

## Beaminster Area Team

God our Father, renew our hope. By the Holy Spirit's power, strengthen us to pray readily serve joyfully and grow abundantly rejoicing in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Week: 16th May, 2021, Seventh Sunday of Easter**

**New Testament:** Acts 1: 15-17, 21-end

**Psalm:** Psalm 1

**New Testament:** 1 John 5: 9-13

**Gospel:** John 17: 6-19

### Reflection on the Gospel reading, by Revd. David Campbell

And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. All pretty straight-forward, really. The disciples of Jesus decided that it was necessary to replace the lost Judas in order to make their number up to the more historically-resonant figure of twelve once again. And so, with that classical and ancient combination of prayer and casting lots, two candidates were chosen and one of them, Matthias was appointed to fulfil the task. There is of course only one question which remains after this election and appointment and it is one which will probably never be answered. It is this: whatever became of the one who was not chosen – the man called Joseph Barsabbas, also known as Justus? And not only whatever became of him, but, and here we have to be quite frank about matters, who was he in any case?

Speculation, for that is all it is, abounds on this particularly vexed question. In Christian tradition, after losing out to Matthias in the election, this Joseph, who must have been known to the apostles in some way, went on to become the Bishop of Eleutheropolis. Eleutheropolis was a pre-1948 Palestinian Arab village located about 13 miles northwest of the city of Hebron. The village had a total land area of about 13,900 acres, of which 69 acres were built-up while the rest remained farmland. Eleutheropolis means, "The City of the Free."

A thought for this week might go along these lines: how often does not being chosen for one thing free us up for something else important to do in our lives? The idea here is that life is not about being chosen or not chosen—we know that in the divine economy we are all loved and chosen—but rather about how pivotal events that seem to bring only sadness and disappointment can actually set us free to explore other options, options which might open doors leading to deep wells of opportunity and joy we never previously thought possible.

### Collect for Seventh Sunday of Easter

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**A Useful Telephone Link from The Church of England.** This is a free number where you can listen to prayers, reflections and hymns and join in worship with others.



### Worship to enjoy at home

BBC Radio 4, 8.10am, Sunday Worship; Songs of Praise BBC1 1.15pm