

Stay Connected – 12th July 2026

Sixth Sunday after Trinity

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

Peter's Blurb

"Come to St. Mark's – not just a church but a family!"

Hi everyone. Sorry about last week – I was off-island and not in church last Sunday so had nothing to report. I made a quick trip to UK to attend the funeral of my younger sister.

Fortunately, I was back in time to catch last Friday's Family Fellowship BBQ which was, once again, a great success.



As people were arriving, circa 6 p.m., the skies were very overcast and stormy- looking. The clouds were scudding past at a high rate of knots and we were all wondering whether we might need to repair to the Parish Hall. But God smiled on us and the rain clouds obviously had a delivery address well to our SE and left us alone. Huge thanks to our BBQ team of Gabe & Bob and to Amy, Amiah, Cathy, Audrey (great baked beans 😊) Lisa- Dawn,

Annie and so many others for all the delicious accompaniments and hard work. It was a great evening and we look forward to the next BBQ evening this coming Friday. Be sure to join us then. 😊

Our service this Sunday was a departure from the normal routine. Fr. Terry moved the Communion to in front of the screen and recruited a number of our Junior Church members to join with him in the singing of the Consecration which was a lovely way of involving the youngsters in the service.

Then, after Communion we learned that Fr. Terry had recruited a "Farmer" to explain the meaning of today's reading – the Parable of the Sower – you know – the one about sowing seeds on the Path, or Rocky Ground, or Among Thorns as opposed to on Good Soil.

Earlier in the week many of us who are addicted to WhatsApp chatting received a teaser in the form of a poster advertising a "Veggie exciting" visit this Sunday. It seemed that "Shepherd Steve", of Christmas season fame, would be coming to visit again. What's that about we all



wondered? Well, it turned out it was a relative of "Shepherd Steve" in the form of "Farmer Steve" who, after appropriately introducing himself, and based on his own experience as a Farmer, had come to explain to all us children exactly what happens if you plant seeds in any of the places where they cannot

be nurtured to survive. See "Farmer Steve"'s Talk below.



Guild News

The Guild will not be having meetings during the summer months. They will resume with their AGM on Sunday, 4th October. Any church members interested in coming along to help in their activities will be most welcome. Please discuss your interest with Pansy or Barbara who will be delighted to talk to you about the importance of the Guild and the nature of its work for the church. It is always the same group who do it all and extra pairs of hands will be greatly appreciated. "Many hands make light work" and "a burden shared is a burden halved" – and all those similar platitudes. 😊

"Farmer Steve"'s Talk

July 12th, 2026

Sixth Sunday after Trinity

St. Mark's Anglican Church

Matthew 13. 1-9, 18-23

The Extravagant Farmer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Well... as you can see...

I'm still a carrot.

I suspect this is the first time you've ever had a sermon preached to you by a root vegetable! But perhaps that's exactly the point. Jesus loved taking ordinary things and revealing extraordinary truths through them.

A seed.

A field.

A farmer.

Things everyone understood.

So perhaps hearing from a carrot isn't quite as strange as it first seems. You know, if we are honest, every time we hear today's parable, most of us immediately ask the same question:

"Which soil am I?"

Am I the hard path?

The rocky ground?

The thorny soil?

Or am I the good soil?

Now don't get me wrong. Jesus certainly invites us to reflect on this. BUT before we think about the soils, let's notice something even more remarkable.

Let's notice the farmer.

In fact, I'd like to call him **the Extravagant Farmer**.

Because no sensible farmer would sow like this. No careful farmer would throw precious seed onto a beaten path.

Or scatter it across rocky ground.

Or deliberately toss it into thorn bushes.

Yet this farmer seems almost reckless. He scatters seed everywhere. On every kind of ground. Again, and again.

You see this parable isn't only about the different conditions of the soil.

It's about the astonishing generosity of the One who sows.

And that is exactly what God's grace looks like.

God keeps speaking.

God keeps calling.

God keeps inviting.

He doesn't wait until our lives are tidy and perfectly ordered before He comes to us. Instead, He scatters His Word into messy lives.

Into broken families.

Into anxious hearts.

Into doubting minds.

And into people who aren't even looking for Him.

You see, Grace always comes first.
Before there is fruit.
Before there is growth.
Before there is even faith...
there is a God who speaks.

As I said to the children a few moments ago, Jesus tells us that the seed is God's Word. And notice something.

Every seed is exactly the same.
There is nothing wrong with the seed.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God says,

"My word... shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose."

God's Word has never lost its power. Sometimes we become discouraged. We wonder why someone we love hasn't responded to the Gospel.

Or why someone who once believed seems to have drifted away.
Or even why our own faith sometimes feels dry.

Jesus reminds us that God's Word is still living and active.

The Gospel has not become weaker.
The question is never whether God can speak.
The question is whether our hearts are open to receive what He is already saying.

Now...

this is where many sermons stop.

They simply say,

"Go home and become good soil."

But...how?

Can hard ground soften itself?
Can rocky soil dig out its own stones?
Can thorn bushes uproot themselves?

Of course not.

Anyone who has ever prepared a garden knows who does that work.

The FARMER.

The farmer breaks up the hard ground.
The farmer removes the rocks.
The farmer clears the weeds.

Now Jesus doesn't tell us everything in this particular parable. But the rest of Scripture does. The God who sows the seed is also the God who transforms the soil.

Listen to His promise through the prophet Ezekiel:

"I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

God doesn't simply demand better hearts.

He gives us new ones.
And that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

You see, it's the Spirit which softens what has become hard.

It's the Spirit who uncovers the rocks we've buried for years.
And it's the Spirit who patiently pulls up the weeds that choke our life with Christ.
Even our willingness to hear God's Word is itself a gift of grace.

Now...

I have another confession to make. This carrot didn't become a carrot because it tried really hard. Imagine planting a carrot seed on Monday.

Tuesday morning...nothing.
Wednesday...nothing.
Thursday...still nothing.
Has the seed failed?

Not at all. Something beautiful is happening beneath the surface. Roots are growing long before anyone can see them.

That is often how the Holy Spirit works.

We want dramatic change.
Instant answers.
Immediate transformation.

But God usually works patiently.

Quietly.
Almost invisibly.

Perhaps someone here today feels discouraged.

You still struggle.
You still wrestle with doubt.
You keep praying the same prayers.
You wonder whether anything is happening at all.

Perhaps the Spirit has been doing deep work beneath the surface where no one—not even you—can see it yet. Roots always come before fruit.

Eventually something appears above the ground.
The carrot top.
The wheat.
The harvest.

Notice that Jesus never tells the seed to manufacture fruit. Fruit is simply what living things produce. Saint Paul calls it **the fruit of the Spirit**—

love,
joy,
peace,
patience,
kindness,
goodness,
faithfulness,
gentleness,
and self-control.

Notice...it is the fruit **of the Spirit**, NOT the fruit of human determination.

Healthy trees bear fruit because they are alive.
Christians bear fruit because the Spirit lives within them.

Our calling is not to squeeze harder or try harder to produce these things ourselves.
Our calling is to remain close to Christ.
To receive His Word.

And to trust the Spirit who produces in us what we could never produce ourselves. Now that doesn't mean effort doesn't matter.

Grace does not oppose effort.
But grace does oppose earning.
Prayer matters.
Worship matters.
Reading Scripture matters.
Gathering with God's people matters.

Not because these things earn God's favour or make Him love us more. They don't. They are simply the places where God has promised to meet His people. The places where His grace keeps softening the soil of our hearts.

So, let's come back to our carrot. Did this carrot become a carrot because it worked really hard? No.

The seed couldn't make itself grow.
It simply remained where the farmer planted it.
The rain came.
The sunshine came.
The nourishment came.
Life came.

Everything the seed needed was provided by the farmer. That is the Christian life.

Christ is the Sower.
The Father is the Gardener.
And the Holy Spirit is constantly at work beneath the surface of our lives.

So, hear this good news.

Our hope has never rested on how tightly we cling to God.
Our hope rests on how faithfully God holds on to us.
So perhaps the invitation today is not to leave here determined to become better soil through greater effort.

Instead, the invitation is simply this:

Remain close to Christ...
and let God do His gardening.
Where your heart has become hard, ask Him to soften it.
Where there are rocks buried deep, ask Him to remove them.
Where weeds have crowded out your attention, ask Him to clear them away.
Then trust the promise that the God who plants His Word is also the God who gives the growth.

As Saint Paul wrote,

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

That has always been the hope of the Church.

Not simply the strength of the seed.
Not even the quality of the soil.
But the faithfulness of the Farmer.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Margaret Blanchette, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara Dyer, Vinette, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Audrey, Robert & Kalreeta, and for Tina Welch, Valerie (June) Johnstone and Hilda Warner. We pray for Joan Hollis, Stephen & Gill Bailey. Please keep David Bedard in your prayers. Also, prayers for all and any others known to us.



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

Sunday, **19th July** –Join us for our **Peaceful Worship** service at 8 am followed by our **Contemporary Worship** service at 9.30 am both led by Rev. Terry. There will be refreshments to follow.

Coming Events

- **Life Group Startup** – The popular Life Groups continue but it **may not be too late** to get involved. Reach out to Steve or Cathy West if you would like to know more: cswestmd@logic.bm or cathjwest@gmail.com.
- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will probably be **on Saturday, 25th July**.
- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3 p.m. on Sunday, 2nd August** in the Parish Hall.

Those of you who generously donate to the church by way of Standing Order may wish to double-check that your orders have not passed their end-by date and expired. Of course, if they have, we would love you to re-instate them. 🙏

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. Please consider the opportunity to pledge 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.
- **Set up a Standing Order instruction** so that you don't have to remember each week.

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!

Friday Night Community BBQ at St. Mark's!

**6pm on the church grounds,
July 10th, 17th & 24th!**

**Hotdogs, hamburgers and a
whole lot of fun!**

Activities for the kids!

Bring a folding chair and a friend!

Please RSVP to 504-4150



St. Mark's Church, Bermuda

Summer is here and there is lots going
on at St. Mark's!! Every Friday in July

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p/1Cd5Vr2BFA/?mibextid=wwXlfr](https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Cd5Vr2BFA/?mibextid=wwXlfr)