Sermon

Pentecost IV

7/7/19

Eltham

**Readings**

Galatians 6 final thoughts – you reap what you sow

Luke 10 – sending out of the 70

+FSHS

This week parish councilors start talking about aspects of our Vision Plan 2020 which you should have received as you came in the door. So I’m keeping my comments short today, to allow time and space for you to hear what parish council is hoping we can do in the next twelve – eighteen months.

The readings today offer some pertinent support as this Vision Plan is presented to you: Paul in his final words to the Galatians exhorts them: “you reap what you sow.” That’s a saying that’s entered common parlance and is almost a proverb. And it’s something we almost take as a given. What Paul is encouraging in the Galatians is mindfulness in how they treat one another. Last week we heard the list of vices, the works “of the flesh”, as contrasted with the fruit of living in the Spirit. He wants the Galatians to be free. In this Vision Plan, we’re hoping to sow some good seeds – and Sandra will say more shortly about the discernment of an appropriate children’s ministry, about a project seeking to connect young musicians into the life of the church, about our engagement in the Pathways project the Diocese is running to help parishes identify and then carry through a new ministry, about pursuing justice for our Indigenous people and people with disabilities, and about seeking new ways to do pastoral care. We sow these good seeds in the hope that God will grow them and grow us as a parish, taking steps we trust are guided by the Spirit, and will lead us towards love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

We also take encouragement from the gospel reading where Jesus sends the 70 out to preach a consistent message to the places they go to. Whether they are welcomed or not they are to say, “peace be to this house”, and to proclaim “the realm of God has come near”. Even those places that reject their message they are to say, as they shake off the dust from their sandals, “the realm of God has come near”. That’s the spirit in which we want to go forward: the realm of God knows no bounds; one accepts it and enters it by welcoming the Presence which is already here, closer than our own breath. Instead of being burdensome, taking that message of peace and proclamation of the realm of God is about sharing God’s deep joy – and I and members of parish council hope that everyone at St M’s will embrace this Vision Plan with joy and with hope in the extent to which it seeks to contribute to spreading the realm of God and helping more people connect with their identity as those whom God loves, and for whom Christ died: the realm of God coming near and bringing peace and the seeds of hope.

The Lord be with you.

 **And also with you.**