

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS

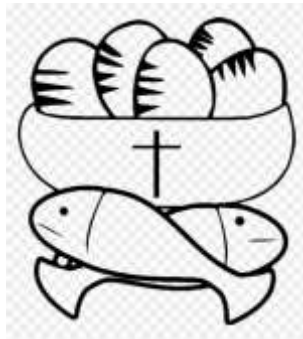


Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

<http://www.stguthlac-knighton.co.uk/>

Sunday 2 August 2020

Eighth 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?

Gladness and Generosity

*“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together **with glad and sincere hearts**, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2.46-47)*

When the first Christians began meeting together as the first ‘church’ they developed a pattern of life described for us by Luke in Acts chapter 2, verses 42-47, and which we might say is characterised by ten ‘holy habits’. I’ve been reflecting on each of them and what they might have to say to us about the shape of the church on ‘the other side’ of our pandemic lockdown.

The eighth ‘holy habit’ is meeting and eating together “*with glad and sincere hearts*”, or as another translation has it ‘**with glad and generous hearts.**’

The church was born in gladness; gladness for what God had done through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and gladness at the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. The first Christians were glad everywhere; at home, in the temple and out on the streets. It was gladness that was more than a fleeting feeling, but was rooted in a profound joy at the knowledge that God is good, strong and active, and that the way of Jesus is the Way of Life for everyone.

Gladness will find a natural expression in celebration but can also be a light shining brightly in the darkest of times. It is not that gladness prevents us from seeing or feeling suffering; rather that it reflects and nourishes faith in the God who can draw good things from evil times and who never gives up on us. Luke also notes that the first church embodied the extravagant Generosity that is at the heart of God’s own character. In the face of avarice and greed all around, Christians are called to

reflect the grace we have received from God by being generous with all we are and have, not just our money.

Gladness and generosity go together in this Holy Habit because they are inextricably linked; giving gives rise to a cheerful nature, and joy naturally wants to lift others too.

I wonder if our neighbours in Knighton see us, the church on their corner, as people who are both glad and generous? Do our celebration and sharing provoke outsiders to take a second look at our faith and life?

Some celebrations we can plan into our life together, such as Christmas, but perhaps we also need to discover other occasions to celebrate both in the church and community (achievements, anniversaries, working together etc). We can organise our generous giving of money, to the church and to charities, but perhaps we also need to discover ways to share our time, our homes, our possessions more freely, and to be less afraid of what we might lose in the process.

The habit of gladness and generosity comes with real challenges for us. Perhaps we should be praying now for the profound change of heart in us that will make them a natural expression of a deep trust in a God of joy, hopefulness and self-giving.

In the meantime, keep safe and stay well.

Adrian

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

Brian Small: Last week we heard from his family that Brian Small had died, just six weeks after his wife Veronica. Brian, like Veronica, was a real fixture of the life of St Mary's and his contribution over the years was inestimable - he was a member of the PCC until just two years ago and his wise and perceptive counsel, mixed with a hint of mischief, was valued by all the recent vicars.

Brian had been unwell for a long time but seemed to have been successfully adjusting to a different life after a move to a local care home. After a short spell in hospital, Brian died at home surrounded by his family, just as he had wanted. Please remember Helen, Stephen and Judith in your prayers this week. Brian's funeral will be on Friday 14th August and we hope to hold a joint service of thanksgiving for him and Veronica in October.

Adrian

Thank you to the thirty or so people who gathered , appropriately distanced, outside St Mary's on Wednesday morning as the hearse carrying Ray Wood's coffin to his funeral paused outside the building and community he loved.

As we prayed together for the first time in many weeks, it seemed appropriate that it should have been Ray who had brought us together.

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 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. Thank you. *Fiona*

The Leicester Lockdown - what are the implications for churches now?

The news is good! Following the Government review this week many of the restrictions on Leicester are to be eased, and for us the prospect of moving towards re-opening our churches is once again realistic. Our PCC has already met and agreed the steps we need to take and we know what we need to do to prepare.

Thank you for all your responses to our questionnaire about re-opening. Your feedback has indicated that the majority of our congregation favour a gradual re-opening, with services from September at the earliest. Through August therefore we will continue to make preparations and adaptations in the building, as well as thinking ahead to an autumn of socially distanced worship - Harvest Festival will be our first challenge! We are also scheduled to have our Annual Meeting in the autumn but details from the Diocese of how we should do this are still sketchy.

No doubt this will be a strange autumn, just as we have had a uniquely difficult and sobering spring and summertime. Our Christian forebears knew the impact of suffering, isolation and persecution (as do Christians in other parts of the world today) so we are not alone.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith..... Consider himso that you will not grow weary and lose heart. “ (Hebrews 12.1-3)

Adrian

Collect & Reading for the Eighth Sunday of Trinity

The Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern
both our hearts and bodies
in the ways of your laws
and the works of your commandments;
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

Romans 9:1-5

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit – ²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever.
Amen.

Matthew 14:13-21

¹³When Jesus heard that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and

he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.'

¹⁶Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' ¹⁷They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' ¹⁸And he said, 'Bring them here to me.'

¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Signposts and Pebbles *The Revd Adrian Jones*

Reflection on Matthew 14.13-21

Did you know that the clothes fashion trend for Summer 2020 is "the capsule wardrobe"ⁱ? Apparently "we are all looking for clothes that will have a lasting impact" and we have "a focus on classic legacy buys rather than whimsical and artistic creations." Although I have never claimed to be 'on trend' myself, I'm interested to know that the buzzwords for fashion week in September are "realistic" and "wearability", as this is what I've always looked for in my clothes!

Scepticism about miracles, even amongst Christians, has been in fashion for quite a while – the trend has been to dismiss these 'violations of the laws of nature' as either fabrications or illusions. It is easy for those who exalt one type of logical thinking above all other routes to understanding, to explain away the miracles we read about in the Gospels because they don't fit the way that they see the world. But *that* is precisely the

point of the miracles they are events that don't fit our usual expectations.

And we mustn't fall into the temptation of thinking that people of previous generations were simpler or more gullible than we sophisticated modern types. The Gospel writers and the readers of previous centuries knew exactly what the miracle stories of Jesus implied and how extraordinary they are. It might help us if we thought of them first as **signposts**, and then as **pebbles**....

This particular miracle story – the feeding of the five thousand – features in all four of the gospels. So we can assume that it has something very important to tell us. In Matthew it follows on from the scepticism of the folk in Nazareth when they hear Jesus teaching, and the alarm of Herod the tetrarch as he fears John the Baptist is back from the dead – this miracle acts as **a signpost** to point us dramatically to who Jesus really is. Feeding more than five thousand people with so little food demonstrates that, beyond the physical world which has been so disturbed by this miracle, Jesus is the source of everything we truly need for life to be satisfying and full. He can meet all our deepest human needs, with so little from a human point of view – just himself.

The miracle also acts as **a pebble** just like a stone thrown into water, it causes disturbance and ripples. The miracle disturbs our rational logic, our assumptions that we know how the world works, that we know what is and what isn't possible, and that our knowledge gives us the control.

The ripples from this pebble disturb our calm sense that we know what *God* must be like too. What happens as the bread and fish are shared is preposterous, irrational, nonsensical, but it's also outrageously generous, inclusive and compassionate. The miracle is meant to disturb us and give us a fuller view of what God is doing in the world through Jesus and what the Kingdom of God is like.

I find it hard to believe that last year the people of the UK spent nearly £61 billion on clothingⁱⁱ – it's staggering isn't it? The miracles of Jesus are staggering too, because they point to the reality of who Jesus is and they disturb our comfortable view of the world and of God. The good news is that Jesus doesn't need you to be fashionable He will do the remodelling if you let him.

Amen.

i <https://www.whowhatwear.co.uk/spring-summer-fashion-trends-2020>

ii <https://www.statista.com>

Wrestling Jacob

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

'Come, O thou traveller unknown' is a wonderful hymn by Charles Wesley based on the Old Testament text for today taken from Genesis 32. The tune, if memory serves, is called 'Wrestling Jacob' sung to this hymn which is well worth looking up and thinking about. After all, Charles Wesley is probably one of the best hymn writers the world has ever known.

The story on which the hymn is based is of Jacob wrestling throughout the night with 'a man' who is to all intents and purposes God Himself. On leaving the place Jacob calls it Peniel, meaning in Hebrew 'the face of God.'

The passage is a 'preacher's paradise', as it offers so much to tease out from a small number of verses. But for now, and speaking personally, the passage describing Jacob wrestling with God for what is meant to mean a significant period ending in God blessing Jacob, gives me great hope.

I have never found God easy to deal with.

I always seem to have honestly 'wrestled' with him for any number of reasons, not least as a theologian working from an academic standpoint. But this struggle, and as the Hebrew suggests, it is a fairly intimate, personal one, and one which yields not anger from God but a divine blessing, gives me, and I

hope others, an encouragement to struggle if necessary in our understanding of the divine.

My own natural questioning 'yes but' attitude is much more here than simply 'allowed', but in some sense encouraged. Jacob shows me that to struggle is actually fine and a source of blessing. Paradoxically however, I find that the selective theologically 'easy answer' in today's Church is often preferred to the 'difficult question' which might benefit from more wrestling with. Biblical criticism, as one amongst many other theological disciplines, has for a fair while now suffered in this way.

So, far from being negative here, the story suggests that all of 'us Jacobs' who have a struggling, intimate, personal relationship with God should actually rejoice in that. We should certainly not be put off or be tempted to give up, but rejoice in the struggle and receive God's enduring blessing into the future.

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.

KNIGHTON BENEFICE MAGAZINE—The July/August edition of the Magazine is now available and has been sent out by email. Those of you who normally receive our church information by post should receive your copy very soon—please bear with us as we print and post! The magazine can also be seen on the church website. Many thanks to Nigel Siesage and all the contributors for another excellent issue.

HELP LOCAL SOMALI CHILDREN?

With the pandemic forcing school closure, those whose families do not have English as a first language are most at risk of falling behind in their learning. I have been approached by our nearby Somali community asking for help for primary and secondary aged children to assist with tutoring, either online or, when appropriate, in person. If you have any subject, or English language, skills that you may wish to share, please do think about whether you could spare an hour a week or fortnight, thanks.

For more details please contact Matthew or Somali Parents Association directly- Abdikayf Farah 07853290875 or info@socopa.org.uk

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.

FOR THE NEWSLETTER Please send material to be included in the next newsletter by **Thursday 10pm** to administrator@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk **This will be a double issue with no newsletter on Sunday 16th August.**

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.

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**



St Mary's Knighton Spire Appeal

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

CONTACT DETAILS

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Curate: Revd Matthew Gough

revgough@gmail.com 07754 961997

Churchwardens:

David Hunt

Tina Jarvis

churchwardens@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk

PLANNED GIVING SCHEME

Regular giving is an integral part of our church life supporting our day to day costs, ministry and mission. A good way to achieve this is through a weekly envelope or a monthly bank standing order as part of our Planned Giving Scheme. Scheme details can be obtained David Hunt. If you are a taxpayer and gift aid your giving, our church can claim an additional 25%.

During the current Coronavirus pandemic please put aside your weekly offerings ready to bring to church when things return to something like normal. The costs of the church are largely unchanged even though we cannot meet, so your regular giving is extremely important to our collective 'health' and the mission of God here.