

## Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August - Ninth Sunday after Trinity

*Revd Jax is away on holiday so Alastair Barron has very kindly prepared this Reflection for me to send out instead.*



Like many, I suspect I've been struck by the amazing talents, skills and physicality of our sports men and women over the last several weeks in the Women's European Football Championship and in the Commonwealth Games. The women's team won the European Championship in some style (and yes I did watch the final and thoroughly enjoyed it - despite the ball being round and not oval shaped!) and the four home countries' medal tally in the Commonwealth games has just been super impressive.



Insideheadline.com

All those performances were the product of years of training, commitment, hard work and perseverance. When it was easy, when it was hard, all those men and women had to stick with their regime, overcoming all difficulties and pushing on.



Whathifi.com

All this came at a time when 100s of bishops from all over the world from the Anglican Communion were meeting at the Lambeth Conference – our senior leaders opening their hearts to God as they debated key issues of the day. It was seemingly a conference dominated by the issue of sexuality and same sex marriage – some for, some against, some attended the conference and, in protest, some did not.



Espiscopalnewsservice.org

I was particularly struck by the thought, though, that some did not attend – where was their voice, how did they contribute to the debate? Why had they given up on the process?

This isn't the place to have the debate itself and I think it's likely that, like the church more generally, there would be many views of this highly contentious issue across our Benefice but that's not really the point here.

Our faith is sometimes not easy, we are called to ask a lot of ourselves, but one thing is for sure, we are called to persevere and that's why the commitment, strength, sheer grit and drive through years of training of all those athletes made such an impression on me.

The bible makes the need for perseverance very clear – in what we do and say and in our prayer life.

Luke tells the story of a widow pestering a judge for justice in Chapter 18 of his Gospel, she just won't give up and eventually succeeds.



Persistent Widow – [freebibleimages.org](http://freebibleimages.org)

Paul says in his letter to the Romans (Ch 12)

‘Be patient in trouble and keep on praying’.

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul says

‘As for the rest of you, dear Brothers and Sisters, never get tired of doing good’

and tellingly, right at the beginning of his letter to the Twelve Tribes in the Dispersion, James says

‘...the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything’.

Well, I'm not sure we're finely tuned athletes training and competing or bishops seeking to address the thorny issues of the day but I am sure we all face challenges from time to time and find ourselves wondering whether it's all too difficult and whether to stop, wondering where to find the strength and drive to carry on, to persevere. My reflection for us all today is that we look to the strength to be found in scripture and the Holy Spirit and the promises made to us by Jesus and just press on – it will be fine, we will succeed according to God's design and will for us ..... He promises!

## **Patience and Perseverance**

*by Arthur Penrhyn Stanley*

So long as our existence lasts,  
we must not give up the duty of cheerfulness and hope.  
He who has guided us through the day,  
will guide us through the night also.  
The pillar of darkness often turns into a pillar of fire.  
Have patience and perseverance;  
believe that there is still a future before us,  
and we shall at last reach the haven where we would be.

### **Collect Prayer for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity**

Almighty God,  
who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church:  
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,  
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

### **Luke 12: 49-56 - Not Peace but Division**

“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

### **Interpreting the Times**

He said to the crowd: “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘It’s going to rain,’ and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time?”

## Schedule of Services

Now that all national Coronavirus restrictions have been lifted, it is no longer necessary to book seats in our parishes for services. Neither is it mandatory for you to wear masks in church. However, Coronavirus is still very much with us. There are a number of people in our villages with it at present, so we are encouraging people to observe social distancing measures.

Date	Ch	Cr	Li	Sp	Wh
14 <sup>th</sup> August			Holy Communion		Morning Worship
21 <sup>st</sup> August	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	6pm – Peace & Wholeness	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	
24 <sup>th</sup> August			Mid-week Holy Communion		
28 <sup>th</sup> August			Morning Worship	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
4 <sup>th</sup> September	Morning worship	Holy Communion	Show Service in the Littleton & Harestock Show Marquee		
11 <sup>th</sup> September			Holy Communion		Patronal Festival Morning Worship
18 <sup>th</sup> September	Holy Communion 12 Noon – Airborne Forces Remembrance Service at Stonefield Park	Harvest Festival	6pm - Peace & Wholeness Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	
25 <sup>th</sup> September			Harvest Festival	Pet Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
28 <sup>th</sup> September			Mid-week Holy Communion		