

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
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Sunday 29 March 2020 Fifth Sunday of Lent

A prayer for the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy,
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

Good News in Tough Times

During the present Coronavirus pandemic holding onto our Christian hope and joy might feel like a real challenge, as our lives will be so restricted for many weeks and the future is uncertain. It is tempting to think that as all our services are now suspended we will be 'less' as a church and 'less' as Christians - but I would like to urge you in God's grace to be *more*.

We need the same love and care that runs through our normal church life together to be at work now in *more* prayer for each other and in meeting *more* practical needs. We need the example and Spirit of Jesus to inspire us now to love our neighbours and to encourage each other even *more*.

So let's give ourselves to prayer, as we have health and strength, for each other and our communities. Let's talk to those we sense might need help and offer what we can. And let's ask that God will continue to help us follow the way of Jesus and build the Kingdom even in these unique times.

If you need some practical help or someone to talk to - or if you can offer this to others- please do phone or email the Ministry Team or the Church Wardens. Thank you to those who have already volunteered.

in friendship and Christ's service, *Adrian Jones*, Vicar

(Thanks to Mark Powley, St Hild College, for ideas used here)

FORTHCOMING SERVICES AND MEETINGS

All services and meetings are cancelled for the foreseeable future.

The church is closed until further notice. Benefice wide plans for spiritual, pastoral and practical support during these difficult times are being put in place. We have set up contact between members of the congregation. **If you would like to keep in touch by telephone with others in the same situation for a chat and support please contact Tina.** Email: churchwardens@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk

FOR YOUR PRAYERS Please remember those whom we have been asked to keep in our prayers. Please remember those who have died recently and keep their families in your prayers. For other prayer requests, please contact a churchwarden.

Please join Winifred Thompson in giving thanks for returning strength and wellbeing. Winifred wants to thank all of you for your prayers, cards and good wishes.

Praying Together through the week

During this week why not give yourself a regular pattern of daily prayer? This will help us to keep a Godly perspective on all that is happening and will reduce our anxiety and stress – and will give us an opportunity to pray regularly for those in need, those who unwell, and all our medical services. Here are some ideas for joining others in prayer:

The Community of the Tree of Life, our own Diocesan prayer community based near the Cathedral, is praying three times a day at 8am, noon and 9pm with a short and very simple service. You can hear more by going to this page on the internet: www.leicestertreeoflife.org and also their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/LeicTreeofLife/

Each Sunday morning the Diocese itself will post a short act of worship and Bible reflection on its Facebook page: www.facebook.com/dioceseofleicester/

The Church of England also has a dedicated web page for information about a range of options for praying and worshipping together: www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online

As always the choice can be rather overwhelming! Can I encourage you to plan simply? During this Coronavirus season I am myself aiming to use 'Pray As You Go' (www.pray-as-you-go.org/) each morning for a simple Bible reflection and setting up my day in time with God. Then as the day draws to a close, I'll aim to join the Community of the Tree of Life for their Night Prayer (see above).

Whatever you do, do take this chance to give time to God.

Adrian

BBC 1 Sunday Worship 11.30am

This is also available for catch up on BBC iPlayer. The order of service is available at bbc.co.uk/orderofservice.

BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship 8.10am

You can listen to a Sunday service on the radio at 8.10am, or if you have the 'Sounds' App you can listen to it whenever you want.

On-line worship

Sundays at 10am. Every Sunday at 10am on the [@DioceseofLeicester](https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofLeicester) Facebook page there will be a short pre-recorded video providing an

opportunity to engage with the Gospel reading of the day. There will be simple prayers, a reading, a brief devotional homily and a creative interpretation of the Bible story by an artist, and a closing blessing. Just follow the Diocese of Leicester Facebook page and join with others around our diocese in experiencing God's word in a slightly different way.

Staying Connected-Social Media/ Facebook

To engage a congregation and wider community without physical contact relies upon us using social media. Facebook is a helpful 'platform' which can host conversations, images, events and even live services. If you are interested in joining St Guthlac's 'Page'-you will need a Facebook account. Please see attached details about how to join Facebook and St Guthlac's and St Mary's Facebook profiles. Any problems, please do contact Matthew by phone or email who is happy to help. (See front cover)

COLLECT FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
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

READINGS

Romans 8:6-11

6To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot, 8and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Gospel: John 11:1-45

1A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. 3So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' 4But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' 5Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, 6after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

7Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' 8The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' 9Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. 10But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' 11After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' 12The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' 13Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 14Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. 15For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' 16Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

17When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, 19and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. 20When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. 21Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' 23Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' 24Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' 25Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 27She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

28When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' 29And when

she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. 30Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' 33When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. 34He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' 35Jesus began to weep. 36So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' 37But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

38Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.' 40Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' 41So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' 43When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' 44The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

45Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

'Thought for the Day' ...on this Sunday's Gospel Reading.

Hinges are more than things that hold a door in a doorway. On a laptop computer or a double display board, the hinges find their place right in the middle of the 'material' either side.

The 'hinge' can find itself as the turning point of stories, dramas, tragedies...and yes, even Gospels.

In Mark's Gospel, the turning point or 'hinge' is Caesarea Philippi and Peter's Confession of Faith. This remarkable moment is 'geographically' half way through the Gospel, and the theological thrust of the material in the second half after this hinge, this turning point, is very different from the first half.

Here, in the Johannine Gospel for today is a hinge, the geographical turning point of John's own drama. Again, the thrust of the material following the story of Lazarus is quite a contrast to the first half. Similar to the majority of miracles in Mark, all of John's 'signs' are found in the first half of his drama. Also, like Mark, Martha's Confession of Faith in John is both in the middle of the whole, the middle one of three....and involving a woman at that!

But why have a story about 'resurrection' on Passion Sunday? Surely we may think that this is a bit odd and 'stealing the thunder' of the Feast of the Resurrection in a fortnight's time.

But in conclusion of this hinge, v53 reveals a further secret and within it the reason for the choice of Gospel for today. In Chapter 11, what Jesus says about himself and does in and around the story of the raising of Lazarus brings the feelings of the chief priests and scribes to fever pitch. Like the Cleansing of the Temple in the Synoptic Gospels here John says "From that day on they plotted to take his life." (11:53).

The 'beginning of the end' rightly finds its place here on Passion Sunday.

A couple of questions to finish with...one spiritual, one theological.

Firstly, can you recognise the 'hinge points' in your life, where your faith has 'lit up' in some small or great way and helped you to determine or strengthen your way forward?

Did Jesus know he was to die and if so from when did he know?

SAF

WELLBEING TIPS

MIND have produced a range of really helpful tips and factsheets to support us during the Coronavirus situation, there's a wealth of information under the following headings:

- **Take care of your mental health and wellbeing**
- **Plan for staying at home or indoors**
- **Tips for if you have to stay at home for two weeks or more**

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse80ef2>

MOTHERS UNION In accordance with current guidelines, there will be no Mothers Union meeting next Tuesday, March 24th, nor April 28th. We shall continue to review the situation and keep members informed.

Pastoral Letter from the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England (*excerpts*)

24 March 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Following the Prime Minister's announcement it is imperative that for the health of the nation and in order for the National Health Service itself to manage the increase in those requiring medical help, the Church of England strictly observes the new guidelines on staying at home and only making journeys that are absolutely necessary, such as shopping for essential items and to take daily exercise.

Our church buildings must now be closed not only for public worship, but for private prayer as well and this includes the priest or lay person offering prayer in church on their own. We must take a lead in showing our communities how we must behave in order to slow down the spread of the Coronavirus.

We must also do all that we can to provide resources and support for those who are isolated, fearful and vulnerable. But we have to do this from our homes. It is also imperative that as the Church of Jesus Christ, called to offer hope and light in the darkness of this world's ills, we maintain a praying presence for our community, though, again, this must happen from our hearts and from our homes.

These are unprecedented times. We are all having to get used to being the Church differently. It is not easy. However, our belonging to Christ has never been measured by the number of people in church on a Sunday morning (though we long for the day when this way of knowing Christ can return) but by the service we offer to others.

We know that God is with us and we pray with you that in the midst of all this pain and sorrow we can remain focussed on the One who gives us hope.

With every blessing,

+Justin Cantuar

+Sentamu Eboracensis

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING: this has been postponed. Three PCC members and two Deanery Synod representatives will be elected when the meeting eventually takes place and new people are encouraged to get involved. If you would like to stand for election to the PCC or Deanery Synod, or would like to find out what is involved, please speak to Lesley Meakin .

FOR THE NEWSLETTER Please send material to be included in the next newsletter by **Thursday 10pm** to administrator@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk