

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

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Sunday 19 July 2020 Sixth 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? - Serving

⁴² *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* ⁴³ *Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.* ⁴⁴ *All the believers were together and had everything in common.* ⁴⁵ ***They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.*** “ (Acts 2.42-45)

While our lockdown continues, I'm taking the chance to reflect on how the first church shared their life together. What 'holy habits' marked out their new life in Christ? despite the hardship and persecution that was also part of their Christian experience, as we read it in Luke's book of 'The Acts of the Apostles'. Perhaps it is time for us to go back to these key aspects of being the church, in our own challenging times.

Here Luke describes a 'holy habit' that has marked Christians over the centuries and in these days of pandemic we also see acted out in news reports: ***“They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”*** This is the practice of *serving those in need* – of putting other people's needs ahead of our own, and sacrificing personal comfort and ease for the sake of others.

Jesus himself came as one who served (Matthew 20:28) so it is no surprise that, as the first Christians became the first church and began to model their lives around his, serving should become a key hallmark of Christian life together. Every act of service follows the example of Jesus in eliminating need and building a world of love, justice and peace for all. Christians are called then to follow the way of Jesus and serve others, just as he did.

We can live this calling personally, in our daily lives, work and relationships, in all sorts of diverse and varied ways. We can take opportunities when they come, as well as intentionally planning how we can use our time, energy, skills and money to support those in need.

We can live this calling corporately as churches too, for example through youth and children's work, help for the homeless, bringing together those with disabilities, or refugee welcome centres. There is a long tradition in Knighton of the churches being active in supporting such projects as well as overseas work in children's homes, medical clinics and through emergency charities when disaster strikes.

We can live this calling to serve in partnership with others as well; with other churches, with people of peace in the community, and with other groups – including other faith groups who are also committed to serving the common good.

In the time of Acts, church members sold their own things so that they had a way of providing for and serving others. They trusted that God would provide for their own needs if they now used what they had for the sake of others.

I wonder if we need to consider some specific questions on the 'other side' of lockdown:

Does *our* service have this same level of impact on *us*? Does it feel *sacrificial*?

Is our service both *personal* and *corporate*? Both *financial* and *practical*?

As we look around during lockdown we can see how Christians in our own city have been helping others in need. I wonder if *our* call now is to get more involved in serving in this personal and practical, *sacrificial*, way – something that needs our attention and reflection, at home and together.

In the meantime, keep safe and stay well.

Adrian

Prayers continue....

Although our buildings are closed, our prayers continue. Our Ministry Team pray regularly for the church and for all its congregation members, as well as for the wider church family and the local community. Prayer is God's gift to us, and releases his power into situations and people's lives in ways that are often beyond our understanding or imagining.

If you would like to be prayed for, or have on your heart someone ill or in need, then do please let us know. In the first instance contact Adrian or Matthew in confidence. We will ask if you would like a name added to the prayer requests on the newsletter or to our 'continuing prayer list', or if you would prefer not to share your request more widely.

We will pray alongside you for two weeks and look expectantly for God at work. And of course, do pray yourselves—God is listening!

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.

Ray Wood It is with great sadness that I have to tell you our friend Ray Wood died peacefully at Welford Court earlier in the week. Ray played such an active and cheerful role in church life that he was well known to many, and a great source of encouragement too. He will be very fondly remembered. Our thoughts and prayers are with his children Sue and Dave, and with their wider family. Ray's funeral will be on Wednesday 29th July, and it is hoped that the hearse will stop by outside St Mary's at around 9.30am for a prayer and a final goodbye from the church.

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**.

MALAWI - At this time when Leicester is in lockdown again it may be easy to become focused on our own immediate situation. In your prayers, please take time to remember the people of South America, the Middle East and Africa as cases of Covid-19 start to soar in all three areas. This was brought home to me when I spoke to a doctor friend of mine in Johannesburg (South Africa) and realised that they reported in excess of 65000 cases in seven days. Malawi too is starting to see increasing numbers of infections with 575 cases in the last but one week alone. Thank you. *Fiona*

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.

Leicester Lockdown and reopening Churches: ***we need your views.***

As you'll know, our 'local lockdown' in Leicester has been reviewed by the Government And we have another two weeks (at least) before we can follow the rest of the country and ease some restrictions. Our church buildings therefore remain closed and we must continue with worship, prayer and other aspects of our church life in other ways.

At some point though we *will* be re-opening our buildings and re-starting worship together! To help us prepare we would like your views through our questionnaire, circulated last week and still available from the website or directly from Adrian.

The PCCs want to know what *you* think is the best way ahead at this point, so please do complete and return a questionnaire – and many thanks to everyone who has already done so. Full details are in the notes that come with the questions.

Most importantly please continue to pray for our life together as a church and as a benefice partnership of two parishes. A fire burns most brightly when the coals are gathered, and just now prayer is the key way for us to be ‘gathered’ and to build our fire. Please pray for each other – for a lively and hopeful Christian faith despite the wearying circumstances,. Please pray for those in need – that they will be provided for. Please pray too for the Ministry Team and the PCCs as we try to lead the churches through these times in a way that is attentive to all that God wants of us.

Adrian

To assist with the 'Returning to Public Worship' survey recently forwarded, if you prefer to send responses online instead of via the post, please click this link to be taken to the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8HWXKXG>

Collect & Reading for the Sixth Sunday of Trinity

The Collect

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Romans 8:12-25

¹²Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - ¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in

labour pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

²⁴Jesus put before the crowd another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" ²⁸He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" ²⁹But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

³⁶Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' ³⁷He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all

causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴²and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Reflection - Rev Janet Gasper

Yesterday was our 50th Wedding Anniversary. Because we were in lockdown, we were unable to celebrate in the way we had planned with a service in church and a party shared with family and friends from our years together. We rather selfishly felt very disappointed, but we know that God continually blesses our relationship, our time together and our wonderful family.

We are all aware of selfishness running alongside compassion in our hearts and because of this awareness we know that there will be tension and conflict in communities and in our world. We live with imperfections and sinfulness but we believe in a God whose love is steadfast and unchanging. For Christians, the assurance of God's presence with us in all the situations of life, comes in the person of Jesus. Our Gospel reading for today is a story Jesus told about the development of God's kingdom.

The story is only found in Matthew's gospel and perhaps reflects the difficult times his fellowship was facing. Known as The Parable of the Weeds, the story indicates that even in a Christian community there can be selfishness, but it may not be a good idea to be too hasty in judging who is falling short.

The weed in the story is 'darnel', a plant indistinguishable from wheat in the early stages of its growth. So, if the farmer starts trying to pull it out, he risks destroying some of the wheat and leaving behind the darnel. The advice is to let both grow together until the harvest and then the wheat can be harvested and the darnel burned.

The message for the church from this story is that as Christians we have to live with good and bad and look for potential. There

is a danger of thinking of ourselves as safely inside the ark, but this story challenges any such complacency. Many things surround us that act like the weeds in the story, preventing us from growing in our love of God and neighbour, but it is God and God alone who will determine the time of harvest and sort it all out.

People respond to the Gospel in many different ways, with different levels of commitment. Throughout Christian history there has been tension between those advocating rigid discipline and policies to keep the church 'pure' and those who take a more open view and believe the judgement of the sincerity of church members belongs to God. Jesus is saying we have to live with a church that includes people we don't agree with and the church must interpret the gospel for its generation.

I know I am part of a world wide church which has the courage and honesty to face issues that affect the whole of humanity – issues of authority, discipline, ecology, sexuality, gender and race and I give thanks for a God whose love looks into our hearts and sees us for who we are in his sight.

Amen.

A God so close...

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

Sometimes they are lovely, sometimes they are horrid, sometimes they seem very real, sometimes they feel fanciful, sometimes they are repetitive... sometimes they are related to the contents of a recent meal!

'They' are of course our dreams.

We all have them, and possibly kindly, the majority we can't recall!

Alongside the 'insignificant' dreams, the peoples of the ancient world took dreams far more seriously than we do. The more

'significant' dreams cross culturally were often thought about in similar ways. For the Greeks, and (say) from the historical writings of 5th century BC Herodotus, dreams consisted of literal visions which were to come...visions similar but requiring interpretation, and those involving visitations by the gods, the ghosts of famous figures, or of old friends long departed.

Epidauros in the Peloponnese in Eastern Greece holds a particular sanctuary dedicated to Asclepios son of Apollo and the 'healer god'. Folk went to the sanctuary to dream and to be visited by the god who would direct them as to their healing. (The biblical story of the Blind Man of Bethsaida has striking overtones to a similar story from this pagan place of healing.)

But back to the main theme...interestingly, the Hebrew Bible, we now call the Old Testament has very similar characteristics to the Greek concept of significant dreams and most certainly in the part of the story of Jacob set for today. (Genesis 28:10-19a)

Here Jacob is fleeing for his life because of his recent fraudulent behaviour involving Esau, and with a poor conscience he falls asleep. He dreams of a ladder, (a better translation being a staircase) and of the close proximity of God who blesses him. He suggests that both the presence of God and the holiness of the place to be called Bethel (meaning in Hebrew, House of God), were until then unknown to him.

Sometimes, and now leaving dreams aside, when things are weighing us down in whatever way like they were Jacob, paradoxically, we can forget that God is 'closer to us than we are to ourselves' , and we forget to look for him, often relying first on our own resources to get us out of 'the jam'. The secret is to try to see God in all people and in all episodes of life. Then, when things 'stack up' and are very challenging, we might just find him easier to apprehend sooner rather than later.

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. 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  **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.

Happy Golden Wedding Anniversary to Janet and Mick Gasper

My parents were married 50 years ago on 18th July 1970 at St Andrew's Church, Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton. We had planned a party to celebrate this milestone, but sadly lockdown has meant a change in plans and a very much scaled down celebration. I am so very thankful for them and wish them a wonderful day celebrating their golden wedding anniversary.

I thought this prayer was particularly appropriate.

Dear Lord, these two have been as one
Through times of trial and times of fun,
50 years as man and wife.
They've built a home, a
love, a life

Please bless them in the
times ahead
With love as strong as
when they wed.
We pray their love will
always hold,
A solid bond as good as
gold

Keep them safe, keep them
true,
Honouring and obeying
You.

(Joanne Fuchs)



Many thanks, **Amy Barnes**

Adrian adds: *and many congratulations to Janet and Mick from everyone across the churches of the benefice! We hope you enjoy the chocolates and fizz from all of us!*

Sunday Faith becoming Everyday Faith....

‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching’

Our new discussion and Bible study group began 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*

GREEN CHRISTIAN GROUP The South Leicester Christian Partnership have let us know that a new Green Christian Group is being set up in Leicester. Details of the organisation can be found at <https://www.greenchristian.org.uk>. Anyone interested should contact Richard Pickering leicestercity@greenchristian.org.uk

CARE HOME STAFF APPEAL-UPDATE

Sincere thanks to all who kindly donated to the Knighton care staff appeal. We raised in excess of £2400 with donations from parishioners and community alike. We will be distributing £200 each to 12 care homes in the Benefice & ward this week. Particular thanks to St Guthlac's PCC and Cllr March who have been incredibly helpful with the administrative processes. Cllr March has liaised with each of the care homes who have been really touched by the church community's gesture of gratitude which has meant a lot at this particularly challenging time.

TOGETHER in HOPE #togetherInHope

Together In Hope (TIH) is a new project set up by the Diocese of Leicester, the University of Leicester and Leicester City Football Club; it has widespread support from leaders and individuals across sports, business, arts, education, charity, faith and community organisations. Its prime aims are to remind us about the many good news stories that come out of our city and its life and to help communities across the diocese explore the twin themes of togetherness and hope during the pandemic and its aftermath.

The Cathedral will be launching a **Together In Hope** virtual message board, collecting and sharing messages of hope and all churches are being invited to explore with their local communities how best to nurture hope and work together for the common good, under the **Together In Hope** banner over the coming months.

Look out for news of more activities in the coming weeks and get in touch with Adrian if you have ideas about what we could do as a church to help draw our part of the city together in hope.

"Images of Knighton"

Entries Wanted
for
2021 Calendar
Competition



Have you got a photographic eye, or can you paint, draw, create (any medium) an image of Knighton?

Adult and under 18s categories

The panel of judges is made up of a local councillor, artists, photographer & Vicar

Free calendars to successful entrants

Please send high quality original jpeg images by -

Monday 14th September

to spireappeal@gmail.com

Queries to Rev. Gough-07754961997



St Mary's Knighton Spire Appeal

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