

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

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



Sunday 31 January 2021

**Candlemas
Presentation of Christ in the Temple**

“Against the dark our Saviour’s face is bright.”

Life at the Vicarage just now is challenging – home schooling provides us all with plenty to keep us busy (and exasperated with each other), there is little time or space for peace and quiet, we have other family members who give us concern, and then there are full-time work and ordinary family chores as well. Since Christmas, I have at times felt disorientated, disorganised and depressed. Life is hard.

I don’t say that to elicit sympathy, because it’s true of so many other households too – whether they be families, couples, single folk or any combination. And in many ways we are privileged in a time of pandemic – we have a good sized house and garden, plenty of support and the prospect of vaccinations for our friends and family. It just needs to be acknowledged out loud, for all of us. Life is hard.

In the face of that darkness though, we have faith in the light. God’s purpose for us is still good, and in Christ we see most fully the extent of his care for us. This Candlemas we have the best cause for hope. *Adrian*

Candlemas by Malcolm Guite

They came, as called, according to the Law.
Though they were poor and had to keep things simple,
They moved in grace, in quietness, in awe,
For God was coming with them to His temple.
Amidst the outer court's commercial bustle
They'd waited hours, enduring shouts and shoves,
Buyers and sellers, sensing one more hustle,
Had made a killing on the two young doves.
They come at last with us to Candlemas
And keep the day the prophecies came true.
We glimpse with them, amidst our busyness,
The peace that Simeon and Anna knew.
For Candlemas still keeps His kindled light,
Against the dark our Saviour's face is bright.

Collect & Readings for Candlemas

The Collect

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son
was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

First Reading: Malachi 3.1-5

Thus says the Lord God: ¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

Psalms 24.(1-6) 7-10

Second Reading: Hebrews 2.14-18

Luke 2.22-40

When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons".

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed

to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

Candlemas, then the return to “Ordinary Time” 2021...

Revd Matthew Gough

This time last year, I had the privilege of leading the Candlemas service at St Guthlac's. The Sunday nearest to February 2nd, the time we mark as traditionally the end of Christmas. The baby Jesus is dedicated at the temple and the medieval church tradition of bringing your old candles to be melted down and replaced with new candles, new light going forth from the church. I remember well that we re-enacted Luke 2 with Anna and Simeon receiving the new-born saviour. Brenda Lee was a very convincing Anna. The children decorated glass jars which were beautiful as they held tea-light and flickered with warm yellow light on the altar.

Candlemas marks the return of Ordinary Time. What does ordinary mean anymore? It seems too strange that a year ago, we knew of this distant threat of Corona Virus in a far away country, gradually getting nearer. Soon the coverage of Italy and then Spain filled our screens with a warning that we were two weeks behind them. It was unreal and abstract as life was very ordinary in February 2020 England. Chris Whitty and Zoom were not the household names they are today with most of us having heard of neither.

I was looking forward to Ordinary Time 2021 (perhaps a bit superficially) as it would have been the first time, I get to wear my new green stole decorated in sunflowers. The sunflowers were inspired by my friend Sophie's artwork of a field of sunflowers which hang in our dining area. Sophie felt convicted by God to paint a sunflower field after seeing the infamous footage of Alan Kurdi. Who was Alan Kurdi? We probably have all seen his image. Tragically, he was the Syrian refugee three-year-old boy drowned in the Mediterranean trying to cross to the Greek island of Kos. His facedown image is a haunting

indictment on our world's failing systems and conflicts which destroy the most vulnerable.

The sunflowers are a really fitting image as they merge into one in unity and as the sunflowers follow the sun as the earth rotates around the sun, so we are reminded of our place in the light of Christ and our need to keep our eyes focused on him. Sunflowers also remind me personally of my deceased mother. Whilst walking late summer with my sister, I told her about my planned stole design, and she reminded me of our mother's love of sunflowers. As we were talking, we turned into the next field which happened to be a field full of sunflowers. We felt like this was God being with us, validating the plan, the cosmos responding in a strange and mysterious way. Or am I just being over-imaginative?

Alan Kurdi puts into perspective our fears and terrors which can be nothing compared to him and his family capsizing in the darkness of night on the Mediterranean Sea. Following the light of Christ like my sunflowers and taking the light from the temple compels us all that we must share the light and eternal hope that we have in Christ. We are struggling, many are struggling. How much harder it must be without faith. Can we share the light beyond ourselves? Be encouraged- a reminder for us and others...**We are not alone (Isaiah 43; Matt 28). Death is not the end (John 3). There is a life beyond this one in the light (Revelation 21) of love (Romans 8) in our Father's house (John 14).**

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_EdZSg? 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



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 us every week **CONNECTIONS**

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>

PRAYER

Personal

In my despair may I know your light. I cling to the truths of Romans 8 that 'nothing can separate us from the Love of God'. I turn to the hope expressed by 14th century mystic Julian of Norwich writing despite plague, war, death and uncertainty of a hope in the sureness of God-

"All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well..."

Church & Local community

We pray for all those churches who have now decided to close their doors to their buildings. We pray that congregations may be sustained, and a spiritual faith deepened and renewed despite such disruptions. We pray for those remaining open, that their decisions may be fully and carefully reached through prayer with safe practices paramount and implemented.

We thank you for the schools, teachers, staff and leaders managing to educate young minds working from their own homes with their own children and working in school buildings for those most vulnerable and whose parents are critical workers. We pray that all may be encouraged and refreshed as they now manage the certainty that schools cannot return to normal operation until March at the earliest. We name before God, those school in our area which many of our young people go to, or adults work in and which have faithfully served the community for generations and whose presence we miss in our special church services and assemblies. We pray for Sir Jonathan North, Lancaster Academy, Overdale Junior and Infants, Leicester High School, Thomas More, The Leicester Partnership, Mill Gate, Water Leys and all the Oadby schools and beyond. Heavenly Father we pray your blessing upon them all.

Weekly prayer for roads in the parish - **Stoughton Road, Toller Road and Westminster Road.**

Nation and World

We pray for wisdom and skill in the ongoing planning between our national governments and the EU in reconciling differences and barriers to enterprises and business and workers managing their daily livelihoods. We pray particularly for our fishing companies, farmers, exporter and haulage companies who have been blighted by the uncertainty and new arrangement applied since Brexit. We pray for the pharmaceutical companies and governments navigating the needs of multiple vulnerable populations. We pray for justice and righteousness to prevail in such negotiations and against selfish national self-interest.

We pray for those families most in need of God's love, food and help with education at home. We pray that none shall go hungry and those we have in our communities may be made known to all and any that can help them.

Those facing personal pain we name before our Lord -

And those who have finished their days on this earth. We thank you for their lives and pray for their families and loved ones to be comforted -

For further prayer requests which can be included in the weekly prayer list or anonymized and prayed for in private, please contact Matthew revgough@gmail.com or Jane administrator@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk

CONTACT DETAILS

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

A MESSAGE FROM JUNE PARRY

I would like to send all my best wishes to all who remember me of the clergy and the members of the congregation. I pray you will have good health and safety in your journeys. God bless you all. *June Parry*

MINI MUSICATHON ONLINE

It was disappointing that the Musicathon planned originally for the Spring and then Autumn had to be postponed. As a thank you to those generous sponsors who committed their support despite the lack of performance, some of the musicians kindly agreed to record themselves for an Online Mini Musicathon. We hope you enjoy the music as well as some of the breath-taking views of the Spire being repaired! Please visit "Knighton Benefice" You-Tube Channel or directly via the link below.
Matthew

<https://youtu.be/J7I5JQzF7jQ>

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.