

**Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 16th October 2022**



Dear Friends in Christ,

‘Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.’ (Luke 18: 1)

This week’s odd little parable in Luke is all about faithful endurance. Our world could certainly do with hearing it! The story of the Judge and the Persistent Woman is vivid and full of little ironies. A contrast is evident between the ambivalent Judge who has all the power on his side, and the woman who doesn’t even have a male relative to represent her in court. The Judge is there to administer justice, but by his own admission doesn’t actually care about justice at all – he just wants a quiet life! The woman, by contrast, is at rock bottom, but even so, she gets what she wants.



‘The Persistent Widow’ by James B. Janknegt

So far so good! But the problem comes when we try to understand what Jesus is saying to the disciples. We have to wait until the end of the reading to see where Jesus is going with this parable: *'When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?'* We are not meant to directly link God to the Judge or the woman to the disciples. Instead, Jesus is asking us to see two distinct attitudes – the lazy and faithless Judge against the woman who is determined for justice to be done.

Jesus' parable is radical and will have been shocking for people to hear as Jesus shared it, given the low cultural status of women at that time. The woman is rewarded for her faithful persistence. She ignores her own status and that of the Judge. She ignores all the social conventions as to how and when she might approach the Judge. Instead, she just keeps on going. Most shocking of all, however, even today, is the question that Jesus asks about which of these two attitudes He will find among us when He returns on Judgement Day. How will you answer Him?

This coming Sunday, St Mary's Church at Chilbolton will be hosting a service in which we will be gathering in celebration and thanksgiving for the faithful persistence of REME (The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers), in working for justice, mercy and peace in our world. REME's distinguished history was forged in the heat of battle at the second battle of El Alamein, which marked the beginning of the end for The Axis Powers (of Germany, Italy and Japan) in North Africa.

The REME website states: REME exists to *'keep the punch in the army's fist.'* The Corps provides the Army's integral repair and recovery capability. REME operates and deals with broader issues related to the procurement and support of equipment, and the changing organisations delivering these vital services, within which members of REME have frequently played key enabling roles. Its soldiers are deployed at the front line, and have to be capable of switching instantly from a technical role to fighting alongside those they support, as their many awards for gallantry demonstrate.



'Royal Engineers clearing the mine fields before the battle of El Alamein, 23rd October 1942' by Terence Tenison Cuneo

One personal account of front line experience is depicted in this remarkable painting by War Artist, Terence Tenison Cuneo. During World War II he served as a sapper in the Royal Engineers. On first sight, this painting looks to depict life in the trenches of WW1, but it actually shows The Royal Engineers and REME units clearing landmines in the second battle of El Alamein in 1942.

The Germans prepared for an Allied attack by laying about half a million mines running across the entire battlefield, five miles deep. Nicknamed the Devil's Gardens, they were covered by 88 mm anti-tank guns and small-arms fire. The Allies prevailed, but at the cost of over half their tanks; 20 percent of the losses were caused by mines.

As we remember and celebrate the work of REME on Sunday, we have a great deal to be thankful for. If not for the faithful persistence of REME and all our Allied forces working for justice, mercy and peace in our world, we might be sitting in a very different world.



'Old Woman Praying' by Aert de Gelder

The question for us now, however, is whether we have, like the judge, personally opted to live a passive life, ignoring the needs of the suffering and the poor, or whether we are, like those whose vocation is to offer their lives in war, filled with Jesus' passion for His people and the creation God has blessed us with.

To quote the prophet Micah: *'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'* (Micah 6: 8)

Yours, in the persistent love of Christ,

Jax

Rector, The Downs Benefice

Collect Prayer for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God,
increase in us your gift of faith that,
forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before,
we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy;
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.



'Old Woman at Prayer' by Rembrandt

Luke 18:1-8 - The Parable of the Persistent Widow

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: 'In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, "Grant me justice against my adversary."

For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, "Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!" And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?'

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
16 th October	Holy Communion with REME	Morning Worship	6pm – Peace & Wholeness Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	
23 rd October			Morning Worship with Ben & Esther Brown (MAF)	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
26 th October			Mid-week Holy Communion		
30 th October	3pm – All Souls Service <i>(with Wherwell)</i>	Holy Communion		6pm - All Souls Service	6pm - Autumn Meditations
2 nd November			6pm - All Souls Service		
6 th November	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion with All Souls	4pm - Café Church – <i>in the Church Room</i>		
11 th November			10.55 am – Act of Remembrance – <i>at the War Memorial</i>		10.55 am – Act of Remembrance – <i>at the War Memorial</i>
13 th November	<i>(with Wherwell)</i>	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service – <i>at the War Memorial</i>	<i>Remembrance Service at the Barracks (time to be confirmed)</i>	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service – <i>at the War Memorial (with Chilbolton)</i>
20 th November	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	6pm – Peace & Wholeness Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	6pm - Autumn Meditations
23 rd November			Mid-week Holy Communion		

27 th November	5pm – Advent Meditation		11.15am - Patronal Festival with Commissioning of the Anna Chaplain	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP) PLUS 5.30pm – Advent Carol Service
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