



**THE DIOCESE
OF SHEFFIELD**

Renewed | Released | Rejuvenated

Coronavirus Ad Clerum

June 22 2020

Bearing fruit

Then Jesus told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ “‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’” Luke 13:6-8

Today’s reading from Morning Prayer reminds us that God is always looking for growth. Growing things is a major theme of the scriptures. The creation narratives are set in the context of a luscious garden. In the Old Testament God’s people are promised fruit from vines they did not plant, there is mention of cucumbers, pomegranates, milk and honey. In the New Testament Jesus feeds his disciples from fields of corn and produces wine in abundance from ordinary water jars. God provides for his people through the growth and goodness of his creation.

God is still looking for growth. Even three months of lockdown cannot stop it. Growth requires patience, time, perseverance and sustained attention. The church is sometimes distracted by a partial view of growth, failing to recognise that growth is about the flourishing of all.

Today is recognised as ‘Windrush Day’. It is a day to honour the British Caribbean community, and the half a million people who travelled to the UK after the Second World War. Many have faced terrible hardship in recent years with at least 83 being wrongly deported. Together with the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement there is undoubtedly and rightly significant growth in our awareness of racial injustice even within the body of Christ. The final chapter of the Bible gives a picture of a tree with leaves for the healing of the nations. It is a beautiful image of growth; a vision of God’s kingdom in which every nation, tribe and language is able to proclaim the glory of God. As we continue to work together with God for the growth of his church in all its fullness may we be ever aware of the hopeful signs of growth and his patient love towards us as we travel that journey together into the future.

Guidance on the re-opening of Church Buildings

We are aware that some have made the decision to open their church building for private prayer and/or small funerals. A reminder that the guidance states that you MAY reopen in this way rather than that you MUST. For those in the process of making this possible, Ecclesiastical Insurance has provided some helpful guidance here: <https://sheffdio.org/ecclesiastical>

Also some guidance on lone working:

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/working-alone-church-health-and-safety-guide.pdf>

We are disappointed that at the time of writing we have no further information about small weddings. We realise that this is a source of distress to some and we will report any changes to guidance as soon as they are issued. Please do keep couples affected in your prayers.

Petertide ordinations

You will be aware that those who were to be ordained deacon this coming weekend will instead be licensed as Lay Ministers in the Diocese on Saturday at 4pm in a remote service held via Zoom! Please keep them and their families in your prayers:

Joshua Blunt	St John the Evangelist, Goole
James Crossley	St John the Baptist, Chapelton
Beth Langner	St Paul, Norton Lees
Matthew Lawes	Christ Church, Fulwood
Carol Lee	Holy Trinity and St Oswald, Finningley with St Saviour Auckley
Gill Salter	St Lawrence, Hatfield
Helen Terry	Christ Church, Hillsbrough and Wadsley Bridge
Jo Twigg	Penistone and Thurlstone Team Ministry
Matthew Wood	St John the Evangelist, Ranmoor

Please also pray for those who were due to be priested as they await the day when this is also possible. We are grateful for their continued service of Christ in the life of our diocese:

Charles Burton	All Saints, Wath
Alison Cook	Christ Church, Stannington
Neil Elsom	St Mary, Greasbrough
Sara Goodman	Christ Church, Pitsmoor
Sarah Maughan	St Leonard & St Mary, Armthorpe
Tracey Morris	St Luke, Lodge Moor
Sibylle Nothhelfer-Batten	The Manor, Sheffield

Ela Nutu Hall	St Augustine, Endcliffe
Lucy Sablan	St Thomas, Philadelphia
Godfrey Smallman	St Luke, Lodge Moor
Ben Tanner	Christ Church, Endcliffe

Inclusion

Wonderful as the opportunities for services and other forms of online worship have been, we are very aware that some are excluded from these. A reminder that 'Daily Hope' (0800 804 8044) is a free national phone line offering a simple ministry to those who might struggle to access services and prayers online. Please do share it widely.

Resources to assist you:

Generous June

A reminder that the 'Generous June' campaign continues throughout this month, offering a wealth of resources for churches and individuals to use individually and corporately. We are delighted to be sharing this initiative with the Diocese of Winchester and grateful to David Stout and the team for the collaboration that this has enabled, www.generousjune.co.uk

Summer sermons

We realise that annual leave is not what it would ordinarily be at this time, but we strongly encourage you to book and take the leave that you need over the coming weeks. In order to help you resource the worship life of your community, members of the Bishop's Senior Staff Team have decided to produce a **weekly sermon** recorded as a 7-10 minute video on the Sunday lectionary gospel reading from the first Sunday in July to the last Sunday in August. We hope this will make it easier for some to take a well-deserved break.

Retreat bookings

The Sheldon Centre (The Society of Martha and Mary), is open for private retreats from July. They offer self-contained accommodation; a particularly valuable resource at this time of coronavirus. Do visit www.sheldon.uk.com for more information. Sheldon is very experienced in offering specialist ministry for clergy who would value support alongside those in any form of Christian ministry.

Reading

Tom Wright has long been a trusted voice on the interpretation of scripture and its application to our times. 'God and the Global Pandemic' published at the end of May does not disappoint. Inviting the reader into a proper biblical reflection on the place

of lament, he uses the motifs of tears, fears and doubts to explore what the scriptures have to say to us in response to our situation. At just 112 pages it is well worth taking the time to read and digest prayerfully.

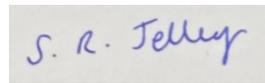
<https://spckpublishing.co.uk/god-and-the-pandemic>

Winchester University held an online global conference last week on Christian Theology in the Midst of Covid 19. The full list of papers will shortly be available to read. For more information go to:

<https://www.winchester.ac.uk/research/enhancing-wellbeing-nurturing-the-individual/christian-theology-in-the-midst-of-covid-19/>

As ever this comes with our prayers in gratitude and hope for the future,

Every blessing,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. R. Jelley".

Canon Sophie Jelley
Bishop-designate of Doncaster

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Pete Sheffield".

The Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox
Bishop of Sheffield