

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

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Sunday 21 June 2020 Second Sunday after Trinity

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.

How do we live as the Church *now*? - Fellowship

‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship.....’ (Acts 2.47)

As we continue to wonder about those things that are key to our life together as a church and that we need to make our priorities, we read that the first Christians were *‘devoted... to fellowship’*.

Drawn together by a new and shared faith in the resurrected Jesus, who shows us the true pattern of human life, the believers knew that spending time together was key. ‘Fellowship’ is simply another way of saying ‘time given to relationships’, and it is the second of the ‘Holy Habits’ the early church developed.

Our society has conned us into thinking that self-reliance and independence are always virtues. We are persuaded that we need to be suspicious of each other and focus on our own needs. But the first Christian churches worked in exactly the opposite fashion. They committed themselves to the time and energy needed to build relationships with each other, even though they were very diverse communities and sometimes they must have found little in common apart from their faith.

As the first Christians continued to meet together they would have learnt, or been reminded, that God seems to have always worked out his purpose through *people*—first the family of Abraham, then the nation of ancient Israel and finally the church. Individuals were important but only because they were part of a network of relationships. The scriptures tell us that God himself exists in relationship—a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. No surprise then that when we are called to live a

life that reflects God and his purpose for the world, we are called to live together in fellowship.

During this coronavirus season we have to work hard, and in some way artificially, to build our relationships with each other—we may even feel that relationships are ‘on hold’ for a while. Looking ahead though we can see how important it will be to meet together regularly and encourage and support each other. Some of this will happen on a Sunday but we ought to make the effort to meet during the week as well. I can testify myself that this is one of the best ways of growing in our Christian faith.

Many churches have homegroups or ‘fellowship groups’ that meet in people’s houses on a weekday evening or day time. During their time together typically 6-10 members may pray, look at the Bible together, listen to each other and give help and support. Starting up again after the lockdown is an ideal time to reimagine and build homegroups as places where we find fellowship in both the best of times and the worst of times.

In the meantime, keep safe and stay well.

Adrian

‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching’

Last week I invited everyone to join a new online group in our benefice, in which we will take seven sessions together to look at the seven big themes of the Gospel of Mark—there are film clips and questions to consider before we meet and then plenty of time to discuss. The group is called ‘Christianity Explored’ and we’ll ‘meet’ by using Zoom on Tuesday evenings—you can join by phone if you prefer. It would be great to have lots of people joining those who have already contacted me—do please let me know if you can and then we’ll set up our start date and send out more details.

Adrian

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 family and friends in your prayers. For other prayer requests, please contact a churchwarden.

Brian Small would like to express his gratitude for all the messages of sympathy that he and the family have received since Veronica's death.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN MALAWI. Please continue to prayer for our sisters and brothers in Northern Malawi and across the world as the nations of the world deal with the pandemic. Let us pray that the remoteness of many of these rural communities will provide an effective shield to the spread of the disease in areas where medical facilities would struggle to cope.

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS Please pray for all our local doctors, nurses, care workers and support staff, especially **Amy and Dan Barnes** and **Katherine Swanson**.

NEWS OF MATTHEW'S ORDINATIONS AS A PRIEST

Now that Matthew is a year into his curacy with us it is time for him to be ordained not just as a Deacon but also as a Priest. The ordination service (usually at the end of June) has been rescheduled for either 12th or 13th September so do please pray for Matthew and his fellow deacons as they wait in anticipation.

UPDATE: When will our churches be re-opening?

Across the country Ministers and PCCs have been considering if they are now able to reopen their churches for private prayer and for funerals once more. Some have decided that they canand some have decided that they are not yet able to ensure hygiene, distancing and cleaning requirements are met. This of course is the important condition—we may open the church building for private prayer and for funerals ***when all safety and hygiene precautions can be put in place.***

In this coming week the PCC of our own church will meet and we will consider a careful Risk Assessment of our church building and of the congregation's capacity to put in place the social distancing and cleaning measures that will be necessary. We have (many!) guidance documents from the Church of England, the Diocese and the Government to help us but the decisions are difficult ones, and not as straightforward as we would like them to be.

You may have strong feelings one way or the other, as do our PCC members. What will be important though is that we come to an agreement and that it is based on careful consideration of the risks, the opportunity and the needs of the congregation and community.

I will of course keep you updated on progress and decisions but in the meantime please do let me know (by email, phone or letter) if you have views or ideas that would help us in this process. In particular I would welcome offers of help with cleaning or supervising open sessions in the church building, from anyone who is not in a vulnerable group. Without volunteers it seems unlikely that opening the building is realistic.

Do pray for our PCC and Ministry Team as we try to find the best way ahead. *Adrian*

Thank you for caring at home and in our community” : this is the message of appreciation that, as St Mary’s and St Guthlac’s, we want to send loud and clear to the staff of our local care homes and to all those carers who have been supporting clients, friends and relatives in their own homes during the pandemic. We are particularly conscious that we have at least nine care homes in our benefice, and that the staff will have been under extraordinary strain and pressure over the last two months—often, it seems, unappreciated by those who make key decisions, and perhaps also by ourselves, until now. To express our appreciation to these care home workers we are aiming to give a gift to as many as possible—probably a gift token to be redeemed when times are easier and leisure seems possible again. We have a generous grant from our Ward Councillors to start things off, but if each gift is really to convey true appreciation then we want to add to it substantially through our own generosity.

Please do make a contribution to our Carers Fund to show your appreciation. We are collecting money through the St Guthlac’s bank account, so please make a cheque payable to ‘St Guthlacs PCC’ (no cash please) . Alternatively you can pay by Direct Transfer:

Sort code 20-49-08 account 53861341 Reference "Carers"
You can send a donation by post or drop your envelope through the door of 62 Elms Road (Matthew), 5 Church Lane (Adrian) or the St Mary’s Parish Centre, Church Lane (but not at St Guthlac’s Church please!).

Thank *you*, in anticipation, for helping us thank our care staff.
Adrian

Fundraising Update Thanks to people's generosity so far. With the Council ward funding of £500 we now have a total of £1200 to say thank-you to the local carers.

Collect & Readings for the Second Sunday of Trinity

The Collect

Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

Romans 6:1b-11

¹Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus summoned the twelve and sent them out with the following instruction: ²⁴A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known.

²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³²Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

³⁶and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'

Reflection: the Revd Adrian Jones

'Hard words for hard times'

These are hard words from Jesus, particularly in these hard times. As with all Bible passages they are best considered first in their context. So it helps if we remember that when Jesus speaks these words he is in the middle of giving advice to the twelve apostles, before sending them out 'like sheep among wolves' to proclaim the good news of God's rescue plan. They were going out to meet an often hostile religious establishment, as well as ordinary people desperate for hope.

The *challenge* of Jesus is "do not be afraid of them" - despite death threats, being disowned, the opposition of family and friends, and misrepresentation, Jesus tells his followers 'do not be afraid of them.'

The *promise* of Jesus is that 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered' - despite the voices that will mock, deny, denigrate and attack them, and despite the very real danger they will face, Jesus tells his followers 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered. It is this promise that ought to grab our attention during these hard times.

The weeks of lockdown have been weeks of *grinding* down for many of us. The pressure, strain and anxiety, the constant sense of being vigilant, the mixed and confusing messages

from experts and reporters, on top of the isolation from those nearest and dearest, as well as our church family and even those casual meetings on the street ... all may have left us wondering where the joy of life is and what exactly we are worth.

Part of the 'home schooling' for our children recently has been about money, and the hardest lesson has been persuading them that it is not *how many* coins they have in their pocket that matters, but the *value* of them... Here Jesus promises us that *our* value in *God's* sight is worth far more than all the many anxieties and dangers that may surround us. The thing that defines who we are, that puts a value on us, is *not* the fear and threat of our times but the deep and intimate loving care of God.

If, like me and many others, you have found these lockdown days marked by changes in mood, uncertainty about the future and searching questions about the state of the world, remember both the challenge and the promise Jesus gives us today—but especially the promise.

“Do not be afraid of them” is his challenge. “The very hairs of your head are all numbered” is his promise. He notices even when a sparrow falls .. and even if it feels as if we have lost our life - for a while at least - if we can bring that loss to him then we can discover how deeply he knows us and cares for us. Once again we can find life.

Amen.

Reflection: Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

'Do not fear' is certainly a recurrent theme of Matthew 10:24-31, quite a tall order for even the most faithful Christian from time to time.

Why is that?

Well, simply 'fear' is something we are born with, and it is one of the most pervasive motivating forces in our human experience. Amongst 'the general' we all have our pet fears which we keep in a cupboard somewhere in our heads, knowing that if the doors should open and we are faced with them we might not have the first notion of how to deal with them... and then panic sets in.

I don't know the metabolic things which are 'set off' in us by stressful situations, but perhaps they range from the hugely animated Corporal Jones syndrome of 'Don't panic' on the one hand, to a rigid inability to move at all on the other.

In my own case, with my prayers in there somewhere, I go emotionally ice cold, say very little, and get on with solving the situation, and then when it's all over... I tend to go to sleep!

The fledgling Church under persecution is what appears to be the social setting of this text.

The extreme of your family members in fear of their own safety 'shop' you to the authorities, for professing a very vulnerable faith within a dangerous society.

Similarly, working as, say, a British Agent in Nazi occupied France throws up a similar scenario of ever present danger seemingly around every corner. (It amuses me in lots of films of the latter, the agent seems to go around physically always looking over his/her own shoulder... which would immediately 'say' to me or any on-looking that they have something to hide!)

So how does Matthew suggest we at least positively live with our fears and anxieties? After laying out, with no punches pulled, the real situations of his own time that threatened folk by reason of their faith, the imagery of sparrows and hair numbers, and therefore the underlying truth of the infinite love of God for each of us individually addresses how we might better deal with our fears and anxieties in a faithful and trusting way.

In one of my former employs as a priest, my 'boss' suggested the ambience of that particular place was one of much stress and pervasive worry. I suggested that I 'did' neither and when my boss laughed, I said that I was deadly serious! ... which was/is probably true, and in my case, it is learnt behaviour mixed in with a lot of God's grace, and a bit of my own constitution.

So today, think of God's infinite love and care for each of us and by continual reflection on the same, may many of our fears be allayed and our faithful trust become stronger.

WORSHIP INFORMATION

BBC1 Sunday Worship 11.45am For the order of service:
www.bbc.co.uk/orderofservice

BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship 8.10am

BBC Radio 4 Daily Service each weekday 9.45am on long wave only

Catch up available for all these on BBC iPlayer or Sounds app.

Virtual Sunday Service for the Knighton Benefice. Please look out for the email giving the link to this week's Sunday Service which will be available on YouTube from Sunday.

Virtual Compline/ Night Prayer at 8pm on a Wednesday. It has proven a meaningful way to have fellowship and prayer together as well as being quite good fun, especially as we find our feet with the technology and more people join us each week. You can join by just **phoning up** and inputting the code **or** using **'Zoom'** online. It has been democratic with several voices joining in with a line of liturgy each. If you would like to participate with a speaking part, please do contact Matthew by 4pm each Wednesday (revgough@gmail.com).

For Phone only: telephone this number **0131 460 1196**
When promoted input Meeting ID: **746 767 4408**

For internet using Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting <https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/7467674408>
Input Meeting ID: 746 767 4408



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

0800 804 8044

Are you in need of some daily
hope during this lockdown?

We have a new FREE telephone
line for you to ring to hear
comforting hymns, daily prayers
and reflections.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHURCH OF ENGLAND CONNECTIONS

Don't forget to visit the St. Guthlac's Facebook page and website
<http://www.stguthlac-knighton.co.uk/>

'Church is Changing' on the home page includes copies of reflections and links to the You Tube recordings of virtual services. Newsletters can found on the news page.

THANK YOU FROM KATHERINE SWANSON

Thank you so much for including my name in the weekly newsletters during the current Covid-19 pandemic. I am extremely touched and grateful for your prayers at this time. I am currently working on Osbourne day care unit at the LRI where I administer chemotherapy and other treatments to patients with Leukaemia, lymphoma and other haematology conditions. It is true that the Covid-19 outbreak has made my day to day working life more stressful and uncomfortable, however I am one of the lucky ones as my working area has been relatively unaffected compared to some. We continue to see our regular patients and any patient requiring high dose treatment or admission is swabbed the day before. This means that as much as we have had increased workload, we have seen less Covid-19 positive patients than some areas of the hospital.

We have been inundated with gestures of goodwill from members of the public. From handmade uniform bags to headbands that prevent the face masks from giving us pressure sores behind our ears. One of our patients delivered 30 pizzas to our department in May, along with 30 chicken biryanis and rice. On days like that word spreads fast and we were soon visited by hungry doctors and nurses from neighbouring wards offering to help us eat the lovely food.

The hospital has also been giving breakfast and lunch packs to all staff which helps keep you going when shifts run over as the canteen is currently closed. At Easter Cadbury's donated an Easter egg to every member of Staff that works at the hospital. We have had donations from companies such as Nivea and Vaseline among others. For the festival of Eid we were brought some sweets by a patient who told us she would usually make them for her family but she could not see anyone this year, therefore she made them for our ward.

All these things have been amazing and made me feel blessed to be nurse, and to love the job that I do. However it's not because of the donations or the free gifts but because I have had the luxury of seeing first hand, how in the darkest of times, people can pull together and devote their time to others despite their own personal troubles.

I hope that soon we will see this pandemic lift, and gradually, however slowly families can be reunited, people can return to work and people can join together to worship again. Until then, stay safe. Katherine

PS . Due to Covid, my ward have had to move all our furniture around to make sure patients were able to socially distance whilst with us. Today while moving furniture to create further space, our much needed and years old filing cabinets fell to pieces. We do not have enough cash to purchase more at this point so if anyone has a spare filing cabinet or storage that they could donation to our ward we would be very grateful.

Thank you

BENEFICE MAGAZINE The next issue of the magazine will be published in early July. Please submit any items for inclusion by **Tuesday 30 June** to stmaryknighton.magazine@gmail.com. Please share your thoughts about anything of relevant to our Benefice community - including your reflections on and experiences of lockdown. Thank you. Nigel Siesage

KNIGHTON OPEN GARDENS As many readers will be aware, I had hoped to organise a Knighton Open Gardens event for the spire appeal this summer. As that is clearly impossible, I would like to let people into our gardens through a photo feature in the magazine. Please send me photos of your summer gardens, with or without yourselves in the picture. Nigel Siesage

GREETINGS & GOOD WISHES come to us all from **Gill and Derek Atkinson**, who are both well and thinking of us back in Knighton. They enjoy our Virtual Worship on the church website.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED Hilary is an ordained C of E minister but currently without a parish. She is urgently looking to rent or buy a two bedroom house in this part of the city. If you know of anything that might be suitable please get in touch with Adrian.

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