

## Stay Connected – Sunday 26th October

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

### This Week's Reading

**Bible Reading: Luke 18. 9-14**

## Peter's Blurb

Well going from last Sunday with not much to report – here I am today with all sorts of things to tell you about. In case you don't want to read all about it – here's the agenda:

1. St. Mark's Today
2. Bible Sunday
3. Smith's Parish Council Tea
4. Brownies & Guides
5. St. Mark's Guild
6. All Soul's Sunday

### 1. St. Mark's Today

St. Mark's today was, in a word, exquisite! The church had been transformed into beautiful still life painting!



This truly beautiful work of art, in celebration of Harvest Season, had been created by Annie Guzman, supported by her sister Joann, who between them imagined and executed it. It was a joy to behold.



It is hard to imagine, unimaginative as I am, what goes into the process of creating such a beautiful work of art and in executing it to such a high degree of perfection. Sadly, it can only be viewed and enjoyed for the one day as the church is closed all week. At the end of the service, though, members of the congregation were invited to take fruit, vegetables, etc. home to enjoy. So, I returned home with a red pepper and a couple of tangerines which I shall enjoy during the week ahead. They say “a picture is worth a thousand words” so we can continue to enjoy the scene vicariously all week. Huge congratulations and thanks to Annie and Joann who have given us all so much joy and pleasure once again.

## 2. Bible Sunday

Bible Sunday is a day for churches to celebrate the Bible and its role in Christian faith, often observed on the last Sunday of October. Following is a Bible Sunday article written by the diocese’s new Canon Theologian, the Rev. Dr. Sharon Prentis and alluded to by Rev. Jennie this morning:

The 26th of October is observed as Bible Sunday—a special day to recognise the importance and influence of the Christian Holy Scriptures in our faith, church, and history. Did you know, the Bible is one of the world's most widely printed books? Nearly every home has a copy or at least knows of its existence. Throughout history, it has been handed out freely—whether to hospital patients, schoolchildren, or military personnel. It is used in courts, inspiring poetry and art, and shaping many professions. It is an extraordinary collection of 66 books, written over a period of 1500 years, and three continents by 47 authors in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. It has influenced culture all over the world and been translated into hundreds of languages, making it accessible to over five billion people.

However, despite its significance, the Bible has also been misused and misapplied to oppress and undermine people. The Bible given to enslaved people in the Caribbean in 1804 had books and chapters missing compared to the Bible we know today. For example, the Book of Exodus contained only chapters 19 and 20; most chapters from Deuteronomy were missing, and all of the Psalms and other parts of the Bible were excluded. Nevertheless, despite this, its truth has been a source of liberation and freedom for many. As a piece of literature, it remains one of the most read books in history but has been deliberately kept off the bestseller lists to preserve its sacredness!

So, why read the Bible? Well, as the inspired word of God, Christians view it as God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17), timeless and profound in its ability to transform lives. From a historical perspective, it is a library of sacred writings which give an account of God’s people crafted by poetic geniuses, prophets, and people who saw their story in the wider story of God’s grace. It recounts Israel’s journey from ancient Egypt, through exile and return,

to the formation of the Jewish Scriptures—an epic tale of order emerging from chaos. It is a rich repository of history, poetry, biographical stories, and moral teachings which invite us to explore God's majesty. The Bible enriches our communication—between us and God, and amongst us—as well as shaping our culture. It forms the moral backbone of many legal systems and social norms. My first encounter with a Bible was at school—thanks to the Gideon Bible I received during my primary years. I received one again many years later and when I married and became a parent, I gave my daughter her first Children's Bible when she was five. People give Bibles as a token of moral guidance and virtue, hoping it will help the recipient live a good life. But reading the Bible demands more than curiosity; it requires dedication, a willingness to encounter Christ and an openness to understanding, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to truly grasp its deep meaning, beauty, and richness.

The Bible is our foundation—telling us about God's story, the world, and ourselves. It reveals God's love through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, transforming words into the 'word of life'. Every Sunday, and throughout the week, it offers comfort in its pages to countless numbers of broken-hearted, joy to the despondent, and steadfast love that endures forever. Throughout history, the Bible has offered hope to the hopeless, solace to the grieving, and courage to soldiers. Its stories remind us of mercy, grace, and divine power—God's words through Christ that will never pass away even ,as it says, when heaven and earth do.

As Billy Graham once said, "I've read the last page of the Bible, and it will all turn out all right." If you have not yet read it, why not start? Or explore a different translation—see new perspectives. Read with your children or try a manga Bible for a fun twist. There is a version for everyone, inviting you into the wonder and majesty of God's Word.

One inspiring story it contains is about the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts. It is an example of how seeking truth through Scripture can lead us to Christ. Today, many curious souls are turning to the Bible, searching for answers, even if they never step into a church. If you want a Bible, just ask—we are happy to provide one.

SP October 2025

### **3. Smith's Parish Council Tea**

From Kalreeta Steede comes news of this upcoming event:

Smith's Parish Council will be hosting their annual "Seniors' Afternoon Tea" on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> November in St. Mark's Phillip's AME Church Hall from 2 pm. to 5 pm. This exclusive event is for Smith's Parish Seniors only. Space is limited so we are asked to RSVP to secure a place. See poster at the end of this newsletter for full details.

### **4. Brownies and Guides at St. Mark's**

An exciting event took place at St. Mark's this week.

On Thursday October 23rd at St. Mark's, we welcomed the new First Devonshire and First Smith's Rainbows and Brownies for a ribbon cutting ceremony, during which the late Nell Johnstone and Jean Northcott, both long



**Young Prospects**



**Jean Northcott**



**Brian Northcott**

serving members of St. Mark's Church and Girl Guide leaders, were honoured. Several members of both their families were in attendance as well as two former Girl Guide Commissioners, Felicity Lunn and Florenz Maxwell.



**L - R Cathy Bassett (Brown Owl)  
Julie Allen (Tawney Owl) .....  
and helper Pauline DeShield**



**Brian, Felicity Lunn  
.....Florenz Maxwell**



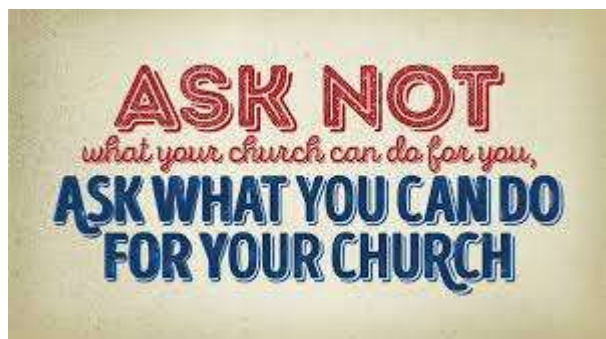
**Dear "Aunt" Nell Johnstone**

From now on, the Brownies and Rainbows will be meeting on Thursdays from 4.15 - 5.30 pm in the upper classrooms in the hall, led by Brown Owl; Cathy Bassett, Tawney Owl Julie Allen; and assistant Pauline DeShield. Our own Jane Bielby has been a Brownie and Guide Leader too for many years. We wish the new First Devonshire and First Smith's Rainbows and Brownies every success and express our gratitude to their leaders who give of their time and talents to the programme.

### 5. St. Mark's Guild

Moving on – and talking about gratitude to leaders giving of their time and talents – I sometimes wonder whether we show enough appreciation to the members of St. Mark's Guild! There is just so much that the Guild members take care of – from preparing the church interior for our services each week, laundering the church linens and making sure everything is right and proper for us all. Work that is perhaps not seen but would become quite conspicuous were it not done! The Guild also provides flowers for special services through their Flower Fund, especially at Easter and Christmas when donations in memory of loved ones are sought. Any time we have a breakfast, or a tea or a supper it is the members of the Guild who plan, prepare and serve us. They set out tables and chairs, lay tables, serve, clear away and wash up. These are always enjoyable occasions and we thank them at the time and applaud them but, I wonder, do we really appreciate just what is involved in these things.

Membership in the Guild is open to all regardless of age, gender etc. and they meet once a month – conveniently, just after our post-service Fellowship/Refreshment break in the Hall on the first Sunday of each month. Pansy is Guild President, Evette is Treasurer and Barbara is Secretary. These last two have been in their positions for over 10 years. The Guild membership has declined in recent years due to the passage of time, attrition etc. and the Guild would truly welcome some new members to share the load and add their own Gifts and Talents to the life of the Church through service in the Guild. We can never have enough people to organize and manage events



such as Bingo Suppers, the occasional Dance or whatever social activity is planned from time-to-time. In addition, if the Guild finances permit it then they make a gift or donation to the church. For example, a few years ago the Guild paid for the tiling of the Hall kitchen floor and similar projects out of Guild funds.

So, this is Pansy's, and my own, plea for any of our congregation and/or membership not already committed to supporting the work of the church other than attending on a Sunday. Please give serious consideration to finding a few hours each week to engage

with Guild activities. Pansy, Evette and Barbara would be delighted to hear from you. Please seek them out and have this conversation – “What can I do to help?”

## 6. All Soul's Sunday

Looking ahead, we have **All Souls Sunday** coming up **next Sunday, 2nd November**. This is another of our Joint Services and will be held at **HTC at 5.00 p.m.** There is a sign-up sheet in the South Porch for people to register the names of their dear departed which will be called in memory at the service. This is always a moving service and candles will be lit for each soul departed. A form will still be at St. Mark's next Sunday and the names forwarded to HTC in the afternoon. The names will all be called during the service and votives lit and placed on the altar in memory of our dear departed.

**If you are unable to get to add your names to the form you could email or WhatsApp them to me and I will include them.**

Following the service, as we repair to the Hall for **Soup and Rolls** the graves in the HTC graveyard will each be lit. It is truly a magical sight – a kind of fairyland effect if you will. So, it promises to be a lovely evening all round.



Anyway, enough of all that! Next week we will be led by Rev Terry whilst Archdeacon John looks after the early birds.

Until then – stay safe and well,  
Peter

## Rev. Jennie's Talk

Luke 18:1-8

Today is celebrated in churches around the world as Bible Sunday. Some of us will be very familiar with the Bible, or at least familiar with certain parts of it, but I am sure that some of us are less used to bible reading. If reading the bible is fairly new to you, if it has not been part of your regular practice, the idea of starting to read the bible can sometimes be a bit daunting. Maybe you have recently come to faith or you are exploring faith, growing in faith...maybe you have even attended church your whole life but have never got into a rhythm of regularly reading your bible. If any of those describe you it is understandably hard to know where to start, but let me encourage you that devoting time to reading God's word is truly life-giving.

I have had conversations with people who tried to commit to reading the Bible for the first time, and started at the beginning, with Genesis, and didn't make it very far into God's word before it became very confusing and heavy. But the bible is not so much a book as it is a library contained in a book binding. The bible is a collection of 66 books and there are over 40 different authors and multiple genres: there is poetry, history, narrative, correspondence in letters and more...It truly helps us to grow in our faith when we prayerfully read the scriptures, spend time with God and let God speak to us through them.

To borrow an illustration used by a colleague: the gifts of God are like the sunshine outside your window. The gift of sunshine is freely given to us, but if you are inside your house with the curtains closed, you don't encounter the sunshine. It is by opening the curtains that we can partake in its benefits. Likewise, it is by opening & reading God's word, the Bible that we can receive from it.

If you are not very familiar with the Bible, or find it intimidating, there are many ways to go about it: there are plans for reading the whole bible in a year, which are pretty intense (if you like intense); there are also daily readings through the Revised Common Lectionary; but might I suggest that if bible reading is new to you or you haven't read it for a while, it can be good to start with something that focuses on what is really central to our Christian faith: the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus, through reading one of the gospels. I highly recommend the gospel of Luke as a great place to start.

This morning, we are reading the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. As we have seen before, the gospels, (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are all accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus on earth, all written from

slightly different perspectives. They contain some of the same stories, and each one has parts that are unique to them. For the past few weeks, we have encountered stories that are only found in Luke and today we heard another one of those.

Luke's introduction to this story gives us a pretty good short analysis of the story:

He says, "Jesus also told THIS parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt".

Or in The Message translation, the same passage reads, "He told his next story to some who were complacently pleased with themselves over their moral performance and looked down their noses on the common people."

Jesus had a habit of getting under the Pharisees skin. The Pharisees were Jewish religious leaders and he regularly challenged the way they carried out their vocation. This story is yet another one that will not put him in their good books.

To the average listener in the crowd to which Jesus speaks, they are hearing a story of 2 individuals who were not particularly popular in the community: a tax collector and a pharisee; Jesus has a fair bit to say about both groups of people. They come up often in the gospels, (especially the Pharisees):

Tax collectors were seen as traitors, collaborators with the ruling Roman occupation. This tax collector would be a Jewish person who is helping Rome to exploit their people in collecting taxes for the Roman government, and it was commonplace that they would inflate taxes so they could skim some off the top, line their own pockets.

Pharisees were religious rulers, many of whom had become so focused on making rules and regulations that they were out of touch with the people and even seemingly out of touch with the Holy God that they were meant to be serving. It is easier to create rules to follow and trust on our own understanding and self-righteousness than it is to seek God and HIS righteousness in all things.

The pharisee took the law given to them in scripture and made more laws so that the average person had no hope of following them, but the pharisees could put on a display of their own "holiness".

And as we find our pharisee today, he has gone up to the temple to pray, as has the tax collector... The tax collector comes in penitence to confess his sins, to repent and ask for God's mercy, but the pharisee's prayer, (to paraphrase)

"Thank you, Lord, that I am OH SO HOLY!"

"Thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. Here is a list of all the good things I do..."

It doesn't really sound much like a prayer, does it? While this Pharisee lists the good things that he does, good practices are meaningless without the right attitude of humility and gratitude to God. God is concerned with the devotion of our hearts and the good practices that the Pharisee mentions should follow from that, but he is displaying an aspect of human nature which is concerned with comparing ourselves to everyone else, or as one scholar has said "thinking on the horizontal". If we are concerned with how much better we think we are than others, it is not helping us to grow in a relationship with God, and we can become arrogant thinking that we are the God of our own salvation.

OUR identity is found in who we are as disciples of Christ, in growing in HIS likeness...not in one upping each other. We are called to think "vertically": to humble ourselves before our Holy God and strive to be more like Jesus rather than comparing ourselves to others.

As Paul writes in his letter the Roman church (Ch. 3:23-24)

*23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

In this story Jesus tells his followers that it was the tax collector who left the temple and went home justified, not the pharisee. The tax collector was honest about his sin and he came to repent and pray for mercy.

The Pharisee was so full of his own self-righteousness and showing himself to be better than others that he did not confront his own sin.

As the end of today's passage says:

*For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted".*

None of us are "sin-free". It is our human condition. But all are liberated from our sin when we give our lives to Jesus. We can come regularly to God's throne of grace and ask for forgiveness. There is no sin so great that he cannot forgive, but if we are not honest with ourselves, if we deceive ourselves like that pharisee, we are not opening the curtains to receive that grace that is so freely given.

May we know this gift of grace, may we not compare ourselves to others but strive to grow in our own relationship with Christ and may we encourage our brothers and sisters on their journeys of faith as well. In Jesus name. **Amen**

## In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Father Don, Margaret Blanchette, Al Spearing, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara (Dyer), Vinette, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Robert & Kalreeta, David, and for Sally Brown and Hilda Warner.

### This Sunday



Previous services and other videos are on our YouTube channel and/or our Facebook page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda> and/or  
<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>

### Next Sunday

Next Sunday, **2nd November** – We will have our usual services at St. Mark's with Peaceful Worship at 8.00 a.m. led by Archdeacon John

followed by our Contemporary Worship and Junior Church at 9.30 a.m. led by Rev. Terry Hassell

### Coming Events

- **Life Group Startup** – The popular Life Groups have resumed but it **may not be too late** to get involved. Reach out to Cathy or Stephen West if you would like to know more: [cathjwest@gmail.com](mailto:cathjwest@gmail.com) or [cswestmd@logic.bm](mailto:cswestmd@logic.bm).
- **Commemoration of All Souls** – this special service of commemoration of our dear departed will take place at Holy Trinity Church on **Sunday, 2nd November at 5.00 p.m.** Names of loved ones to be called will be collected beforehand. See sign-up sheet in SMC South Porch.
- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will be on a Saturday late in November. **Time TBD;**
- **Senior's Paint Par-Tea** – Join Suzie Carvalho for this activity **Wednesdays and/or Fridays** beginning **5th November**. See poster below for details.
- **SAVE THE DATE – Sunday, 30th November - Anniversary of Praise Service** - Help us prepare for this special Anniversary of Praise celebration of hymns and songs to acknowledge 100 years with a resident Bishop and 50 years as the Anglican Church of Bermuda. **Watch this space.**
- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 7th December** in the Parish Hall.

**Down the Debt** – St. Mark's needs your help in reducing the size of our debt which inhibits future investment in our church. If you feel you may be able to help with this please go to <https://stmarks.bm/donate/> where you will find details and an opportunity to donate.

## Links:

Just a reminder – if you want to check vot's happnin' or vot's comin' dahn de road – you can find it all at our:

- **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>
- **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda>
- **Website:** <https://anglican.bm/churches/st-marks/>
- **Holy Trinity Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitychurchbda>

## End Stuff:

**Here's a thought.** It is always a great time for us all to review our pledging. If each of us is able to increase our pledge by 10% that would be a great boost to our cash flow (which as you know is tenuous at best). And, with our in-person collections still inhibited by numbers restrictions, please consider the opportunity to convert to pledging by Direct Deposit (see below). Your support is vital.

As always, another huge thank you to all of you who continue to support our church family with your pledges and donations via online transfer.

**Direct deposits** can be made to: Butterfield Bank for the account of:

**St. Mark's Church Wardens – A/c No. 20-006-060-104125-100.**

- **For Grave Payments** – when paying Grave Maintenance fees be sure to enter Grave Number and Name of Lessee e.g. "Grave 273 Peter Nash" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Cash donations** – if you do not have an Envelope # just be sure to also enter your Name and "Donation" e.g. "Nash Donation" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

**Use of the "Beneficiary" space is IMPORTANT – it is the only way we have to identify who is paying and for what. Come to St. Mark's – not just a Church but a family!**



**SENIORS  
PAINT PAR-TEA**  
no talent required

painting supplies &  
light lunch provided \$60

**PAINT, EAT & SIP**  
Wednesday or Friday 11am- 2pm

3 Verdmont Ln, Smiths  
Reserve your spot at Suzie's Table  
Call 537-4838  
suziecarv@gmail.com

The poster features a central illustration of a teapot on an easel surrounded by various flowers. The background is a light blue with colorful brushstrokes in yellow, pink, and teal.



  
SMITH'S PARISH COUNCIL  
PRESENTS  
**THE ANNUAL SENIORS  
AFTERNOON TEA**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29TH, 2025  
2 PM TO 5 PM

ST. PHILIP AME CHURCH HALL  
102 HARRINGTON SOUND RD, SMITHS

EXCLUSIVELY FOR SMITH'S PARISH SENIORS  
LIMITED SPACES PLEASE RSVP TO NINA JACOBS:  
441-536-9168  
SMITHSPARISHCOUNCIL@GMAIL.COM

The poster has a white background with a decorative border of green and yellow leaves and flowers. It includes a small icon of a tea cake at the top.