

Revd Michael Burns
Christ Church West Wimbledon
Sermon : July 28th, 2019
“Sixth Sunday after Trinity”

Trinity 6 2019

For those of us who are of more mature years, if I can put it like that, I wonder if you can remember where you were on the evening of Sunday 20 July 1969? I remember it very clearly. I was in Yorkshire preparing with school friends for our Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Expedition. We had all been on a practice hike for the day and arrived at the Youth Hostel where we were to stay the night – and the warden told us the news that the first man had just stepped on to the moon. I think we probably were politely impressed and duly appreciative of this amazing news - but we were also hungry for our supper!

For two people here today I suspect the news of that moon landing 50 years ago was to take second place to the myriad of preparations for their wedding at Christ Church 6 days later on Saturday 26 July 1969! In my sermon last Sunday I encouraged everyone to look ahead to the future rather than always dwelling in the past – but I did also say that it was important to be aware of our past and that it is good on occasions to celebrate what has gone before. This is one such occasion. It is, as I have said, a great pleasure to welcome Chris and Veronica back to Christ Church 50 years on to celebrate with them their Golden Wedding anniversary.

Yesterday they had a lunch party for 88 guests and on the cake was iced the words “Thanks be to God” as they are both very thankful to God for his faithfulness and love as they celebrate 50 years of marriage. They’ve brought their wedding photos and service sheet to show everyone afterwards as they stay for coffee before travelling back to Dorking for another celebratory lunch!

I have no doubt that Chris and Veronica will be looking back over the years, very aware of the lows as well as remembering the highs – but conscious that they have

been blessed so much by God, giving particular thanks for all those who now make up their extended family. There is real cause to celebrate and give thanks to God.

In our first reading Paul encourages his readers and hearers to 'continue to your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, abounding in thanksgiving'.

In our Gospel reading Jesus shares with his disciples his own practice of prayer and he goes on to instruct them. So Jesus encourages his disciples to adopt his intimate address of God: 'Abba; Daddy'. The prayer he teaches expresses reverence towards God and a hope that God's kingdom of justice and peace will reign. It includes our earthly needs and it commits us to forgiving others in the same breath that we ourselves seek forgiveness. The prayer of Jesus encourages us to reshape our lives according to this pattern and entrust ourselves to the goodness of God in all of our lives. The Lord's Prayer is the mainstay of Christians down the centuries and should continue to encourage us as we move forwards on our pilgrim journeys as the family of God wherever it is we may live and worship as Christians.

In the Church we know all about families, because the Church is a family, albeit a large, diverse and, at times, pretty unwieldy one. But it is in this family that we have a duty to care for each other, to support each other, to pray for each other. At times as with any family there will be petty squabbles, but hopefully we will rub alongside each other fairly happily most of the time. So let us all today give thanks for our earthly families and celebrate that we are all part of God's heavenly family. For that great privilege, thanks be to God. Amen.

The blessing of the marriage of Chris and Veronica Watts on their 50th anniversary then took place.