

Reflection for Trinity 7 – with baptism!

Today we are very pleased to welcome the family, friends and God-parents of Sophia Loren-England as she is baptized into God's family, becoming our sister in Christ. Many of us have met Sophia (and her parents) in recent weeks and rejoice at this wonderful occasion. Welcome Sophia!

At first glance the readings set by the lectionary for today don't seem to match that spirit of celebration. Jesus tells a parable that includes weeds being burnt on the fire, with 'weeping and gnashing of teeth', while the Apostle Paul talks to the Christians in Rome about their faith leading to troubles and that believers 'groan along with creation'. Talk about killing the mood!

But there are also solid reasons for hope and joy in those passages – and not in the "I'm alright, Jack" sense of "I'm wheat in God's field, so I'm OK, and what happens to the weeds doesn't matter to me". Because unlike the weeds, we can change to become wheat; we just have to admit that we have fallen short of God's standards, resolve to change our ways (with God's help) and put Jesus in charge of our lives and let him make us the people (the crop) that he wants us to be. Baptism, and the promises we (or our God-parents) make, are a sign of this change. And Jesus came and died so that chance of change could be available to absolutely everyone.

Paul writes that God has adopted all who believe, and his Holy Spirit (who he sends to live in us) tells our hearts that we are his children and will receive every good thing he wants to give us. That is the reality that Sophia is being baptized into today, and a true reason to celebrate!

Ian Totterdell, churchwarden



NEXT SUNDAY 26.07.26 Trinity 8
10.30am in the Church



OT 1 Kings 3: 5-12
NT Romans 8: 26-end
GOSPEL Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

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St Thomas, Exeter

19th July 2026

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Baptism of Sophia Loren-England

10.30am in the Church

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

270 *Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice
proclaims it*

235 *I the Lord of Sea and Sky*

— *Baptised in Water. (Words on sheet)*

172 *God is working his purpose out*

Wednesday 22nd July

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Young at Hearts are on an outing

Thursday 23rd July

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter at Jenny
Tuckett's house

Friday 24th July

9.30am Morning Prayers

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 25th July

12.30pm St Thomas Lunch at the Royal Oak.

All welcome.



Collect

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; 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**

Isaiah 44: 6-8

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? Let them proclaim it, let them declare and set it forth before me. Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be. Do not fear, or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it. You are my witnesses! Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one.

Romans 8: 12-25

So brothers and sisters, we owe it to God to live according to God's ways, rather than by every desire of our hearts. Those of us who are led by God's Spirit are children of God.

God has adopted us so we shouldn't act like slaves to sin and fear. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit telling our hearts that we are children of God and will receive every good thing God wants to give us. If our faith in God causes us trouble, we know that we will also end up receiving his glory.

Nothing horrible that happens to us here compares to the glory God will show us. All of creation aches for God, and God's children and creation will be set free and eventually receive God's glory as well.

We groan along with creation as we wait for our hope to be realised. That hope will save us. Even if we can't see what we wait for, we wait for it with patience

God's Word, My Voice

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

Jesus told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared. 'The owner's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

"An enemy did this," he replied. 'The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?"

"No," he answered, "because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters: first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."

Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.'

He answered, 'The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

'As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine

like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Post Communion

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life, ever giving himself that the world may live: may we so receive within ourselves the power of his death and passion that, in his saving cup, we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Notices

Today we welcome back Rev Sarah Mounoury to preside and preach at our service which will include the baptism of Sophia Loren-England.

Many thanks to all those who served on our stall at the Love St Thomas Summer Festival last weekend. We took a total of £257.21 and we will also receive a sizeable donation from the festival funds.

During the current heatwave our church building is staying open until the early evening as a cool space.

Tuesday 11th August at 7.00 p.m.

The Churchwardens and PCC of the Parish of St David, Exeter warmly invite you to come and welcome the Revd Mike Clark as Vicar of the Parish of St David, Exeter and the Revd Sarah Cumming as Associate Priest of St David Exeter at a service of Institution, Induction and Licensing by the Right Reverend Moira Astin, Bishop of Crediton.

Anyone who has an email can RSVP to

admin@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk by the 2nd August. Or sign up at our Sunday service.

Rev Hannah Alderson, our new Rector, will be licensed to our parish at 7.30pm on **Monday 7th September**. Please continue to pray for Hannah and her family as they prepare to move into our community.