

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
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Sunday 28 June 2020 Third 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? - Breaking Bread

‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.’ (Acts 2.42)

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 the breaking of bread’*.

The early Christians found God in every aspect of life as they gathered together to share their lives as a community. They made mistakes, they continued to learn and they found something so special as they tried to follow the way of Jesus. It was in this context that we find them *‘breaking bread’*.

The breaking of bread is a distinctive term of Luke, the author of Acts. He uses it most powerfully when Cleopas and his companion describe how Jesus had been made known to them *‘in the breaking of the bread’* (Luke 24:35). Here in Acts 2:42 it is not clear from how Luke is using the term when describing the life of the first Christian communities. Is it describing the act which opened a common Jewish meal? Is it a new, specific liturgical and sacramental act? It might be reasonable to assume that at least sometimes when the first Christians met together they remembered the Last Supper, but Luke has not gone out of his way to make this clear for us.

It may be that Luke is trying to show us that, in their life together, the *‘ordinary’* and the *‘spiritual’* could not be separated for the early Christians. They, like Jesus, took bread, the ordinary and everyday; they gave thanks to God, they broke it, they shared it and they consumed it - an ordinary act transformed by the presence of Jesus in Spirit and their shared faith and life. The essence of their actions was to take, to give thanks, to break, to share and to eat.

This can give us too then a pattern for our services when we

meet - whether we call it the Eucharist (“thanksgiving” in Greek) or Holy Communion (“forming community”) or Mass (from the Latin “sending”). *But ...* there is also something very important here about the way in which we treat the ‘ordinary’ in our lives.

Christians have always been tempted to separate the ‘spiritual’ from the ‘ordinary’, to put the ‘holy’ and ‘sacred’ parts of our lives into a different compartment from the basic and very human business of living. The early Church shows us here how artificial that divide is. They recognised that God is present in *all* of life, and that to restrict our faith to special times only is to misrepresent him to the world and to stunt our own life of faith and growth. We might say that they knew how important it is to move from having a ‘Sunday faith’ to having an ‘everyday faith.’ I hope that during our corona virus lockdown you have been able to find support from your faith—from praying and reading the Bible, through encouraging conversation with other Christians, and through practical help shared amongst us. As we look ahead now to a new stage of our common life and to the time when we may be able to meet together again, it would be good to remember how the first Christians allowed faith and hope to shape their *whole* lives.... the very ordinary as well as the special times.

If we have ‘locked down’ God into a Sunday box, then now is the time to ease our restrictions and let him be the God of our ordinary and everyday lives too.

In the meantime, keep safe and stay well.

Adrian

Sunday Faith becoming Everyday Faith.... ‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching’

Our new discussion and Bible study group begins on Tuesday 7th July. We are meeting at 7.30pm fortnightly through Zoom, and you can join by telephone if you prefer. ‘Christianity Explored’ takes 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. It's not too late to join—please do contact me and I will give you more details. *Adrian*

FOR YOUR PRAYERS Please remember those who 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.

NEW UPDATE: When will our churches be re-opening?

You will no doubt have seen in the news the Government's announcement that places of worship may reopen from 4th July. This is what we have been waiting for! Behind the headline however, things are not as simple as they may sound.

In order to open safely every place of worship will be expected to stick to guidance on numbers, distancing, cleaning and what exactly we can and cannot do when we meet.—and as I write **we are still waiting for that guidance from the Government.** In time we will also receive further guidance from the national Church, but the Bishops also have to wait for the Government guidance. This makes it impossible to do much in the way of planning for re-opening at the moment.

However our PCC will meet this week to consider a careful Risk Assessment of our church building in relation to re-opening for times of **private prayer** and for **funerals**. We will identify the hazards and risks involved, the control measures that we will need to put in place, and our collective capacity to put in place all those measures.

After considering the risk assessment we then have to agree if it is *possible* to open safely, and is this something we *want* to do, given all that will be necessary to make it happen.

If we do decide opening is possible, then time for essential preparation will be needed. We will also need volunteers to clean the church after three months of being closed up, and to 'supervise' the building when it is open. Without enough volunteers it will be much harder to have the doors open.

I know that it is very frustrating for many of us to continue in this state of waiting, but I hope you can see that we are doing our best to work within a complicated situation, and with regulations

that restrict what we might otherwise wish to do. Above all we want to ensure that everyone is kept as safe as possible. We are called to a life together and that means looking out for the well-being of everyone, especially those who might be more vulnerable than others.

Do please continue to 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

LATEST TOTAL Thanks to all who have responded to our Carer Fundraising appeal. We have a total currently of **£2100**. If you want to contribute to saying thank you to the care staff in our local care homes there is still time but we want to close the appeal at the end of this month.

Collect & Reading for the Third Sunday of Trinity

The Collect

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts
whereby we call you Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,
that we and all creation may be brought
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
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

The New Testament Reading is Romans 6:12-23

Matthew 10:40-42

⁴⁰Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in

the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'

Reflection: You're Welcome

Revd Aphro McCullough

Our Gospel reading for today is about love and kindness. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible translates the word 'reward' in this reading as 'welcome' and Jesus uses it six times in this context in just these three verses. Jesus calls us to think more deeply about what it means to welcome one another and we understand that our welcome, our acts of kindness are for all the time, any time no matter what circumstances or crises we find ourselves in. We also understand that our welcoming need not be about big, heroic acts. According to Jesus, there is no such thing as a small gesture. A cup of cold water is all it takes but a cup of cold water is precious to a person who is really thirsty – sometimes it's the gift of life itself. And don't we all need that cup of water in these difficult days?

When Oscar Wilde was sent to prison in 1895, it was the ultimate humiliation for him. In his day, he was a real celebrity, but all that disappeared once he was convicted. Whenever the prison authorities moved him in public, he was spat at and people jeered at him. But one day when the crowd was particularly hostile, a friend of Wilde appeared and did a very simple thing that silenced the crowd. As Wilde passed by, handcuffed and looking at the ground, the man simply raised his hat to him as a mark of friendship and respect.

Later, Wilde wrote, "The memory of that lowly silent act of Love has unsealed for me all the wells of pity, made the desert blossom like a rose, and brought me out of the bitterness of lonely exile into harmony with the wounded, broken and great

heart of the world.” The smallest of good deeds: a little thing done in love, a cup of cold water.

It doesn't take much to be hospitable, welcoming, and accepting of other people. A cup of cold water, a hug, a cup of tea and a cake, a listening ear, the hand of friendship. It doesn't take much; we can all do it and we can all make a difference. But why should we? What's the point? Well, in our reading Jesus says that if we do these things we will receive our reward but I believe we should do these things first of all because we love Jesus and in his first letter John tells us that we love Jesus because he first loved us. Love begets love and in the parable of the sheep and the goats the king said 'whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'. Jesus is our King and we do it for Him. Amen

Reflection: Ekklesia...then and now!

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

By way of a change this week, I felt I wanted to write about the concept of 'Ekklesia' , the proper name for Church, as it is now as compared with before Covid 19.

Ekklesia is a Greek word meaning 'called out from'... 'ek' meaning 'out of' and 'kaleo' the root of the second part of the word meaning 'to call' . We are each the 'ekklesia' in our own right, as we have been called out of the world to be a follower of Jesus. But normally 'ekklesia' is a collective, based on the name given to a popular assembly in Ancient Athens, referring to all those 'called out' of the world throughout the world in order to be a disciple of Jesus. This is itself joined with the ekklesia in heaven thus forming the Church as a universal concept. So how are we each 'ekklesia' ? Well, we each believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that he lived, died and rose again. Each of us is then joined with all others who believe the same forming the worldwide ekklesia, the Church throughout the world, but sadly divided into different denominations.

Also ekklesia is expressed locally in a smaller collective called a congregation who (normally!) meet together at least weekly, as was Jesus' custom at the local synagogue to worship in a local fellowship. The readings are often the same as other churches far and wide giving more of a sense of the oneness of the ekklesia. We each try our best to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength in our disciplines of regular worship, prayer and bible study, and to love our neighbour by our sacrificial service of them.

So, that is where we are normally.

But where have we been in lockdown and as we start to see a relaxation if the same?

Well, theologically much of 'ekklesia' as described above is still the same despite lockdown.

Even though we can't meet together, there is still the ekklesia at St Guthlacs and a further one at St Mary's.

The difference is that our disciplines of regular church going and receiving communion have had to be modified, and any gathering together will have to be carefully monitored. But at each and every stage we are still fundamentally 'ekklesia' although I am sure we all wish to return to something like its own normality, where the wholeness of ekklesia is expressed more fully in collective worship and fellowship.

WORSHIP INFORMATION

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 the BBC 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 United in faith with **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.

REQUEST FROM KATHERINE SWANSON 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

A NEW ARRIVAL Many of us will know the Rev Leigh Greenwood, the Minister of Stoneygate Baptist Church. Leigh and her husband are pleased to announce the birth of a daughter , Miriam Henrietta, sister to Eddie. Our best wishes to them all.

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