

TRINITY LAST 2026

You may not know this but I did not expect to be in the pulpit today! To mark the end of 'Generosity Week', I was asked to find a 'star' preacher but, no such luck. I even asked our retired friend, Bishop Tim Stevens, to fill the gap, but he has had shingles. Talking of which, I had to have my injection last week because I assume it is to **prevent** shingles (?). Anyway, I screamed before the needle went in, to make the nurse laugh and afterwards she said: 'Come back in 6-12 months for the second one!' That's going to be difficult, of course, but I was told it was a once-only injection!

The things you learn...like the parishioner I bumped into on my way home from Little St John's Street, who said she was sorry I was leaving. 'I hear you are moving to Yorkshire' – Well, that's the first I have heard of it! Perhaps we will, but at the moment we will be homeless, so there might need to be a very big collection for us when we finally leave! But more seriously, because clergy don't seem to like talking about money matters, David Berridge has kindly stepped forward to say a few words at the Notices and there's lots of really encouraging information to take home with you as you leave today.

I can't remember where today's readings came from or who chose them, but the beginning of Ephesians, chapter 5, is very wonderful: "Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Generosity and

sacrifice are bound up together in all our Christian vocation and service; in all our friendships and possibility for friendship; and yes, in all our work, whether it is paid or voluntary. There is no hiding from the vocation we all share in those first two commandments from our Gospel today – to love God, and to love our neighbour. There are many distractions of course and sometimes they seem to be ‘addictive’ not least via social media. Some are very serious and others more light-hearted. Yesterday a message was sent for the Rector of St Mary’s, Woodbridge – God bless him!

“Is your street on the (orange) map? Halloween is coming soon! Add your street to the Treat Map now, so families know where to find sweets and spooky decorations.”

As if I would! I am looking forward to the Feast of All Saints’ next week, and to a wonderful new congregational mass setting composed especially for us by Ben Ponniah. You can meet him later this afternoon if you would like to join us for a singing preview, or do I mean, run-through?

Our readings today, though, are teaching and encouraging us to stay focussed on the kingdom of God - heart, soul, mind and strength – every fibre of our being. To live as children of light is our choice, and our direction of travel, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are many different resources to help us in our common task as reflected in the Benedictine motto *‘ora et labora’*; to work is to pray. I heard a teacher say recently, it is a phrase which animates and underpins her work as a teacher in a

SEND (learning disability) setting. “It is the moments when I am fully focussed on the young people I teach, listening to them, encouraging them and advising them, that I feel deep gratitude” she said. “To give attention; to be fully present with; to want the best for the other, is where I sense my life’s purpose is fulfilled”. Many of you, I know, use the Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer ‘app’ to begin and close the day to help you feel closer to our common life in Christ; many of you use Bible Fellowship notes to ponder the scriptures and to reflect on them; many of you gather weekly as part of our Meditation group, enjoying the opportunities of silence which slow us down from the stresses or speed of everyday living. It is just an aside, but something I commend to all our thoughtful Sunday Intercessors – to use less words, and to create more gaps and silences to think about, and help everyone else, to pray in that moment, to actually benefit from the silence: to treasure, to inspire, and to embolden our going out...

We are not trying to be monks and nuns, much as we need and value them, much as their prayers for us all, matter. But we are trying our best to be children of light like that wise scribe in his very personal encounter with Jesus, that life-changing encounter. That is God’s gift to us as well and it is unconditional and freely given so that our hands and hearts may be filled with generous and abundant living, generous and sacrificial living, which lights up other people’s lives.

Pray that we may make time for inner silence in order that we can be fully present in the hubbub of the week ahead. Pray

dear sisters and brothers, that we may feel connected to the still small voice of God.