

THE PARISH OF GREAT YARMOUTH
GREAT YARMOUTH MINSTER, ST PAUL'S, ST MARY'S
SUNDAY 2nd May 2021 5th Sunday of Easter

Services as follows: Facebook at 10am and 11am in the Minster.
Evening Prayer on Facebook / YouTube Thursday at 7pm.

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In today's reading from Acts Chapter 8, Philip, one of Jesus' first disciples, is sent by God on a journey, and on his way out of town meets with an important court official reading a scroll of scripture. Philip asks the man if he knows what the scripture is about - the Ethiopian offers him a lift so that Philip can explain the text to him as they travel. It's a bit like a preacher sharing a taxi cab with a foreign diplomat!

The passage the Ethiopian official is reading, speaks of going quietly to a place of humiliation or suffering - and he asks Philip *'Is this writer speaking about himself?'*... It's likely the Ethiopian official recognises something of his *own* suffering which he endured as he took office in court - many important official roles historically used to be occupied by eunuchs, because it meant they would not show partiality to their own family - as they would sadly be unable to *have* any family. It was a stark price to pay for status and power - and without the chance of offspring, the man might well have seen himself in the words of verse 33 *'who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth...'* Philip then explains how the prophecy points to the suffering and resurrection of Jesus - and goes on to say how all are called to be Jesus' disciples.

But there is something timeless here - in that the Ethiopian official, first sees something of himself in the Bible's gospel message - of his own suffering and humanity - and then learns of the humanity and hope found in Jesus... I wonder how many Christian disciples come to faith by first recognising their *own* life's experiences in the texts of the Bible - and then coming to understand it is part of a bigger narrative, belonging to Christ.

Rev'd Jemma

NOTICES

Minster Opening times from this week the Minster will be open Monday – Sunday (excluding Wednesday), from 10am-12noon for private prayer. Please follow distancing guidelines.

Sunday Eucharist at 11am in the Minster, along with an online service at 10am. Wednesday Eucharist this week is 10.15am at St. Paul's. If you wish to volunteer to help keep the Minster open, please contact the Parish Office.

Confirmation Service next Sunday, 9th May at 11am. Please come along and support those being confirmed.

Ascension Day Sung Eucharist at St Mary's Church, 7.00pm on Thursday 13th May everyone is very welcome.

Pentecost there will be evensong in the Minster, 6.30pm on Pentecost, Sunday 23rd May.

Pathway Volunteers – if anyone is interested in volunteering at Pathway, please contact Jennifer King:07723 120850. Pathway opens Mon, Wed & Fri serving a lunch. Any amount of time you can offer will help.

Online: If you're online you can find the "Parish of Great Yarmouth" on YouTube. We'll also do live streaming on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/GtYarMinster> . You don't have to be signed up to Facebook to view these.

Regular Giving To set up a regular payment or make a one-off gift, account name The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Great Yarmouth, sort code 20-99-21 and account number 60425850. Thank you.

Parish Magazine: The May magazine is out now, if you have any articles for the magazine please contact Pat Stringer, email: pat.stringer1@sky.com

PARISH PRAYER LIST If anyone wants someone prayed for please ask. Pray for those who are sick or in need, all who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit or in need of God's loving care: Brenda, David, Wally, Claire, Nancy, Peter, John, Mary. Remember before God the recently departed David Knowles. Pray for St Nicholas Priory School: head teacher Maria Grimmer. Pray for all staff at James Paget Hospital and all those who work to care for others during the pandemic.

COLLECT

Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son
Jesus Christ
have overcome death and opened to us
the gate of everlasting life:
grant that, as by your grace going before
us you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help
we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING (Alternative readings)

The reading from Acts must be read as either the First or Second Reading.

Either Acts 8:26-end

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him

no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Or **Baruch 3:9-15. 32 – 4:4**
or **Genesis 22:1-18**

PSALM Psalm 22:25-end

R *Be not far from me, O Lord.*

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
I will perform my vows
in the presence of those that fear you.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the Lord shall praise him;
their hearts shall live for ever. **R**

All the ends of the earth
shall remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations shall
bow before him.

For the kingdom is the Lord's
and he rules over the nations. **R**

How can those who sleep in the earth
bow down in worship,
or those who go down to the dust kneel
before him?

He has saved my life for himself;
my descendants shall serve him;
this shall be told of the Lord for
generations to come.
They shall come and make known his
salvation,
to a people yet unborn,
declaring that he, the Lord, has done it. **R**

SECOND READING (Alternative readings)

Either **1 John 4:7-end**

A reading from the first letter of John.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God

abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Or **Acts 8:26-end**

GOSPEL John 15:1-8

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

POST COMMUNION

Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the
truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.



Be not far from me, O Lord.