**Reading and Reflection with Prayers St Levan**

**for 11th October 2020 18th after Trinity**

**The Collect**

Almighty God, to whose glory we celebrate the dedication of this house of prayer: we praise you for the many blessings you have given to those who worship you here: and we pray that all who seek you in this place may find you, and, being filled with the Holy Spirit, may become a living temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, **Amen.**

**For the Online and Posted folk only! Reading Philippians 4.4-9**

4Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

**Gospel Matthew 22.1-14 (Used as only reading in church)**

1Once more Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: 2‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. 4Again he sent other slaves, saying, “Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.” 5But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, 6while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. 7The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8Then he said to his slaves, “The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.” 10Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, 12and he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?” And he was speechless. 13Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 14For many are called, but few are chosen.’

**Reflection**

It is Feast Sunday for St Levan, and while we know that this year it will be different, it is with a heavy heart that we think of the things we can no longer take for granted. The Feast Supper, the coffee and gathering of the three church communities together, the singing and the sharing of the peace with friends old and new.

A bit like the wedding feast, what we planned for cannot happen and we can throw our hands in the air and bewail the sadness of 2020 or we can more like the father (well not the punishing and throwing into darkness!). On hearing that his planned celebration would not happen as he had thought, instead of cancelling the celebration of the wedding, he reshaped it, he made the best of what was available. Those who were invited must have been rather surprised. Once I was at a posh party, chatting to someone who like me was not usually invited to these social gatherings. He turned to the child of the house who was handing out delicious bites, and said, “What a treat! I wonder what I did to be part of tonight!” The child, a stranger to the idea of tact replied: “Lots of our friends went on holiday so we had to make up the numbers!” Ouch! Rather an embarrassing pause as the host was standing behind their child and heard it all!

The response to the lack of proper clothing for the guest is one that sounds terrible unless you know that the people invited to a wedding at the time of Jesus in the Holy Land would have been invited to the home, and given a ritual bath and ceremonial clothes were provided as a mark of respect to the bride and groom and their families. This guest must have refused the robes, therefore dishonouring the family, and bringing them shame as the other guests would have seen the man without wedding clothes as a lack of resources and riches of the family.

So shall we be like those who did not attend the wedding feast, finding excused to avoid fulfilling the promise? Or like the one who choose to dishonour the family? Or shall we be like the father who embraces change of plans without notice and still somehow manages to make the celebration exceptional! Or one of the lucky unexpected guests?

St Levan Feast is still happening, not quite as usual admittedly, but God is still present as we celebrate the founding of the building, the building is still there, and prayers are still offered. As for the service, well Jesus said “Do this in remembrance of me” So we shall offer the Eucharist in obedience to Jesus’ call upon our lives, and we shall remember the first reading today, making it our own: 4Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. **Philippians 4.4-9**

**Prayers on a stormy season amended by Vanda**

Almighty God, we praise you for your creation, and all you richly provide. Enable us to live in such a way that your majesty and mercy are seen by all. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All governments rule under your authority. May they work for the good of those they rule, seeking your justice and peace in every law and action. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Enable those who are engaged in industry and commerce, the media and education, sport and the arts, to fulfil their responsibilities with integrity and an attitude of service. We pray for Lucie and Michael to be married in St Levan later this month, bless them Lord in their marriage and celebration. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Comfort and strengthen those who are gripped by poverty, weakened by illness, or oppressed by cruelty. We pray especially for those who are battling with Covid 19. May they know your love and experience your care. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Inspire your church here on earth to proclaim the gospel of your love
in the death and resurrection of your Son. May all people hear the call to trust you. We pray for St Levan on their feast day, equip the church Lord to be alert to your call, sacrificial in service and loving to all, even those least loveable. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Help your people to display your compassion to all those in need.
May the poor and the lost of this world find in you their true wealth and sure destiny. Refresh and equip us, O God, to be your faithful and obedient people, **Merciful Father, accept these prayer in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.**

Calming and reliable God, when the storms break, I break too! Especially if the storm is sudden and unexpected, panic sets in and I find myself drowning, unable to breathe. And you may not be immediately there, at my side hushing my fears and making everything OK again. Calming and reliable God, give me the faith I need to hang on in times of darkness and terror and despair. Help me to understand that when you calm my storms you may not necessarily do so in the way I want or expect but will always do so in the way that is best for me.

Calm me Lord as you calmed the storm. Shelter me, Keep me from harm. Let all the tumult within me cease. Enfold me Lord, in your peace.

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