



**Sixth Sunday after Pentecost**

**16 July 2017**

**Sentence** The words you have spoken are spirit and life,  
O Lord; you have the words of eternal life. *John 6.63,68*

### **Collect**

Divine sower, scattering seed, never hoarding,  
wasting life - or so the world thinks:  
give us depth to receive the gift so freely given  
and the maturity to revel in love's abundant, reckless growth; through  
Jesus Christ, the grain of life. **Amen.**

### **A reading from the book of Genesis.**

*Rebekah is recognised as one of the four matriarchs of Israel. Last week we heard the story of her marriage to Isaac and this week of the birth of her twin sons, Esau and Jacob (later renamed Israel), through whom God's promise to Abraham that his descendants will number more than the stars, will be carried forward. Fathers designated who their heir would be, either by birth order or achievement; since households were patrilineal this reduced competition and helped survival in an unstable world. Isaac and Rebekah are the only monogamous couple in the Hebrew scriptures.*

These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. The children struggled together within her; and she said, 'If it is to be this way, why do I live?' So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her,  
'Two nations are in your womb,  
and two peoples born of you shall be divided;  
one shall be stronger than the other,  
the elder shall serve the younger.'

When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they

named him Esau. Afterwards his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. When the boys grew up, Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau said to Jacob, 'Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!' (Therefore he was called Edom.) Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.' Esau said, 'I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?' Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

*Genesis 25.19-34*

Reader Hear the word of the Lord  
All Thanks be to God

### **Psalm 119.105-112 APBA page 355**

*This is the longest psalm in the collection of 150 and is an acrostic on the Hebrew alphabet. It is a long meditation on God's law for which all kinds of synonyms are used: decrees, precepts, word, statutes. God's wisdom guides our every moment as we are willing to listen.*

### **A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.**

*'In Christ' was Paul's vision of Christian community, which is here spoken of as 'in the Spirit' that is, grounded in the Spirit of God as known in Jesus Christ. To be 'in the flesh' is to live ignoring or denying the Spirit's claim upon our actions. Since we humans are incapable of living as God originally intended, Jesus in whom spirit and flesh are one, and not hostile to God, has won for us freedom from our captivity to wrongdoing and its effects.*

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not

according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

*Romans 8.1-11*

Reader      May your word live in us  
**All**            **And bear much fruit to your glory**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**All**            **Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Cantor        'Blessed are those who hear the word and understand it:  
                    and bear fruit a hundredfold' says the Lord.

**All**            **Alleluia!**

Reader        The Lord be with you

**ALL**           **And also with you**

Reader        A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

**ALL**           **Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ**

*In this parable, the seeds are a metaphor for God's law or Torah, better understood as God's 'way' or 'directives for living'. A harvest of 'a hundred fold' would be an extraordinary bounty and any farmers listening to Jesus would have indeed pricked up their ears to listen! Remembered later in a persecuted community, Matthew's retelling of this story would have been encouragement to stand firm and prove to be a community of good soil. Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they*

sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!’ ‘Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.’

*Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord  
**ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

### **Prayer for the Week**

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Bible Readings next week**

**Mary Magdalene**

Song of Songs 3.1-4a Ps 63 2 Corinthians 5.14-21 John 20.1-18

### **Pray for the Faithful Departed**

We remember before God: Charlotte Hallam, Stewart Lannan, Mavis Nicholas, Nancy McGrath, John Righetti, William Alfred, Harold Adcock, Ernestine Lobb, Florence Nelson, John Davis, Roma Simmons, Roma Florence Bruce, Jack Lusby Burns, Susan Moody, Leigh Manning, John Pritchard, *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

### **Commemorations of the week**

**July 22 Mary Magdalene.** With Mary and Martha of Bethany, this Mary from Magdala in the Galilee was one of the women disciples of Jesus. With Jesus for most of his ministry, she was the first witness of the resurrection, and given the honoured title Apostle to the Apostles.

