

**Eleventh Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 15th August 2021**



Dear Friends in Christ,

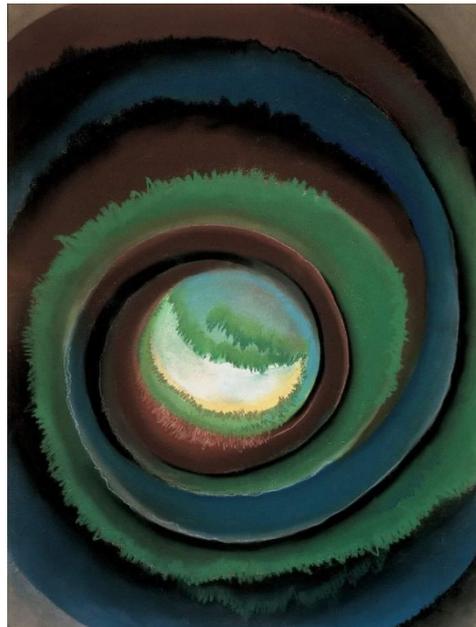
'Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.'
(John 6: 56)

In the early 1970's, I remember my mother buying a fascinating book on nutrition, which became almost as well-thumbed as her bible, as she came to terms with life-changing health problems. Written in 1954 by American nutritionist, Adelle Davis, many of the ideas in this seminal work, *'Let's Eat Right to Keep Fit,'* remain cutting edge to this day, such as the need for exercise, the benefits of whole grains, fresh vegetables and vitamin supplements; the avoidance of processed foods, hydrogenated fats and excess sugar. As a result of this book, our (already healthy) family diet changed radically – no more sugar in tea, no puddings after dinner except on Sundays, and no more of my favourite bread pudding! Despite this dietary shift being anathema to my 9 year old mind and tummy, the healthy eating regime undoubtedly helped my wonderful mum to defy a terminal diagnosis and live until my 50th birthday. That and her unwavering faith in Christ Jesus, the real bread of life.



'Last Supper' by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo

Jesus' ministry was directed to a Jewish culture which had a keen spiritual interest in food. Not only had the synagogue leaders developed many complex rituals to which faithful people must adhere, but scripture itself underscored God's provision of food for His people which sustained them during times of trial in the wilderness. Theologian, Jane Williams, points us to the people's understanding of food being at the core (forgive my pun) of Adam and Eve's separation from God in the Garden of Eden as they ate a forbidden apple from the tree of life. Williams writes that 'Food, as symbolised by the Passover meal set [the people of Israel] apart as those whom God himself chose and brought out of slavery.'



'Pond in the Woods' by Georgia O'Keefe

As we have been exploring in the earlier passages of John 6, Jesus uses the symbolism of food to jolt those who had begun following Him to make explicit choices in their lives. Were these often poor and malnourished folks following Jesus to obtain their next free meal? Or were they prepared to look beyond their earthly needs in confessing faith in Jesus as the Son of God; welcoming Him to sustain them for eternity. Jesus is straight-talking: *'Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.'* The bread and the wine of the Last Supper become profound symbols of the lengths to which Jesus was prepared to go to give us life.

The living bread comes to us today through the slow, eternal light of the Eucharist. Jesus invites us to eat of His flesh and to drink from the cup of salvation He freely proffers. Let us gaze into His loving eyes as we eat and drink the real food of Him who died for us to be reunited with God: restoring us in right relationship with our Creator and giver of the only life we need; correcting the fault-line of Adam and Eve's disobedience. Rescued by Jesus from the slavery of sin - we truly are what we eat!

Yours, feasting on Christ,

Jax
Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice

Top Tips from Austen Hooker

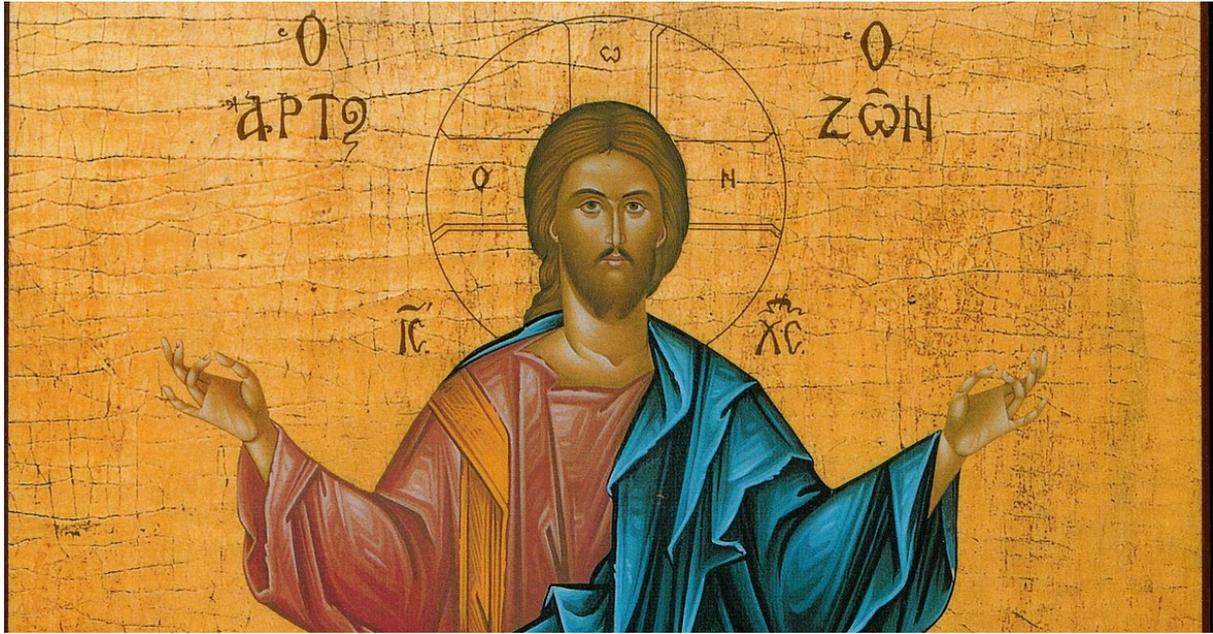


This week, as we journey into August, Austen's top tip is for us to attend to our hedges. It is a perfect time of year to give established hedges a good prune, now that nesting birds have fledged. A good trim keeps our green borders healthy and neat; prevents disease and helps them to grow and thicken. Trimming back damaged branches and removing brown leaves also helps to keep hedges bushy and strong.

Did you know that to prune a hedge whilst birds are nesting is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981: It is illegal to damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built. According to the RSPB, the bird nesting season is usually considered to run from March to August, so be sure to check before you get your shears out!

Collect Prayer for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

O God, you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;
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.



John 6:51-58 – Jesus is the Living Bread

Then Jesus said, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'

Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.'

Schedule of Services

This schedule is correct at this time but may be subject to future alterations – please check on our website for the most up-to-date information.

All services start at 10am, with the exception of Café Church, which starts at 4pm.

Please could you continue to book to attend services by contacting the Benefice Office on 01962 880 845 or office@downsbenefice.org.uk

Please would you also continue to wear masks until we are advised otherwise.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>15th August</i>		Holy Communion	Morning Prayer		
<i>22nd August</i>	Holy Communion			Morning Prayer	
<i>29th August</i>			Harvest Festival Holy Communion		Morning Prayer
<i>5th Sept</i>	Harvest Festival		Café Church		Morning Prayer
<i>12th Sept</i>		Morning Prayer		Holy Communion	
<i>15th Sept (Wed)</i>			Holy Communion		
<i>19th Sept</i>	Holy Communion		Morning Prayer	Pet Service	
<i>26th Sept</i>		Harvest Service			Harvest Festival