



## THE CHRISTIAN FAITH - A TRUTH GROUNDED IN JESUS

In the year 325 AD, about 220 bishops from across the Christian world gathered in the city of Nicaea, in what is now modern-day Turkey. Called together by Emperor Constantine, this meeting – known as the First Council of Nicaea – was a landmark event in the history of Christianity. For the first time, church leaders from various regions came together to define what Christians believe, seeking unity in a time of theological division.

At the heart of the Council's work was a controversy surrounding a man named Arius, a priest from Alexandria in Egypt. Arius taught that Jesus Christ was fully human but not fully divine – that he had been created by God and therefore could not be equal to God the Father. This teaching caused a huge argument, as many Christians believed that Arius' view undermined the very nature of salvation and the identity of Jesus.

The bishops debated from May to August 325, finally affirming what the Church had always believed but had not yet formally defined: that Jesus Christ is "of one substance" with the Father (homoousios in the original Greek). This meant that the Son is not a lesser being, but fully and truly God – "eternally begotten, not made", as Christians affirm today, Sunday by Sunday. This, of course, became a foundational belief of official Christian teaching.

To express this clearly, the council formulated what is now called the Nicene Creed. While slightly revised at the Council of Constantinople in 381, the Creed remains one of the most important summaries of Christian belief. Millions of Christians across denominations still recite it today – our parish included, affirming the faith handed down through the centuries.

Yet Nicaea was more than a theological debate – it was a moment when the Church sought unity, clarity, and truth in a time of uncertainty. Though debates were fierce (it is said that St Nicholas got so frustrated that he slapped Arius across the face!), the goal was to remain faithful to the traditions handed down from the apostles, to the gospel that had been preached since the time of Christ. The Council also addressed practical issues, such as the date of Easter and certain church practices, but its greatest legacy is the stand it took in emphasising the full duality of Christ – his humanity and his divinity.

By doing so, it safeguarded the heart of the Christian message: that in Jesus, God truly came to dwell among us, redeem us, and bring us into communion with himself.

Today, the Council of Nicaea reminds us that the Christian faith is not a patchwork of opinions, but a truth grounded in Jesus, preserved and passed on by the Church in every age.

Like the Church of centuries past we are not immune to debate and division.

A power-struggle between the "conservative" and "liberal" wings of the Church is being played out once more as our Roman Catholic friends elect a new Pope, and as we seek to appoint a new Archbishop of Canterbury. And within the Church of England the debate over same-sex marriage continues over what constitutes "marriage" and other issues of human sexuality. More locally we contemplate re-formation of parishes and benefices into Minster Communities.

Debate and division are nothing new to the Church. Nor is the practice of coming together to talk and listen to each to find a common mind grounded in Scripture, tradition, experience, and love.

May the Church continue to be called into dialogue and unity – which is Christ's gift to us all.

## FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



**LUNCH LIGHT** our group that supports folk who are bereaved, plan to meet on **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July between 12.30pm – 2.00pm**. So if you have lost a loved one and would like some company, a chat and a bite to eat, why not drop in or Telephone Janet 01283 215000, if you want to know more and would like to join us, or if you wish to help out. There is a charge of £3

**COFFEEANDCHAT@CHURCH** will meet in church on **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July between 9.30 and 11.00am**.

### JULY SERVICES ACROSS THE WOODFIELD TEAM.

(all starting at 10am unless otherwise stated).

Tuesday July 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Coffee &amp; Chat at St. John's Donisthorpe at 9.30am</b>
Saturday July 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St John's Prayer Group meeting Winnie Meadows home at 10am</b>
Sunday July 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (MP)</b> , Measham, Normanton & Snarestone (HC), Packington, (Breakfast Church), Swepstone (MP)
Sunday July 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (Lay Led Worship)</b> , Swepstone (MP) Swepstone (HC), Measham (Breakfast Church)
Sunday July 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (Lay Led Worship)</b> , Normanton (Baptism/MP), Swepstone & Norton (HC), Measham (Breakfast Church), Appleby (Lay Led Worship)
Friday June 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Lunch Light at St. John's Donisthorpe (12- 30 – 14.00)</b>
Sunday July 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe (HC)</b> , Measham (Baptism), Packington (HC), Appleby (MP).
Wednesday July 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Donisthorpe Midweek Holy Communion 10am</b>

## EXPLORING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

An enquiry from someone about confirmation has prompted the realisation that it is some while since a preparation course was held within the Woodfield Team either for adults or teenagers. We hope to rectify that! So, we should love to hear from those of you who may be thinking about confirmation yourself or perhaps enquiring on behalf of a son or daughter. The course would also be very appropriate for anyone who would just like to find out more about the Christian faith – or would like a refresher!

If you are interested, please could you email Ruth, the Administrator, at [woodfieldteamoffice@gmail.com](mailto:woodfieldteamoffice@gmail.com) or telephone: 07928103850, providing your contact details and indicating whether you are available daytime &/or evenings. Alternatively, speak to any of the clergy – you may want to chat to one of them before “signing up”.

## A QUIET TIME WITH GOD

### WHEN WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO PRAY

*‘Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.’- Romans 8:26*

It is possible today that you find yourself not knowing how to pray.

Not knowing what to do to help God's kingdom come.

This guide has been created to try to help you.

We hope this guide will help you find the words to talk to God, as one friend speaks to another about the desperate situations arising in the world at this moment.

Take a moment to set the scene of what it is we are praying for...  
Notice how you are reacting in this moment as you reflect on recent events...  
Perhaps one thing from the news stands out to you...  
Whatever arises, know that God holds you in this moment in love...

Have you been able to speak to Jesus about how you feel and what you've been thinking, or are you too confused to do so?

If there is confusion for you, you might find it helpful to identify one emotion surfacing for you above the rest. Perhaps anger...or sadness... despair... confusion...or desperation...  
How would you like to offer this to God?

Can any of these emotions help you to reaffirm a hope and a call for justice, peace, and equality for all people?

As followers of Jesus, how might we be being asked to respond to what is happening?

We can stand shoulder to shoulder with all suffering peoples. Take a moment to pray for all those who are suffering today, from every walk of life, in this situation...

We might recall Jesus' challenging words: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you". With those words, how might you be stirred to do this today? You might like to ask God to change hearts and guide tongues so that the words that are used are to build up and not tear down.

Paul proclaimed in his Letter to the Romans,  
"I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord". – Romans 8:38.

How does this encourage you today?

Lord Jesus, you said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit", we beg you to watch over, guide, guard and protect all women and men and children. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Lord Jesus, who said "Blessed are the peacemakers", we ask you to turn hearts towards deeds of peace. We ask to be ourselves instruments of peace. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Lord Jesus, you said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness", inspire and strengthen the men and women who work to bring about peace and reconciliation. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Lord Jesus, you said, "Blessed are the merciful", we thank you for the many good people who continue to seek ways of reconciliation and show mercy to others. Blessed are the merciful.

You might like to pause now and in silence pray for those most in need at this time.

Placing all these prayers on a firm foundation, you might like to say the Lord's 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. Amen.

We end by remembering Jesus' words: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Lord Jesus Christ, who is called the Prince of Peace, you yourself are our peace and reconciliation, who so often said, "Peace to you," grant us peace. Make all men and women witnesses of truth, justice, and brotherly and sisterly love. Banish from their hearts whatever might endanger peace. Enlighten our rulers that they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace. May all peoples of the earth become as brothers and sisters. May longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always over us all.

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his son our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen (PRAY AS YOU GO)

## GOD'S TIME

The Church has its own way of measuring time.

At the beginning of last month we celebrated Pentecost: the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon his people. It brought to a climax the six months of special seasons teaching us about Christ's time of earth. We started in December with Advent, followed by Christmas, Epiphany, then, after a short gap, by Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

But the next day Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June, the Church tells us we are In Ordinary Time. It doesn't mean, of course, that we don't have more special occasions. The Sunday following was Trinity Sunday and, rather like family birthdays, we will have lots of saints to remember in our summer and autumn months. But it is still something of a shock, even an anti-climax, to face weeks of 'ordinary time'.

Perhaps though there is a special gift in them.

All time belongs to God. He shares it with us, inviting us to make best use of our quiet times, as well as our special celebrations. We can enjoy 'the sacrament of the present moment' with God wherever we are, whatever we are doing. We need only to pause, to remember, perhaps offer a few special words (prayer) and allow God to do the rest.

We have a particular name for this gift of God. Jesus taught us to call it 'eternal life'. It lies, not in tearing off the pages of a calendar, measuring age, or in any other human calculation, but in our relationship with the One who made us and sustains us.

Perhaps 'ordinary time' is just what we need to follow Jesus into God; and to allow the Holy Spirit to bless each and every present moment.

*Eternal God,*

*Thank you for the Holy Spirit, poured out anew.*

*Help us to enjoy all the time you give us*

*and to find you in all that we are, and in all that we do.*

*In the name of Jesus.*

**Amen**

## AUGUST GRAPEVINE

480 copies of Grapevine are delivered each month to homes across our parish, pushed through letter boxes by our group of dedicated distributors but twice a year, once in summer and again in winter we like to give them a month off. So next month's Grapevine will only be available for 'church family' and those who receive it by email. If you would like to receive it by email and but are not on the distribution list contact me on [derektomlin@btinternet.com](mailto:derektomlin@btinternet.com)