

St Francis Weekly News for FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 13th September 2020



This bulletin may have come to you by email or through your letterbox, if you received it on paper but are happy to receive an email in future please email deborah.lechmere@ntlworld.com If you know anybody else who would like this delivered or emailed please contact Deborah or Revd Janet: revdjanetwyer@outlook.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

COME, YE THANKFUL PEOPLE COME

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Last Sunday celebrated the Harvest with a special service of praise and thanksgiving.

In some ways it was very different to any Harvest Festival I have ever known – no hymns, no children and their families, none of the usual meeting, greeting and moving around; but even though those things were absent, we still were blessed with an amazing sense of Godly presence.

God was most certainly with us as we lifted up our hearts to the Lord of the Harvest and opened our ears to God's word for us.

It was also very evident that there was a deep sense of connectedness between all those who gathered; in person and on zoom – so, in actual fact, this service of Harvest Thanksgiving was really not much different to any other service that has been held in St Francis over the past sixty or so years since its inaugural service.

Although we deeply miss many of the things we used to do [like sitting wherever we pleased] and most especially the music that Pete so faithfully and generously usually shares with us through his gifted musicianship, our worship remains a beautiful expression of at onement with God.

There be may some of you reading this newsletter who have been thinking about joining the congregation of St Francis on a Sunday morning [or indeed the traditional service of evening prayer on a Sunday evening] and are hesitating because it might seem strange or different.

If that is the case I would urge you to make the effort and come – we are very carefully following all the regulations relating to being covid safe; and in the event that we exceed the capacity of the church space we do have contingency plans for expansion into other areas of the building.

As we work our way through Creationtide to its climax on St Francis Day, 4th October our services will remain an opportunity to draw ever closer to God our creator and to one another - something they have always been, but they will also have the added benefit of allowing some time each week to ponder on the beauty of this world around us and think about how we can play our part in preserving that beauty for the generations to come.



Some of the harvest offerings at the Altar.

Many thanks to all who contributed to make this wonderful service of thanksgiving an occasion to remember.

WHERE'S EYORE?

Rev Winnie has reappeared from holiday, but with no Eeyore. We have no idea where he is. We do however have some news, which is a bit out of date as the post is tending to be very late at the moment because of all the restrictions. The news is in the shape of a rather tattered letter from Eeyore written on what looks like a brown paper bag of the sort that market traders sell vegetables in. Here is what it said.

Dear Rev Winnie

I am so sorry I lost you on that horrible train station in Milan. I couldn't bear to wait in the ticket queue any longer, so I decided to look around for something to eat.

I was only gone for a few minutes while I munched on a bag of carrots but when I came back to the ticket office you'd gone, and I cannot find you anywhere.

I am writing you to let that I will get on a train as soon as I can; I am sure that, wherever it takes me, it will be somewhere nearer to home.

I am giving this note to the nice ticket lady to post to you and I hope I will catch up with you somewhere on the journey back to Heartsease.

Love Eeyore

PS The Italian for 'carrot' is 'carota'. I thought you might like to know that.



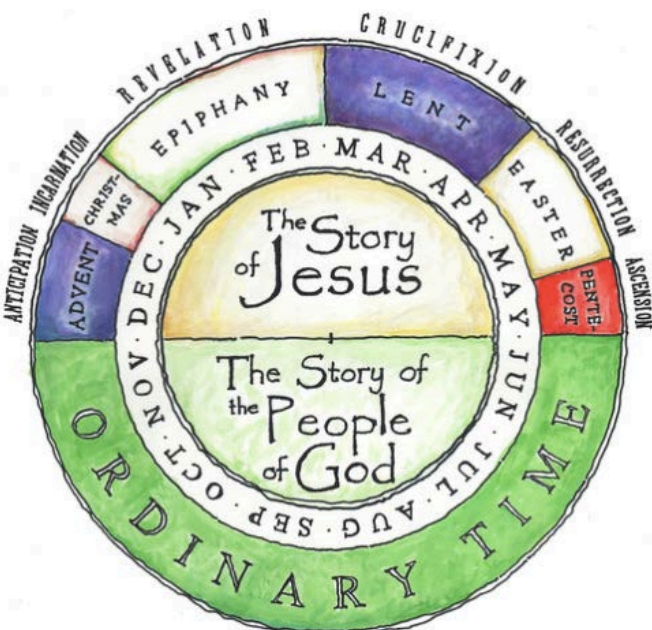
this note to you know try and train as soon



THE CURATE'S CORNER

You may have noticed if you have passed the church at night this week that we now have some new lighting inside.

We have some electric candles in two of the side windows and on the altar which light up



automatically at 5pm (when evening prayer begins) and switch off at 11pm. They are very realistic so don't worry, there isn't a fire risk! One person has already thought about trying to blow them out, which would be rather difficult...

We also have some up lights behind the altar to illuminate the wall. There is white light on the cross to represent the light of Christ, with green light on either side which is the colour of the season. The church year begins at the start of Advent, which is usually around the beginning of December. The year is divided into 'seasons': Advent, Lent, Eastertide to mention a few; the times in between are called 'ordinary time', and the colour for 'ordinary time' is always green. We are in 'ordinary time' now, hence the green light behind the altar. When advent begins this year on the 29th November the colour will change to purple. Here is a chart to show the church's year, or 'kalendar':

If this all looks rather complicated, then you would be right – but this is also what makes the church year so fascinating! Not only is it handed to us from centuries of tradition, but it also signifies the Christian story and, at the same time, *our own stories* as it traces a path through seeking, dying and finding new life.

At the same time as the seasons, we also celebrate the lives of 'saints' – loved and well remembered followers of the way of Christ who are commemorated on their special feast days. I've put some posters up outside the church to illustrate some of the 'saint's days' in September, and I'll be updating them every month. They are very colourful and charming illustrations from a book for children by an artist called Enid Chadwick originally published in 1948.

People have shown a lot of interest and I've been asked who St Adamnon was. He was an Irish monk who lived in the 7th century and is known mostly for writing a biography of St Columba, his mentor. I cannot tell you why Enid drew him chopping down a tree, though; this is a bit strange, as the Celtic monks and St Columba in particular were dead set against the cutting down of trees. These early Christians were far more in awe of God's creation than we tend to be today, and in this season of Creationtide, this is worthy of serious reflection and repentance. Perhaps this drawing refers to an old legendary story of St Adamnon which appears somewhere in the many writings about him; if you know, do tell me! And of course, if you want to learn more, drop into the church and see me.

Every blessing, Fr Tracy

ST FRANCIS ALL AGE ACTIVITY PACK

The long promised pack [which will have something for everyone] will be available next week.

At the moment we are limiting the number we produce to thirty packs.

These will be available on a first come, first serve principle and can be picked up in church after the 10.30 service.

If you would like to pre-order a pack to ensure you get a copy please let us know by any of the addresses or numbers that are listed in this newsletter.

The Church of St Francis
Heartsease



FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF FRANCIS



A Free Resource Pack for All Ages

Please call in to sign up or call:

Revd Janet 07990 576118

Father Tracy: 07704 328319

WE ALL HAVE A STORY TO TELL...

We want to hear your stories about all that has been happening to you or your loved ones over the past few months.

Please write them down and send to us:

admin@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk

The Vicarage, 100 Rider Haggard Road, NR7 9UQ

Or call Revd Janet [07990 576118] or Fr Tracy [07704 328319] and we will be pleased to listen and write your story down for you.

FORTHCOMING DATES FOR THE DIARY:

CREATIONTIDE SUNDAY EVENING PRAYERS
Every Sunday 5.00pm

ST FRANCIS ACTIVITY PACKS AVAILABLE IN
CHURCH AND UPON REQUEST
Sunday 20th August; 10.30am

ST FRANCIS DAY SERVICES
4th October
10.30am – Patronal Festival
5.00pm – Evening Prayer

ST FRANCIS FREE FOOD

We continue to offer food parcels to those in need who ask for help.

IF YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW NEEDS
HELP WITH FOOD, PLEASE CALL ST
FRANCIS FREE FOOD ON 01603 431259 OR
CALL AT THE CHURCH ANY WEEKDAY
MORNING BETWEEN 11AM -12PM.

Over the past few weeks there has been a very significant drop in the amount of food we are receiving and also in the number of requests for help.

This would seem to signal that the need for St Francis Free Food is no longer as urgent as it once was and that the time has come for a rethink in terms of how we offer support to those experiencing food poverty.

The Parochial Church Council will be meeting on Thursday 17th September and this is one of the issues that will be under discussion.

If you have any thoughts or comments you would like to put forward to the meeting please email: admin@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk or contact the Vicar: vicar@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk mobile number 07990 576118.

PASTORAL CARE MATTERS

With restrictions, regulations, and the situation with infection rates changing almost daily it is natural we will all of us be feeling anxious one way or another.

If you are worried about any of the changes that are happening, or if you need some assistance of any kind please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We are very happy to talk with you if that would be *helpful*.

Please do not feel that you are alone - help and support is always available, whatever may be troubling you.

Revd Janet [07990 576118]

Father Tracy [07704 328319]

Eleanor [07840 206716]

Also, there is always someone available in the church building weekdays 11.00am – 12.00pm; please feel free to knock at the door, it will open to you.



USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

In these difficult times someone might just need one of them...

Childline: 0800 1111

Samaritans: 116 123

Domestic Violence Hotline: 0808 2000 247

[If you hear a neighbour in distress please do not hesitate to call this number or 999; you could save a life]

Mind: 0300 123 3393

Age UK: 0800 169 6565

St Francis Free Food: 01603 431259

A WORD FROM THE VICAR

Over the past few weeks because I've been coordinating all things creationtide, I have been thinking a lot more about the natural world.

I have always had a deep love for wildlife and the great outdoors - I suspect spending an almost feral childhood on Mousehold Heath has something to do with that, but I now realise that over the years I have not been as attentive to the fact that every single tiny part of God's creation is a glorious and inexplicable miracle.

Never have I been more aware of this than the other evening, when sitting at the dinner table, I spotted a large spider at work spinning a web on the outside of the patio doors.

Now I can honestly say that I am not a great lover of spiders; creepy crawlies and me do not ever get to see eye to eye [I'm usually long gone before they can spot me]. However, because this little critter was the other side of the glass and I could see even from where I was sitting that she had some unusual markings, I went to have a closer look.

By the way I say she, because I understand that females are generally bigger than the male of the species – I didn't want to think what size the female might be if this was a male...

That aside, on closer inspection I could see alongside her beautiful stripy legs she had some very distinct markings on her rather bulbous backside [I know – who am I to judge?]. Anyway, on closer inspection, peering very closely I suddenly realised that she was carrying the markings of a perfect cross. It was absolutely stunning to see and I was completely blown away by the thought that here was a tiny example of God's awesome hand at work.

I also got to thinking that it was also a rather lovely example of the divine sense of humour directed at our human failure to comprehend that God is the God of all things created – not just us.

The fact that God has placed a cross on the back of a spider seems to me to be a wonderful indication that even the lowliest of creatures is seen and loved by its maker – and that the good news of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was for the whole of creation; for every single part of this world that God made, no matter how tiny or repulsive.

The cross is the symbol of the best of news for us all, but, very sadly, it would appear that far too many people now seem to recoil from the cross of Christ as if they have unexpectedly come across something to avoid; something so beyond what they are comfortable with that they either run away from it or stamp it under foot as though it has no place in their life or on the earth.

How sad that is – the cross of Christ is a means of awesome grace that tells us that we are no longer need to be separated from God because of our sinfulness; it tells us that no matter what we do wrong we will be forgiven and given a fresh beginning if we say sorry and amend our lives accordingly.

What a gift Jesus was for the whole of creation – and what a gift creation is as well. St Francis used to say that there were two ways to come to know God better – Holy Scripture and the creation he gave us to look after; how right he was!

God's blessing and peace be with you and yours.

Revd Janet xx

Ps I have a superb picture of the spider that I hesitated to share here – if you'd like to see it, just ask!

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: Maegan; Doreen F; Tom; Riley & his mum and family; Jeanette, David & Grace; Paula; Colin; Pete; Lauren; Fr Brian; Hazel; Ben; Frazer; Tina F;

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Rosemary, Sheila, John, Joy, Shirley.

We remember with love Frank and all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends.

CREATIONTIDE THANKSGIVING

We thank God for the world he has made, and for all his love and care.

For the warmth of the sun,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For the rain which makes things grow,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For the woods and the fields,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For the sea and the sky,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For the flowers and the animals,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

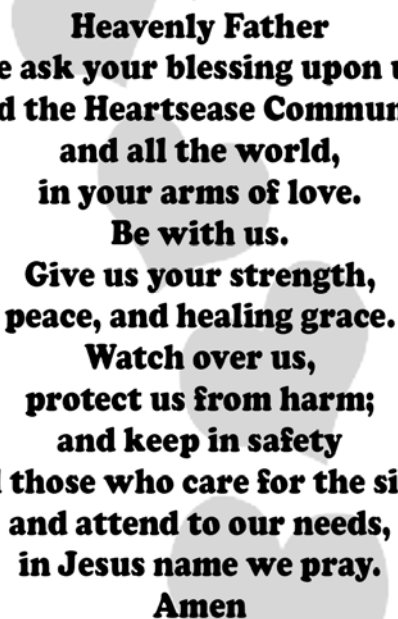
For families, friends and the gift of love,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.

For all your gifts,
Father in heaven
we give you thanks and praise.
Amen.

PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Church of St Francis Heartsease



**Heavenly Father
We ask your blessing upon us.
Hold the Heartsease Community,
and all the world,
in your arms of love.
Be with us.
Give us your strength,
peace, and healing grace.
Watch over us,
protect us from harm;
and keep in safety
all those who care for the sick
and attend to our needs,
in Jesus name we pray.
Amen**

PRAYERS FOR 14TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
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

Merciful God,
your Son came to save us
and bore our sins on the cross:
may we trust in your mercy
and know your love,
rejoicing in the righteousness
that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord God,
the source of truth and love,
keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and
fellowship,
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Readings FOR 14TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
GENESIS 50: 15 – 21



Realising that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?'

So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died, "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.'

Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.'

But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.'

In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

PSALM 103: 1 – 13

Bless the Lord, O my soul, •
and all that is within me bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, •
and forget not all his benefits;

Who forgives all your sins •
and heals all your infirmities;



Who redeems your life from the Pit, •
and crowns you with faithful love and compassion;

Who satisfies you with good things, •
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

The Lord executes righteousness •
and judgement for all who are oppressed.

He made his ways known to Moses •
and his works to the children of Israel.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, •
slow to anger and of great kindness.

He will not always accuse us, •
neither will he keep his anger for ever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, •
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, •
so great is his mercy upon those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, •
so far has he set our sins from us.

As a father has compassion on his children, •
so is the Lord merciful towards those who fear him.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen

ROMANS 14: 1 – 12



Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be

fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God.

For it is written,

'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

MATTHEW 18: 21 – 35

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?'

Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.

So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything."

And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe."

Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you."

But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt.



When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?"

And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt.

So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

REFLECTION FOR 14TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

HOW OFTEN MUST I FORGIVE?

This is Peter's question to Jesus in today's Gospel reading. By offering to forgive someone seven times, Peter thought he was being generous. No, says Jesus, seven is not enough. Make that seventy times seven. And you can see Peter thinking, how on earth do I keep count, but that is just the point – you aren't meant to try.

Jesus follows it up with a story. There was a man who owed his master £1,000,000,000. The master ordered that he and his family should be sold to try to get a small part of the money back, but he begged for time to pay. On average wages it would have taken him 50,000 years. He was released and forgiven the debt. He immediately went and found one of his co-workers who owed him about £2,000 and demanded immediate payment. His co-worker begged for time to pay but was refused and thrown into prison.

His colleagues feel very indignant about this and report the situation to the master who summons the man back. You wicked servant, said the master I forgave you a massive debt and you've had this

man imprisoned for peanuts and the master hands the servant over to the torturers.

So today I want us to think about forgiveness

- The need for it
- The cost of it
- The consequence of it
- The requirement for it

There is a real need for forgiveness. There is a need for the person who has done wrong to know that they have been forgiven. This comes through in our Old Testament reading because the brothers are desperate to know that Joseph has forgiven them. There is also a need for the person who has been wronged to be willing to forgive the person who has wronged them.

Very often when we have done something wrong we know it and our conscience keeps prodding us so that we don't have any peace. The thing is that asking for forgiveness can be desperately hard. We often don't want to admit that we were wrong, even to ourselves, and it's much harder to admit it to the person we have wronged. But we do need to go through that process of saying sorry in order to put things right.

There may even be times when we felt fully justified in what we said or did, but we realise that someone has been badly hurt by it, and we need at least to apologise for that hurt.

Equally those who have been wronged need to be willing to accept the apology and offer forgiveness. This is not just good manners. It's necessary for our physical and mental health because resentments which are allowed to fester can actually make us ill.

Forgiveness is not cheap. There is a real cost. Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke of "cheap grace" by which he meant that forgiveness without acknowledgement of the wrong that had been done was of little value.

Forgiveness is not about sweeping things under the carpet and pretending they didn't happen. It's about expressing them for what they are and then resolving them in an appropriate manner. Any type of bad behaviour needs to be confronted and dealt with. We do it with our children (if we are wise) and we need to be prepared to do it with adults. The cost of forgiveness may be financial, it may be a dent to one's own ego, it may involve giving something up.

We need to bear in mind that the highest ever cost of forgiveness was that paid on a hill outside the

city of Jerusalem 2,000 years ago when Jesus, who was himself without sin, paid the price for all our sins. That is the contrast that Jesus makes in the story. The difference between the huge debt the man owes to the master and the relatively trivial debt his fellow servant owes him.

Forgiveness may be costly but the consequences are definitely worthwhile. Those who are willing to forgive find a peace that passes all understanding. Failure to forgive stores up bitterness and can lead to mental and physical health problems. Often those who have been forgiven will realise how fortunate they are and will change their lifestyle.

So there is a need for us to be ready to both offer and receive forgiveness. There is usually a cost involved and we have to be willing to pay that. There are consequences which are normally beneficial for both sides of the equation

Finally forgiveness is not an optional extra. Jesus makes it clear that willingness to forgive is a requirement of all who would be his followers. His conversation with Peter makes that clear and the point of the story he tells is a contrast between how much the master has forgiven the servant compared with the trivial amount the servant refuses to forgive his colleague. And the solemn warning at the end is that we cannot expect to receive forgiveness if we are not prepared to offer it to others.

This is consistent with Jesus teaching elsewhere. The Lord's prayer clearly states "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us".

In all situations, however difficult it may be, those who would follow Jesus are expected to follow the law of love and to be prepared to forgive those who have wronged them. Equally we have to be prepared to admit those occasions when we are in the wrong and ask forgiveness from those we have hurt.

I'm going to let the Apostle Paul have the last word. In his letter to the Ephesians he writes:

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander along with every kind of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

David Lechmere
Lay Reader



Our Father
who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done in earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors,
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.



How many times should I forgive someone who has done something bad to me?’ Peter asked Jesus. ‘As many as seven times?’ This seemed very forgiving to Peter.

‘Let me tell you a story about two slaves,’ Jesus replied.

‘The first slave owed his king 10,000 talents, more money than he could ever pay back. The king came to him, saying, “It’s time to pay up. If you don’t have the money, you’ll have to sell everything you own – your house, your possessions, even your wife and children.” The slave fell to his knees and begged him for more time. Seeing his distress, the king said, “I have changed my mind. You are released from the debt.”

‘Straight away, the first slave went out and met another slave. This second slave owed the first slave a smaller amount, just 100 denarii. “Pay up what you owe me,” the first slave demanded.

‘The second slave begged, just as the first one had, “Please have patience. I need more time to pay.” There was no pity in the first slave, though. He had the man who owed him money thrown into prison, saying he wouldn’t be set free until he had paid his debt.

‘Of course, all of this was reported back to the king, who was extremely angry. “I had mercy on you!” he shouted at the first slave. “Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow slave?” Then the king handed over the man to be tortured until he had paid everything he owed.’

Jesus looked at Peter and his other disciples. ‘So you must forgive more than seven times. Let’s say seventy-seven times. You really have to forgive people with your hearts, not just your mouths. If you don’t, my heavenly Father will punish you, like the king punished his slave.’

Glossary

talent a weight of 30-35kg. 10,000 talents of gold would be worth more than £326 million today;

denarius a small silver Roman coin. One denarius was a labourer’s daily wage. 100 denarii would be worth about £1,500 today.

Name



Matthew 18.21-35

Jesus teaches that we should always forgive.



Family time

Talk Is it easy to forgive someone, if they do something wrong to you more than once?

Do If someone annoys or upsets you this week, stop, count to seven and forgive them.

Pray At the end of each line, everyone could join in saying, **'help us to forgive.'**

When someone upsets us: **help us to forgive.**

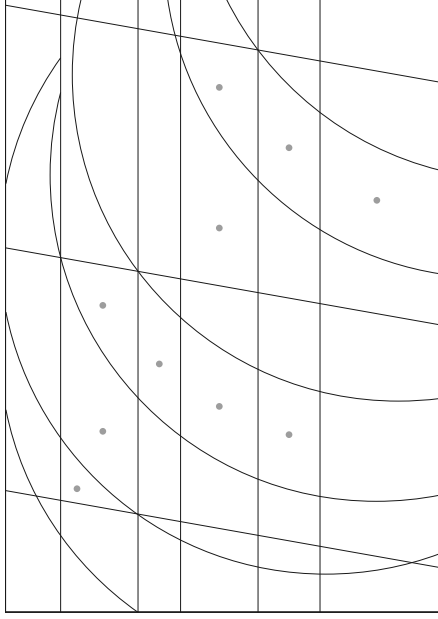
When someone ignores us: **help us to forgive.**

When someone gets on our nerves: **help us to forgive, Lord. Amen.** as you forgive us, Lord. Amen.

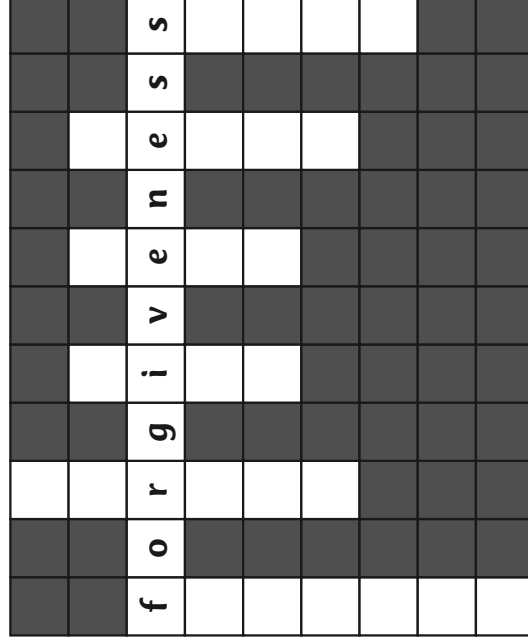
Activity time



Colour the dotted sections to reveal the number of times Jesus told Peter to forgive someone.



Can you fit these forgiveness words into the grid?
sorry, debt, forgive, mercy, pardon, pity



Can you think of something or someone that you could forgive beginning with each letter of 'forgive'?

F O R G I V E

Name

13-19 September 2020

Colouring time

Jesus tells a story about a king who forgave the debts of a servant, but the servant did not do the same for another servant.

