy Spirit wells up within your church: by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ and make us eager to do your will, that we may share with the whole creation the joys of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, 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 Leviticus

**19** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

**2** Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

**15** You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbour. **16** You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbour: I am the LORD.

**17** You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself. **18** You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD.

### A reading from the 1<sup>st</sup> letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

**2** You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, **2** but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. **3** For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, **4** but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. **5** As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; **6** nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, **7** though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. **8** So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.



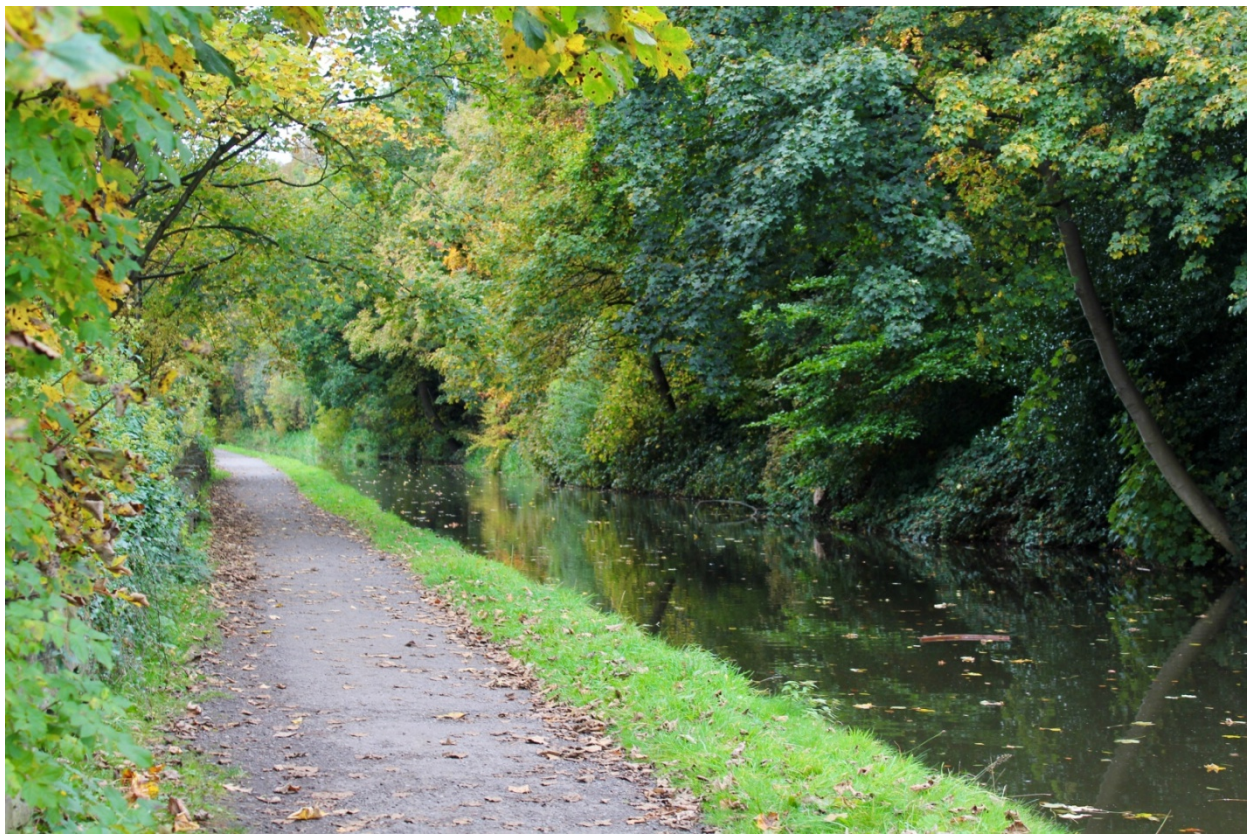
## A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

<sup>34</sup> When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup> and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” <sup>37</sup> He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

<sup>41</sup> Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: <sup>42</sup> “What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” <sup>43</sup> He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

<sup>44</sup> ‘The Lord said to my Lord,  
“Sit at my right hand,  
until I put your enemies under your feet”’?

<sup>45</sup> If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” <sup>46</sup> No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.



### Words from Fr Rodney

Other than when you have been in church, when was the last time you picked up and read from your Bible ? And when or if you did, what did you make of what you read ? Today is “Bible Sunday”, and it is one of the occasions in the Church’s year when we are encouraged to see how important it is that we do read our Bible, and that we do so in such a way as to enrich our Christian lives. The Bible, and particularly the New Testament, is one of the gifts that God gives us to help us to be the disciples He needs us to be. There are several things that help to make us the disciples God needs us to be, among them are the Bible, Prayer, Worship, the Sacraments (especially the Eucharist) and fellowship with our fellow Christians. We need a balanced and regular diet of all of them if we are to be truly and faithfully God’s people. On this Sunday I have always encouraged the reading of the Bible through the Bible Reading Fellowship Notes, and there are people in both our churches who also use and value them. I use them daily myself and know how valuable they are in feeding my faith even after many years as a Christian, and over 40 years as a priest. So take the opportunity today to reflect on how you allow God to feed your faith, and like any ‘diet’ ask yourself how you could improve it

### Intercessions - Let us pray

Heavenly Father we thank you once again for this opportunity to come together from the safety of our own homes and we pray for all those faith communities who are not so fortunate. We ask for your blessings on our faith leaders and all those who work within our places of worship to bring comfort, strength and support to the communities they serve in these difficult times. Amen

Heavenly Father as we look at our world we pray for all those who face poverty, disease, prejudice and injustice and pray that those in authority use their positions of power to work sincerely to tackle these and the many other problems that face the world today. We also continue to bring our own government and advisors before you and ask for wisdom and guidance as they continue to respond to the pandemic. We also ask for your blessings on the work of all those who struggle to bring aid and support to those who disparately need it at this time. Amen

Heavenly Father, as the clocks go back today and the days get shorter with the prospect of a challenging winter ahead facing us, we give thanks for the gift of the love and support of our families, friends and neighbours, a source of much needed light in these darkening days. We ask you to bless them and keep them safe and pray that we are soon able to reunite with those we are presently separated from. We also pray for all those within our communities who are lonely and vulnerable and for all those who for many reasons fear for their future at the moment. Amen

Heavenly Father we bring before you all those who suffer in body mind or spirit, especially all those who are suffering from the pandemic, those who care for them and their loved ones as well as any we wish to pray for particularly today .... We also remember all those working in our health and social services under so much pressure at this time, the residents and staff of our care homes, as well as all the other key workers supporting us in our daily lives. We give thanks for their service and pray for their safety. We continue to ask for your blessings on the work of those working on treatments and vaccines. Amen

Finally Father, we remember today all those who have gone before us, those who have died recently, especially in the pandemic, those whose anniversaries are around this time and any we wish to pray for today... we thank you for their love, friendship and our memories of them and we pray for comfort and peace for their loved ones. Finally, remembering God's gift of eternal life we ask that they rest in peace and rise in glory, Amen

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

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, forever and ever. Amen.