

St James' Church, Weybridge

Flower Festival Evensong, Sunday 14th June 2026

First Reading: Isaiah 35. 1-8

Second Reading: Luke 12. 22-34

Jesus teaches the crowd that they shouldn't worry and instead, trust God with the challenges and chances of life.

Evensong Sermon

May my words be in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Now I need to share something with you – I don't think this will surprise you, but I must be absolutely honest about it. I can't ever claim to have been fashionable. No – its ok, you don't have to say nice things. I know. Fashion has sort of passed me by. And the great thing about being ordained, as Steve will discover in November, is that a clergy persons wardrobe need not be too exciting. Mine is 95% black, so no choice is necessary. I love it just like that. You may think I need help? Did you know that tailors and therapists have one thing in common: they help you fit in.

What we look like, how we clothe ourselves, and what we choose to wear is, in many ways about our identity. Now I don't need to look like anyone else to find purpose, or to fit in and that's fine as a priest. For me, there is an inner clothing that matters – values, faith, community, loyalty, love – not how I look on the outside. And black will never go out of fashion.

At the same time, St James' Church's liturgical tradition affords me some colour! I get to wear wonderfully vibrant vestments for different seasons – so you will be relieved to hear there is colour in my life after all! At the moment, we are in ordinary time, which means the seasonal colour is green, representing all that is found in nature – grass, tress, plants and so much more.

I may not clothe myself in the latest fashion, but I do enjoy colour none the less, especially in creation – the world so beautifully made, which is diverse. This incredible Flower Festival, which has seen St James' church dressed in stunning vibrant colour, has shown us that people in all their diversity have so much talent and ability, so much to contribute. And there is unity to be found amidst our diversity!

This event has reminded me of just how beautiful God's creation is. Sadly, these flower arrangements are transient – as we know, they will only last a week at best, although we will post many photos on social media and our website to keep memories of this week alive for a long time to come. Creation, this world in which we live is seasonal, transient - everything

has a time. For some that is comforting, for many that sense of insecurity and change can be worrying.

In our second reading, we find Jesus teaching a crowd about many things, challenging their worries and concerns. What do you worry about? How you look? What will you wear? What you will eat? After all that lovely cake this weekend, I am not sure I will want to eat for days. We have so much to be thankful for, we are very blessed here in Weybridge, so perhaps we don't have the same worries as many others in our world who struggle to feed and clothe their families. Indeed, there are some even here in Weybridge who struggle to do this.

So, what do you worry about? We do like to make the right impression, don't we, and how we present ourselves really matters. Jesus is not saying we should expect to be clothed like the great King Solomon or that we will be clothed as beautifully as the flowers of the field. But the Lord of life and love is suggesting that if God clothes flowers so beautifully, then he will take care of each one of us, and this teaching follows a familiar pattern, less is more. In all the challenges and chances of life, we don't need to be alone, we can trust God, the creator, the master designer.

The flowers Jesus refers to could be any wild flowers, probably those common to the area around galilee where he was teaching. Those hearing Jesus at that time would have been aware that those same plants could be used for starting fires in ovens or even used to bake bread. Flowers too have more than once use. So, if God cares for something so insignificant as a native grass, that is in a field one day and the next in the fire, surely God will take care of each one of us also. Yet we are tempted to worry!

Jesus taught that we should not worry about the things of earth because God will take care of us. Then Jesus used another example. He said to look at the lilies. Lilies are beautiful flowers. In our Lord's illustration, the lilies grow on their own. They don't work or make clothing, and yet nothing is more beautiful! Jesus said that even King Solomon, who was very rich, never dressed as beautifully as the lilies!

All of us here will have things we may worry over – it may not be our choice or availability of clothes, or food, but we all have worries – health, finance, family and their struggles, time and so much more. But we are called into a relationship with our Loving God which is different, who knows what we need. Life is not about our outward adornment, but inner meaning and purpose. That is why Jesus said that we need to put God first in our lives, and that when we do this, order and purpose will clothe us with God's gifts.

God is good and gives us so much – this Flower Festival, with its beautiful displays and contributions by so many people celebrates the diversity of this community in which we are all welcome, loved and included. May we spend just a little less time worrying and open our hearts anew to a deeper relationship of trust with God who knows us, loves each and every one of us and longs to clothe us with his love, joy and peace. Amen.

Fr Damian Harrison-Miles, June 2026