

Dear All,

Summer has officially begun! I know a friend who usually took at least 5 books on holiday with him, so he could simply relax and switch off. I often think the Bible is a switch ON, encouraging us to grow in faith and our walk with Jesus. I hope as you explore these notes, [where in July the focus is on the book of Colossians and in August it is Hebrews,] you are able to do just that.

Every blessing,

Janet

All material taken from Roots on the Web 2025

6 - 12 July 2025 Growing community

Proper 9 Year C Isaiah 66.10-14; Psalm 66.1-9; Luke 10.1-11,16-20

Galatians 6.(1-6),7-16

Paul concludes his letter to the Galatians by reminding them to look out for one another and bear each other's burdens while not shirking their individual responsibility to live a life of freedom and love. We are all called to care for and nurture one another so that we all grow in the love of Christ.

Carrying your own load but sharing your burden sounds complicated! But responsible members of a community work well together and help each other. Carrying our own load does not mean we can't also ask for help.

13 - 19 July 2025 Encouraging words

Proper 10 Year C Deuteronomy 30.9-14; Psalm 25.1-10; Luke 10.25-37

Colossians 1.1-14

At the start of his letter to the Christians at Colossae, Paul commends them for their faith in Jesus, which is bearing good fruit. He prays that they may continue to build up a community of love and mutual encouragement where everyone's needs are met.

Encouraging words are so important for ensuring people have the confidence to do the things that are asked of them. Today, we will consider some of the encouraging words Paul said to the church in Colossae and how they may also encourage us today.

20 - 26 July 2025 Seeing the invisible God

Proper 11 Year C Genesis 18.1-10a; Psalm 15; Luke 10.38-42

Colossians 1.15-28

In one of Paul's richest theological reflections on the coming of Jesus, he talks about the crucified Christ as the invisible God made visible. True authority and power are not found in the pomp and might of Caesar, but in the humility and suffering of Jesus.

Today we consider how we see God, not just with our eyes, but how we perceive and know his character, as revealed in Christ.

27 July - 2 August 2025 What really matters?

Proper 12 Year C Genesis 18.20-32; Psalm 138 Luke 11.1-13

Colossians 2.6-15,(16-19)

The congregation in Colossae is being pulled towards concerns about special foods and days, but Paul encourages them to keep focused on Jesus. He uses a number of images to highlight the completeness of our life in Christ.

Paul is keen to stress to the Colossians that, in a world where philosophies and fads come and go, what really matters is Christ – the one in whom the fullness of God dwells and in whom we find fullness of life. This week, we seek to place Jesus at the centre of our lives and concentrate again on the things that really matter in a world full of distractions.

3 - 9 August 2025 A new focus

Proper 13 Year C Ecclesiastes 1.2,12-14; 2.18-23; Psalm 49.1-12; Luke 12.13-21

Colossians 3.1-11

Paul invites those who have been raised with Christ to have a new focus: to look beyond everyday realities to the life hidden with the risen Christ, who is seated at God's right hand. Those who share Christ's new life have stripped off the old self and must put to death old ways of living that separated them from God.

This week we consider how setting our minds on godly things has profound practical consequences on our day-to-day living, both for ourselves and those whose needs we see more clearly as a result.

10 - 16 August 2025 Keep going in faith

Proper 14 Year C Genesis 15.1-6; Psalm 33.12-22; Luke 12.32-40

Hebrews 11.1-3,8-16

Today's reading, part of a chapter on acts of faith by God's people, focuses on Abraham, who trusted God's call to leave his home and become a nomad. He and Sarah had no child and no home for many years, but their commitment to God's promise was unwavering.

Sometimes faith seems to come easily (see this week's psalm). At other times it is tough (Abraham and Sarah were blessed with a baby – many faithful couples are not). Today we explore how the gifts of Scripture, prayer and the stories of others can help us and those we pray for to keep going in faith.

17 - 23 August 2025 Who's running with you?

Proper 15 Year C Jeremiah 23.23-29; Psalm 82; ; Luke 12.32-40

Hebrews 11.29 – 12.2

The writer to the Hebrews continues to highlight acts of faith by God's people, recounting miraculous deliverance and steadfastness in trials. The author urges believers to

persevere in the face of difficulties and opposition, focusing on Jesus – the ultimate example of faith and the source of salvation.

At times we need encouragement to persevere in our Christian faith. Who better to encourage us than those, from the past and the present, who know what it is like to be people of faith? Today's readings do not pretend it will be easy, but there is support and encouragement from those who run alongside us.

24 - 30 August 2025 Awesome!

RCL Proper 16 Year C Isaiah 58.9b-14; Psalm 103.1-8; Luke 13.10-17

Hebrews 12.18-29

Today's reading is a tale of two mountains, contrasting the terrifying experience of God's presence at Mount Sinai (where Moses received the Law) with a joyful approach to the living God through Jesus at Mount Zion.

As we approach God, do we come in awe, or even fear? Today we look at ways in which we can keep a sense of awe and wonder, yet approach God with confidence.

31 August – 6 September 2025 Confidence to care

Proper 17 Year C Proverbs 25.6-7; Sirach 10.12-18; Psalm 112; Luke 14.1,7-14

Hebrews 13.1-8,15-16

The final chapter of Hebrews gives encouragement to keep on in faithful worship and loving concern for others, including strangers and those in prison. Christians are to live lives consistent with their calling, free of the love of money and rooted in the love of Christ.

How can we find the confidence to look outwards from our own concerns and care in the way Jesus asks? Could it be through the confidence we have in God's care for us?

PRAYERS FROM July 13TH

A prayer of adoration

God of encouragement,
you bless us by calling us by name:
we are encouraged by your living Word.
You bless us by inviting us to serve you,
and we are encouraged by your living Word.
You bless us through the lives of others,
and we are encouraged by your living Word.
You entrust to us the ministry of blessing others,
that they may be encouraged by your living Word.
To your glory. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Refrain: **Forgive us when we let them down.**

Lord God, it is easy:
to ask you to bless others, but to not bless them ourselves;
Refrain

to ask for encouragement for others, but to not encourage them ourselves; *Refrain*
to take others for granted and to not acknowledge their worth or affirm their efforts; *Refrain*
to talk the talk but not show faith in action or hope in perseverance.

Forgive us when we let you down, and reshape us, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness

All-knowing God,
you bless us with encouragement in our dark times.
You cheer us on through your Spirit in our better times.
You forgive us for our worst times
and are alongside us at all times. **Amen.**

Prayers of intercession from 3rd August

This prayer was originally published in 2022. New intercessions will be published here by noon on Wednesday (insert date) 2025.

Lord our God, your abundance, your love, your provision, your blessing amazes us day by day.
With such knowledge we bring our prayers for others in need this day.

We pray for those in need of food on the table when the cupboard is bare or when the crops have failed. No one should need overseas aid and yet they do. No one should need to use Foodbanks and yet they do. No one should go hungry and yet they do. Help us to do all we can to help feed the hungry.

God of abundance:
hear our prayer.

For those who are hungry for love, hungry for care, hungry for compassion, hungry for purpose, may they find what they need and what they seek from the abundance of your richness to the world.

God of abundance:
hear our prayer.

For those who don't seek abundance, but simply seek for a shelter to surround them, a roof to protect them, a place to call home, a place to belong, a place to be the best they can be.

God of abundance:
hear our prayer.

For the fearful and the frightened, the bewildered and bemused as the pace of life overtakes them, for those who feel they no longer belong where they used to, they no longer understand what they used to.

God of abundance:
hear our prayer.

For the NHS and Social Care and Social Workers who strive to see people as a whole and to meet their needs when all around them there are pressures and cutbacks and shortages and complaints.

God of abundance:

hear our prayer.

For governments across the world as they readjust to life's changing needs and demands, may they have open eyes to see the real needs, open ears to hear the cries of the needy, open hands to reach out in compassion and are and open minds to change their ways when needed.

God of abundance:

hear our prayer.

For those participating and organising the Commonwealth games, that they may be a games of friendship, hospitality and fairness. That all who share may feel respected and appreciated, safe and secure.

God of abundance:

hear our prayer.

For those known to us who need our prayers today...in the silence of this moment we bring their names and offer them to God.

God of abundance:

hear our prayer.

For ourselves that we may live fruitful, helpful lives, treating others with respect, dignity, fairness and worth. That we loved as we are loved and as Jesus commanded.

God of abundance:

hear our prayer. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR JULY from 13th July.

Thought for the week

Read out in place of a sermon if you wish

There was once a man who was admitted to hospital for a procedure. The procedure was seen as routine and something he was expected to go home from that day. However, the man was scared; he had never been to the hospital before and wasn't sure what was going to happen or how he was going to feel. He had to go in alone as he had no one to accompany him.

Once in hospital, he encountered a nurse who changed his experience. The nurse was full of encouraging words. She didn't tell him he was being silly for being worried about something minor; she noticed the way he was feeling and listened to him. This kindness and encouraging words not only affected the man in the hospital but also had ripples that went out into the wider community years later.

When the man returned home, he told his family how this nurse had spoken to him and made him feel. His granddaughter was listening and was inspired; years later, she became a nurse and remembered how the words had affected her grandad. Every time she met someone anxious while waiting for an operation, she treated them with kindness and encouraged them, just as that nurse had done for her grandad all those years before.

This is what we can take from the Colossians reading today: not only should we find the words Paul gave to the church inspiring, but it is showing us how we should be encouraging of others.

THOUGHT FOR AUGUST from 10TH August

Hebrews was written for people who were in danger of starting to lose interest in Jesus. It is possible that some were becoming disillusioned with faith because of personal issues. Most of the previous chapters deliberately remind people of how wonderful Jesus is – in particular, that he is the real high priest (compared with the shadows and copies on this earth; Hebrews 4:14-15).

Chapter 11 is an encouragement to keep on believing and to keep on going in faith. Abraham and Sarah are held up as exemplars of people who kept going in faith when the odds seemed to be stacked against them. The writer draws on Genesis 15:1-6 and the promise of an heir for Abram and Sarai (as they were then called), from whom descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky will come.

It is an inspiring story and has been an encouragement to many who have struggled, not least with the acute pain of childlessness, to keep on going in faith. There are many people who can testify to the joy of having their prayers answered against the odds, often having walked very painful pathways. [Michelle Obama in her book *Becoming*](#) tells of the struggles she and Barack had in conceiving and the pain they went through before their two daughters were born – daughters that brought them untold joy.

Such stories should be rightly celebrated but, alongside that, there is an ever-present need to be sensitive to and supportive of those whose stories do not have the hoped-for ending. [Sheridan Voysey's book *Resurrection Year*](#) helpfully shares how he and his wife Merryn coped with this. The writer to the Hebrews is refreshingly honest about this. In verse 13, he speaks of those who 'died in faith without having received the promises'.

Why some prayers are apparently answered and others are not will always be a mystery on this earth. But, as the writer of Hebrews reminds us, this earth is not the only reality, for there is also a better place – a heavenly one; a place where every tear will be wiped away and all will be made whole. This vision is offered as an encouragement to keep on going both to those who struggle and to those who don't. One day all things will be made new but in the meantime the need for a better country, a heavenly one, here on earth is all too apparent. We keep on going in faith not just for our own blessing and benefit but on behalf of others who long for peace, for justice (think of [Mr Bates vs the Post Office](#)), for freedom; on behalf of those clinging on to their faith and needing to know that God has not abandoned them.

Every week we pray for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Where might that prayer be particularly urgent today? How might we be part of the answer to that prayer?