

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

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



Sunday 6 December 2020
Second Sunday of Advent

ADVENT

(On a theme by Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Look how long
the tired world waited,
locked in its lonely cell,
guilty as a prisoner.

As you can imagine,
it sang and whistled in the dark.
It hoped. It paced and puttered about,
tidying its little piles of inconsequence.

It wept from the weight of ennui
draped like shackles on its wrists.
It raged and wailed against the walls
of its own plight.

But there was nothing
the world could do
to find its freedom.
The door was shut tight.

It could only be opened
from the outside.
Who could believe the latch
would be turned by the flower
of a newborn hand?

*Pamela Cranston © 2019. Pamela Cranston, Searching for
Nova Albion, (Wipf & Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR), 2019.*

SUNDAY WORSHIP DURING THE PANDEMIC

As we come out of lockdown once more, you are welcome to join us for worship on Sunday mornings at 10.30am as usual. Sunday services will usually be a celebration of the Eucharist, apart from the fourth Sunday when we have Morning Prayer (in church) and Church Club (online).

Next services:

Sunday 13th December (Advent 3) – Communion Service

Sunday 20th December (Advent 4) – Communion Service

BOOKING SYSTEM

In order to maintain social distancing, we have to limit the number of people who can attend each service; our current calculation is that we can seat a maximum of 19 individuals, small households or ‘bubbles’ safely at any one time. This is sadly very limiting. Consequently, we need to use a booking system.

If you would like to attend, either service you need to contact Tina to book a place.

THE COMMUNION SERVICE

Before the service

- Please arrive by 10.25 to allow time to direct you to your seat.
- When you arrive, you may have to queue for a while - please maintain a distance of 2m from others.
- Please wear a face covering as you queue and all the time you are in the church - we have some extras for those who cannot obtain their own.

- You will be welcomed and asked to sanitise your hands.
- The steward will ask you to give or check your contact details. The Steward only will write these down. These details will only be shared in the unlikely event that anyone develops symptoms. This is to protect everyone.
- You will be directed to a seat. Please sit only in this place as we need to maintain distances and reduce movement.
- Please note there are no toilets available.

The service

- You will find a communion booklet or service sheet and a book (OCOFOL) with the day's readings and prayers on your chair.
- A member of the Benefice Team will lead the service.
- The choir is still not able to lead us in worship and we can't sing any hymns. Yolanda will be playing the organ.

The sharing of the bread or blessing

- Great care will be taken to protect the safety of the congregation. Only the priest will handle the elements and vessels, and then only after sanitising their hands. There will be no assistant. The wafers for the congregation will be covered while the priest consecrates them.
- After the priest takes his/her wine and priest's wafer, he/she will put on a mask and sanitise hands again. Only then will the small individual wafers be uncovered and given to the congregation. Only wafers will be offered, not wine. At the distribution, Holy Communion will be administered in silence.
- Please stay in your seats the celebrant will come out to you in turn.

- If you wish to receive the bread, please hold out your hands. The priest will 'drop' the wafer into the outstretched hands, taking care not to touch them.
- There is no obligation to take the bread. If you wish to receive a blessing, please hold up your service booklet. If you prefer to pray quietly and not to receive either please fold your arms.

After the service

- Leave your service sheet and book on your chair.
- Please keep your distance from others as you leave and do not linger in the building - sadly we can't offer refreshments.
- If you wish to leave a donation, please put it in the small box provided.
- You will be asked to sanitise your hands as you leave.

When we have all gone, the church building will remain unused for 72 hours to eliminate any virus.

If you should feel unwell with any of the symptoms of coronavirus in the two weeks following the service, as well as seeking medical advice, please leave a message with Adrian or Matthew.

ADVENT 2020

Advent Meditations for Wednesdays:

Advent this year sees another opportunity in the benefice to do a little meditative study. On each Wednesday evening members of the Ministry Team will be looking at one of the ancient Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and Light, for half an hour before Wednesday online Compline. Reflections will also be available on our websites and in the newsletters for further study at leisure and/or in preparation for Wednesdays. Our very complementary team will bring their own ways of approaching these themes...we hope you enjoy the reflections.

2nd December: **Hope** – the Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

9th December: **Peace** – the Revd Janet Gasper

16th December: **Joy** – the Revd Adrian Jones

23rd December: **Love & Light** – Fiona Wingate, Reader

The zoom log in details for this course can be found in 'Worship Information' on page 16.

LIVING IN HOPE-YORK ADVENT COURSE

4 Advent Sundays, Starting 29th November 7-8pm. Getting to the heart of Advent's message, how we live our lives in preparation for the return of Christ. We will focus each week on the York Course themes of Living well, Dying well, & and the afterlife (Hell? Heaven?). The big questions we all ask in an enquiring, supportive space, hosted by our Living Waters group. £2 suggested donation for the course book. You can join in over the phone or on Zoom. Contact Matthew to secure a place and a booklet and the joining details.

Email: revgough@gmail.com, or phone/ text 07754961997

Collect & Readings for the Second Sunday of Advent

The Collect

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power
and come among us,
and with great might succour us;
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness
we are grievously hindered
in running the race that is set before us,
your bountiful grace and mercy
may speedily help and deliver us;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.
Amen

First Reading: Isaiah 40.1-11

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

⁶A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers,

the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!' ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalm 85.1-2, 8-13

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3.8-15a

Mark 1.1-8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight"', ⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

The Advent of the Prophets

Rev Matthew Gough

One of my most vivid memories growing up in the 1980s was the Protect & Survive public broadcasting films. Do you remember the serious voice and the brown leaflets which came through every household door letting you know how to build an air raid shelter in the event of a nuclear attack. In 1986 it seemed very real that Russia and America may start a nuclear war and we'd be obliterated with our US air bases in Britain.

My teachers told me that during the Cuban Missile Crisis, they really felt that the standoff in 1962 would bring the world to an end. Or the time of 9/11 we often see that as a watershed whereby terrorism and civilisation came under threat. Hanging over us the last few decades has been the catastrophe of global warming. Extinction rebellion. Now we are living through a pandemic threatening, lives, livelihoods and life as we know it. I presume the threat of the end was true in the cold war of 1950/60s and the second and first world war militarism, fascism and communism. So bear this in mind when we hear the words of Mark and Isaiah this morning. There is a circularity.

It is at this point we mark Advent. A time of looking forward to the Christ to come again but also the memory of Christ coming to earth. The past and future hope.

Isaiah written 600 years before the birth of Christ, points to a time of deliverance. A hope both in the messiah to come but also to encourage the Israelites in exile of their immediate deliverance from Babylonian captivity. And then Mark writing after the death of Christ at the time of the Roman occupation when the Temple of Jerusalem is under siege and attack, points to the Christ who came and the hope he promised.

John the Baptist is portrayed as both the last of the old prophets and the first of the prophets to witness the messiah Jesus Christ-the new hope made flesh. 'Prepare a way'-pointing to the Christ who was amongst them and back to God's deliverance promises fulfilled. Still at Advent there is also the looking forward to a future hope to be fulfilled.

And so here we are in captive to Covid. Some of us without hope. Perhaps the virus is not your fear. Perhaps it is your family. Perhaps it is money. Perhaps it is nothing to do with the virus at all. Perhaps you are lonely. Or suffering a broken heart? Mourning the loss of a loved one? Perhaps there is something in life broken or not quite right?

Jesus comes as God on earth fulfilling his promises. God is faithful. We will be delivered. The life we have is not the end of the story. There will come a time when mourning is no more. He will wipe away every tear. We have been here before as a people We will be here again. One day God's final return to judge the world is a promise to end all suffering with a new heaven and a new earth. Mark opens with the 'good news'. What is the good news? Is it good news today?

Firstly, with the Isiah Israelites in captivity, the promise of return was only good news to those who knew they were exiles in captivity. 150 years later than the exile from Jerusalem, did the generation pine for home? Did the 1st century audience in Mark's gospel need a greater hope beyond the Roman occupation? Do we see that we are aliens in a strange land? Covid has forced new ways upon us all. Can we be like John the Baptist prepare the way for others to see that there is hope?

Advent has a two fold hope. Good news that God walked amongst in the flesh. We are not alone. And that Christ will come again. My new advent stole has the scripture from Matthew 16-'against the church the gates of Hades will not

prevail'. We are Christ's church, we have a truth that death is not the end. Like the prophets before, we, the church now carry the light of Christ in the darkness of our time. Come Lord Jesus, come.

'Prepare the way of the Lord...'

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

The beginning of the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel set for Year B in our lectionary, is full of biblio-critical interest... which is for another time and place. But John the Baptist, the Forerunner, the expected Elijah figure is, in a spiritual way, someone we could do well with 'getting alongside'.

As the text suggests, he is 'preparing the way of the Lord' who appears 'toute suite' and so, in a real sense, John's part in the drama is over almost as quickly as it has begun. But, nonetheless vitally important to the drama itself.

We in our role of 'preparing the way of the Lord' with others, in our daily lives, are no less vital in today's Church. But how?

I'm not sure in imitating the looks and habits of the Baptist the cause would be best served!

But, getting alongside others, discerning where folk are and beginning exactly there, doing our best at being empathetic, which includes out of self giving Christian love, speaking helpful words, and doing helpful deeds...all these go a long way to 'preparing the way for our Lord and Saviour' to enter into their lives in a way which is natural, none threatening and lasting.

What I am describing above is at the heart of being pastoral, and is at the heart of pastoral ministry, both for clergy and laity. In full time priestly ministry, it used to be the case that visiting folk in their own homes or in hospital, that is, 'where they were' 'on their own turf' was the activity of each working afternoon

between lunch and Evensong at 1700hrs. Visiting congregation members soon spilled over into visiting other folk recommended by the form er. I found it a real joy, and for me a vital climbdown from those times necessarily spent in academic ivory towers.

Discerning how people ticked and how they simply 'were', one to one, the other side of the altar or the lecture podium, I found vital to my ministry, and very much a part of 'preparing the way of the Lord'.

Certainly, today the priorities of ordained ministry have changed and casual visiting, certainly by the clergy, in many places seems to have gone out of fashion, and not least because of safeguarding.

However, the questions remain...how do we each or corporately 'prepare the way of the Lord' in this pastoral way in today's Church?

How do we get alongside each other, those of our fringe and those beyond the fringe in today's Church?

How can we 'prepare the way of the Lord' as a Church and a benefice in a pastoral way in the 21st century?

A funny but true story to conclude.

In my first curacy, apart from teaching for the OU, and singing around the place, I was a massive visitor. A member of the congregation asked me to pop round to a neighbour who was notoriously an 'old grouch'! Always up for a challenge, I knocked on the door which opened and I delivered my 'spiel'.

'Hello, I am Fr Stephen from Holy Trinity...'

Before I had finished said spiel, the reply came...

'There aren't any Fathers in the Church of England!'

I noticed a sort of twinkle in his eye, so with a smile, I suggested he put the kettle on and also he should be nice to me because I was very new!

We got on famously after that.

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.

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**.

Dear Friends,

It has been awhile since we were in touch and even longer since we saw each other. I hope you and your family are keeping well and staying safe in these strange and peculiar times.

I thought you might welcome a progress report and update on the life and work of the mobile clinic in Northern Malawi.

October – December 2020

I'm glad that visits of the mobile clinic have resumed: two trips for each of October, November and December at a cost of £575 per trip. This covers one clinical officer, three nurses and one driver, medicines, others medical items and fuel. Its continuing work is crucial. With this level of personnel we are able to offer treatment as well as monitoring and preventive care for such things as high blood pressure, diabetes, malaria, dental care, community hygiene and many other things too. I had a reserve of funds so have been able to get things moving again. The first trip was 24th October.

December 2019 - October 2020

The clinic last went out on the 21st December. Unfortunately the vehicle got stuck in mud from the rains. After many long and difficult hours the team had to abandon the visit. Trips of the clinic where then paused for a while to let the worse effects of the heavy rains and flooding subside. This isn't unusual. It's an annual occurrence. When we were planning to resume – late March/April – Malawi was hit, like so many places, with the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID – 19

As of now – 23rd November - there are approx 6009 reported cases, 183 deaths and around 5443 recoveries. Almost 72,000 tests have been conducted. Coronavirus is in Malawi which has only 25 intensive care beds and seven ventilators for more than 18 million people. As reported in the British press back in April.

Thank you

Thank you for your enduring concern, awareness, support and commitment to the needs of the clinic. This is so encouraging. The work and outreach are vital to the well being of the communities we serve. It also continues to announce and ‘keep on the radar’ locally the enduring medical needs – and indeed needs in general – of these remote communities in rural Northern Malawi. Where the people can so easily be forgotten and who I describe as living right at the end of the road.

My warmest best wishes and prayers for the season of Advent; may it be redolent with expectation and hope.

Every blessing and kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christopher". The script is cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'C' and a trailing flourish.

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.

Wednesday Evening Meditative Study and Compline for Advent

Please note a change to the regular pattern of Wednesday evening Compline. From Wednesday 2nd December you are welcome to join via Zoom or to phone in from 7.30pm each week to explore the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and Light with the ministry team facilitating a discussion. Compline will follow at 8pm (but without the usual breakout discussion). Join for both or either, you are most welcome. 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

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".

CONTACT DETAILS

Vicar: Revd. Adrian Jones 0116 2704268
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Associate Priest- St Guthlac's: Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster
safpta6@gmail.com 07966 376905

Assistant Curate: Revd Matthew Gough
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Revd Aphro McCullough

Revd Janet Gasper

Reader: Fiona Wingate

Churchwardens:

David Hunt

Tina Jarvis

churchwardens@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk

Knighton Benefice Magazine: Nigel Siesage
stmaryknighton.magazine@gmail.com

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

MAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS GO FURTHER.

We are, as in previous years, accepting donations to Bishop Christopher's Malawi charity instead of exchanging Christmas cards with one another.

If you wish to donate in this way, you may do so by cheque or online transfer:

Cheques should be made payable to St. Guthlacs PCC. Please write 'Malawi' on the reverse of the cheque and post it to Jane Wright.

Bank Transfer, account name St. Guthlacs PCC,
Sort code 20-49-08, account number 53861341,
please put 'Malawi' & your name as the reference.

Names of those sending Christmas greetings in this way will be included in the newsletter nearer to Christmas, so that your greetings are passed on to the rest of the congregation.

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 from 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.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

A huge thank you to everyone involved with the Christmas Fayre 2020. This includes those who have been involved in the production and organisation but equally importantly, those who have so generously supported St Guthlac's by submitting an order. We have made the fabulous sum of £777 to support the running of the church.

St Mary's Virtual Christmas Tree Festival 2020

This time last year many people were making and decorating trees, in wonderfully imaginative ways, to display in the first ever Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary Magdalen Church. Sadly, a 'real' display is not possible this year but we would still like to recognise the event and the way in which it brought our community together.

So for 2020 we are planting a virtual Christmas Tree forest of photographs on our church website!

We have invited all our contributors to take part and would be delighted for others to join in too. To take part, just email to KnightonTrees2020@gmail.com , any time from Sat 28th November – Sat 20th December, with:

- * a photograph, drawing or painting of a tree - any shape, size or colour;
- * your name or the name of your organisation/business as you would like it displayed on the website;
- * your age if under 16 years old.

We look forward to seeing all your contributions and hope to see you all in person again, in 2021.

Best wishes - The Christmas Tree Festival Team

THE BIG CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

On **Saturday 12 December 6pm** the RSCM will be hosting a unique, participative (virtual) joint Christmas Carol Service together with the Churches Conservation Trust. They have some very special guests who will be joining them as readers and contributing to the service, including **HRH the Prince of Wales, Theresa May, Rowan Williams, and Alexander Armstrong.**

To view the service live on the RSCM YouTube channel on 12th December, click [HERE](#).

If you would like a pdf of the carol service music book to enable you to sing along then please email administrator@stguthlacknighton.co.uk

Images of Knighton 2021

Last chance to get some excellent 'Images of Knighton' Calendars for Christmas, local artists celebrating Knighton life and raising funds for Spire Project. Free postage tubes as they make great gifts. £7.50 each, or 3 for £20. Available St Mary's on Sundays, Flynn's (Londis), Knighton News, Holbrook News, Aileen Orme, Nigel Siesage or Matthew revgough@gmail.com, 07754961997

