

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

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



Sunday 15 November 2020
Second Sunday before Advent

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.

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 or member of the Ministry Team.

Father Michael has had a fall at home, and has fractured several bones in his body. He's now transferred from the Royal to Nottingham, and Tom O'Connell (my informant) says 'Fr. Michael Moore is One of The Best. Lets All and Others get on Our Knees for Him. Orabis pro Nobis' (Pray for us); *Margaret*

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

Please remember in your prayers the people of Beirut and all Aid Workers and Charities working in the capital and throughout Lebanon. 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.

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**.

“Keep on keeping on!”

As we experience the second week of our new national lockdown it may feel as if we have to ‘dig deep’ to find the personal strength to stay positive and persevere with the precautions and restrictions we are urged to live by.

I have been encouraged by this picture, which originated from the Methodist Circuit in Sheffield:



The message is important; we need more than rules to find our way together through this pandemic- we need *grace*, towards ourselves and each other. ‘Grace’ can be defined as the undeserved and unconditional love of God, offered to us freely whoever we are. God’s love doesn’t depend on our worthiness (none of us are good enough to warrant it), or our effort (we can’t achieve it by our own work), or our religion (God’s concern is our heart not how well we keep to orthodox belief and practice). God’s love comes without strings – this is *grace*, and this is what we too are called to show to our neighbours and ourselves.

While we and our neighbours may have most of the practical things that we need, even in a lockdown, loving others means that we do need to add a generous measure of kindness and understanding to our relationships and conversations during these challenging times.

Everyone's experience of these difficult months has been different; it has been shaped by the circumstances of family and work, by our physical condition, by our personality and character, by opportunity or lack of it, and by so many more factors. Now more than ever, is the time to listen to our stories and to show grace to each other – the last thing anyone needs is judging, gossip and criticism for instance. We need to build each other up through unconditional loving care – the grace that God has already shown to us.

And, importantly, we need to show grace to *ourselves*. This is not a good time to judge ourselves harshly if we find ordinary tasks difficult, nor if we find ourselves struggling with feelings and weariness. We are living through difficult times and it is 'normal' for life to feel difficult and much more like hard work.

Can I encourage you to be kind to yourself as well as to others? To make a few more allowances for yourself when you are short-tempered, sad, fed up, worn out or worn down? Can I also encourage you to be *thankful* for every opportunity you have to show grace to other and to receive grace yourselves?

In this way, despite the lockdown, we will follow Jesus when he says 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.

Yours in friendship and Christ's service,

Adrian

Weekly Worship during the lockdown

During the new lockdown our church buildings must remain closed for worship together, but that doesn't mean that our worship must stop! As you can read elsewhere, our online Virtual Worship and Compline will continue through the lockdown. At St Guthlac's the PCC have decided that our responsibility to care for each other and to ensure safety during a time of rising infection, means our smaller space should not open for individual prayer. However, the larger space at St

Mary's means that the building can open for individual private prayer, each Sunday morning from 9.45am to 11.15am.

As before we will need to wear masks and keep to social distancing guidelines in church, and of course we can't have any structured or shared worship – but God will still be present and will still meet us there. Do drop in at any point to pray, and leave when you are ready.

Adrian

ADVENT 4 ALL

4 Sundays dwelling in the seasonal rhythm of Advent. 7-8pm phone in or by Zoom. Hosted by Matthew and the Living Waters Group for breakout discussions. Join us as we explore together how to live well in the 'now' and to prepare for the 'not yet'. To show interest and get joining details email revgough@gmail.com, or phone/ text 07754961997

Collect & Readings **for the Second Sunday before Advent**

The Collect

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son was revealed
to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope,
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory
we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;
where he is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

First Reading: Zephaniah 1.7, 12-18

Psalms 90.1-8(9-11)12

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

Matthew 25.14-30

Jesus said to his disciples, ¹⁴“The kingdom of heaven is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, “Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.” ²¹His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, “Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.” ²³His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, “Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.” ²⁶But his master replied, “You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have

invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“There can be no religion without adventure”

– reflection on Matthew 25.14-30, Rev Adrian Jones

This is a familiar parable for many of us, “The Parable of the Talents”, and at one level there is a straightforward understanding of what it might be teaching us: God gives us all different gifts and we are called to exercise them in his service, however much or little we think we have.

When we also remember though, that Jesus gives us parables to prompt questions, to disturb as much as encourage, and to get us thinking and talking (even arguing) about God and ourselves, then we must also look for the buried treasure here as well as all that is more obvious.

Even before this we ought to remember the *context* of the parable and what Jesus is talking about when he gives us this story. At the start of Matthew chapter 25 Jesus says “*At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like....*” so we can see that our parable is about God’s Kingdom. Then what about “*at that time....*” ? Again if we read back in Matthew, we see that this whole section is about ‘the end times’ when Jesus will return in triumph and judgement. We can see then that our parable carries overtones of preparation and warning as well as encouragement to keep the faith through hardship.

Looking at the parable itself, a good place to start is with the awkward questions that it raises for us, such as:

- If the rich man gave out his money to the servants “each according to their ability” then surely he already knew what the last servant would do with his one bag?
- Equally, the first two servants only did what the master had expected of them... so did they deserve a reward?
- The Master was known to be a ‘hard man’, taking what he hadn’t worked for and perhaps had no right to take.... does Jesus want us to see *God* like this?
- The third servant was scared of the Master, and the rich man’s response to him suggests he was right to be! Is Jesus saying we should base what we do on the *fear* of God’s response?

There is a lot we could discuss together about such questions, and that of course is what Jesus intended! I believe we learn best about God and ourselves when we do it together. Given our current need for brevity however, let me just add a few thoughts.

As this parable comes within a larger passage about the coming end times and judgement, it may be fair to see it as carrying some warning about our personal responsibility for what we do with our own ‘bags of gold’ – but Jesus consistently talks about the *love* of God and his *acceptance* of us, despite our flaws and mistakes.... so it may be more helpful to see the Master of the parable as a *contrast* to God.

Earthly ‘masters’ are likely, as the parable suggests, to take whatever they can, from wherever and whosoever they can – one danger of ‘the end times’ is that we may be lured into going along with this sort of behaviour, even into sharing it’s rewards. Lastly, although the Master gives according to ability there is no sense in the Gospels that God holds back on his generosity – quite the opposite! Jesus often says ‘*How much more will God....*’ and St Paul’s expectation is that God ‘*is able to do*

immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine'. God it seems, gives to us without such limits as our ability.

One commentator, William Barclay, thinks that this parable tells us "there can be no religion without adventure". Can we dare to believe that being adventurous, even risky, with all the blessings and good things that God gives us is the way to live in his Kingdom? Perhaps the way of Jesus is to put aside our human security and to throw everything in with God.

Amen.

The Parable of the Talents

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

The Gospel Reading set for this Sunday is amongst the most abused texts in the New Testament.

Contrary to what might be modelled by some best-selling American Evangelists, the parable, which simply uses wealth as an image, does not condone a drive to economic prosperity. The mistake is exaggerated by the awful NIV translation of the Greek word 'talanta' (meaning 'talents') as 'bags of gold'...very poor indeed.

The mistranslation skews the whole meaning of the parable in a way Jesus would never have condoned.

Instead, the parable challenges us to use all our God-given talents or 'gifts' for the sake of the Kingdom no matter how many we have.

It is also worth noting that the parable is set, with others, in a discourse we call eschatological, where Jesus instructs his disciples to endure through difficult times, living also in anticipation of the Lord's return, a feature found in the Creeds we call the Parousia.

As in all the collection of parables in Matthew 24 and 25, it exemplifies the certainty of the Lord's coming, and amidst a

constant readiness, how the disciples are to live in the meantime.

So, the Parable of the Faithful and Wise Slave; the Parable of the Ten Maidens also carry this flavour of imminent return.

In the Lucan version of today's parable, ten slaves receive a small amount and the same amount each, to accomplish the Master's business. Here in Matthew's redacted version, there are only three servants who are given 'each to his ability' (25:15) although in monetary terms the amounts given to each are fantastically huge, again revealing what is only symbolic in the use of wealth in the story.

We may applaud the use of what has been given to the first two slaves, but the parable suggests the third is being punished for being protective of his mediocrity.

In this I do feel a bit sorry for this third slave especially as, as part of his punishment, what he has is taken away and given to the one who has the most...rubbing salt into the wound indeed!

I know from experience that, those of us who feel we have comparatively little to offer, don't want to be exposed as seemingly meagre compared with others who seem to have much more in the 'talent stakes' and who have the confidence to use them and show them off.

When I was a monk, the Superior of the Community didn't sing the Offices or the Mass, so that, when as Precentor, I asked him why, he gently and kindly said that in his role he had enough to do.

I said that on the following Saturday and at Evensong, there were to be a lot of guests visiting the Community, and as at that moment, and very unusually, there was only me to sing. He very reluctantly agreed to join me. Well...at the Evensong, he opened his mouth, and by the end of the Psalmody, I wondered why I bothered to sing at all!...his singing was absolutely beautiful and just perfect for Plainsong.

This shows a curious twist to the parable in that he didn't want to put others off trying to sing by exposing one of his many extraordinary talents, which by comparison, was so much better than any of us 'mere mortals'!

But the exceptions, such as this, still prove the rule.

We are each called to use the talents we have, the amount we have or the quality of same in our own perception is unimportant.

We are called to use 'them' or 'it' faithfully in this time of the Church, as we await whatever we consider the Parousia to be.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Thank you to those who have already submitted their order. We are selling out, so please place your order as soon as possible. If you have not got an order form, just phone your order through to Anne & David Hunt.

We have a few items remaining these are:

Christmas Cakes

Christmas Orange Marmalade Large and Medium

Orange and Ginger Marmalade Medium

Single hyacinth bulb in a bowl

Apple Chutney Large and Medium

Plum & Cinnamon and Festive Ginger Fruit Cordial

Christmas Wreaths

Festive Face Masks

Wrapping Paper 3, 4 and 5 metres

MAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS GO FURTHER.

For those of you who are planning to write your Christmas cards during lockdown, we would like to let you know that we will, as in previous years, be accepting donations to Bishop Christopher's Malawi charity instead of exchanging Christmas cards with one another. Details of how to donate will follow in a few weeks. Thank you

ST GUTHLAC'S AGM ELECTIONS

Many thanks to Tina Jarvis and David Hunt, who do such a great job as our Churchwardens and were willing to stand for election again at the recent AGM. They were duly elected. Thanks also to Jean Gabbar, Jane Wright and Chris Bullough who were re-elected to the PCC and to Fiona Wingate, who will continue to serve as a representative on the Deanery Synod for a further term. If you would like a copy of the AGM brochure or AGM minutes, please let me know. Lesley Meakin (PCC secretary).

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Gil Parsons - Many thanks to everyone who stood outside St Mary's last Monday to pay their respects to Gil Parsons as the hearse called by. Ondre and the family were very touched by your presence on behalf of the whole church and the many who would have been with us for the funeral under normal circumstances. Also very moving was the special version of 'Abide with me', recorded separately and then edited together, by some past and present members of St Mary's choir and the Cecilian Singers which was played as part of the service. In addition to the family tribute, Margaret Bonney spoke about Gil's love of music and singing, and we heard a 1994 recording of the Cecilian Singers, including Gil, singing 'Sing Joyfully'. Despite the restrictions it was a moving and fond farewell.
Adrian

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.

Each week we will now usually upload a recording of the Sunday service from St Mary's or St Guthlac's onto the Knighton Benefice You Tube channel. This should happen by 1pm each Sunday. Please go direct to

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChYDSfNmIB2Zamsaz_EdZSq?
or via the website or Facebook page.

Virtual Compline/ Night Prayer at 8pm on a Wednesday.

You can join by just phoning up and inputting the code or using 'Zoom' online. 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 with its sister faith CONNECTIONS

Don't forget to visit the St. Guthlac's Facebook page and website

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

Please note that this is a new address with an "s" after "http" to denote it is secure connection. If you don't put the "s" in you will still arrive at the website, but your browser may indicate that the site is "not secure".

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



2020 Charity Winter Gardens



Let's celebrate our communities and support our local charities at a time they need it most.

Taking part is easy and it's open to everyone



1. **Get creative & decorate** your house, window, front garden or office



2. **Choose a local charity** to support at oldmanandsons.co.uk/charity-winter-gardens



3. **Add your charity QR Code** to your display



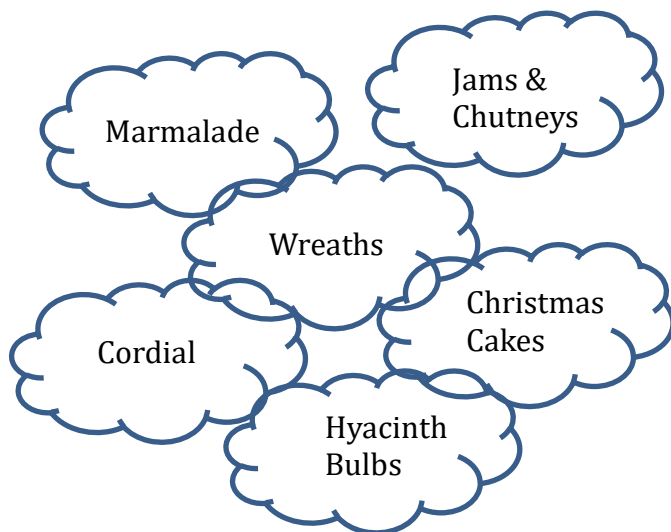
4. Passers by can donate to your chosen charity by **scanning the code**

Find out more at
oldmanandsons.co.uk/charity-winter-gardens



Organised by: **OLDMAN AND SONS**
THERAPEUTIC GARDENERS

St Guthlac's Virtual Christmas Fayre Home-made Christmas Gifts



Although St Guthlac's won't be able to hold a Fayre this year, we are pleased to be able to offer some of our popular makes and bakes..... **the order line is now open!**

If you would like a copy of the catalogue please email fayre@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk or phone David Hunt for a paper copy.

There is a limited supply of goods so orders will be dealt with on a first come first served basis. **PLEASE SEE p11 FOR ITEMS WHICH ARE STILL AVAILABLE.**

Methods of payment and receipt of goods are detailed on the catalogue. Completed orders will be available from December 6th.