

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

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



Sunday 7 February 2021

Second Sunday before Lent

A question for all of us

Friends,

This last week was designated as Children's Mental Health Week, and our local schools have been encouraging their pupils to identify and understand their feelings, as a first step towards being able to talk about those feelings and support each other.

Many of us have recognised in recent years that 'it's good to talk' and that the old attitudes of 'stiff upper lip' and 'grin and bear it', encouraging us to bottle things up, only lead to later trouble – for ourselves or inflicted on others. This is why it's now seen as so important to encourage children to learn about and talk about their feelings.

As adults we need to learn these lessons too and put them into practice – unless we can *demonstrate* to our children and grandchildren (and to each other) that our feelings and our mental health and wellbeing are critically important, then the next generation will be no better off than ourselves.

Christians have always believed that God is concerned for *all people*, and for *all of each person* – and that has to include our mental health as well as the 'spiritual' aspects of our lives and being. The mental health of our children – and indeed all of us – during this pandemic, must then be a concern for Christians.

How do we do our bit to promote wellbeing and mental health? Perhaps we can learn lessons from our children.

They more readily accept each other as they are, are slower to make long term judgements about others, have a sense of fun and playfulness that persist during difficult times, and live more fully in this particular moment, finding the wonder and joy of each day and experience.

And let's **pray** for our children and each other. I believe that prayer is one of God's gifts to us, allowing us to be part of changing the world for others. Let's *use* that gift and then perhaps this time of crisis can become a time for positive change.

Yours in friendship and Christ's service,

Adrian

Collect & Readings for Second Sunday before Lent

The Collect

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things,
now and for ever.
Amen

First Reading: Proverbs 8.1, 22-31

Psalms 104.26-37

Second Reading: Colossians 1.15-20

Gospel Reading: John 1.1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reading for Reflection: Isaiah 40:21-31

- ²¹ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
- ²² It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,

and spreads them like a tent to live in;
²³ who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.
²⁴ Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

²⁵ To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.

²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?

²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.

³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;

³¹ but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Reflection on Isaiah 40:21-31

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

Friends, please forgive me for no 'formal' sermon this week but, for the newsletter of St Guthlac's, more of a reflection, whereby I hope we can understand a little more about the Old Testament in general and more especially about the Isaiah material and its context in particular.

Scholars think that there are THREE Isaiahs relating to different periods of Israel's history. Chapters 1-39, First Isaiah, is called to warn of God's judgement on the People of Israel because of their unfaithfulness in breaking the Covenant and 'wandering after' the gods already worshipped in the Promised Land by their cohabitants. At this point, it is probably best to refer to the Kings of Israel and Judah who were advised against by the prophets, and who were the figureheads of the people...and who were, in the great majority, a pretty rotten bunch!

Chapters 40-55, Second Isaiah, relates to the judgement itself of which there had been countless warnings(cf Jeremiah) and, Third Isaiah Chapters 56-66 refers to the redemption, restoration and return of Israel to The Promised Land and the rebuilding of the Temple.

Due probably to what we call 'redaction' of the scrolls, some oracles have become misplaced, so that one piece from (say) Third Isaiah finds its way into First Isaiah etc.

So, the context of our Old Testament reading for today...Isaiah 40:21-31...is the exile of the people in Babylonia. Nebuchadr ezzar II in 586BC had destroyed Jerusalem and with it the Temple and enslaved the Jewish people. Isaiah sees him as the instrument of God's righteous judgement as Third Isaiah

sees King Cyrus of Persia as God's instrument of mercy and restoration.

Here in this reading from Second Isaiah the prophet has the voice of God as the 'Holy One', in Hebrew the 'qados' emphasising his Creative power, Almightyness, Otherness, 'apartness from the ordinary' in comparison with the often corrupt rulers and princes (rozenim) of this world, but God alone is ultimately Lord of His Creation. Here the Hebrew is stunning, and has a similar feel to it as the Wisdom Literature of Job. Matched with this theme is God's moral perfection who acts perfectly justly but with mercy...providing the balance of the whole of the three Isaiah's work.

It is important to reflect on this part of God's nature, as we can sometimes be drawn into a sort of 'God in our pocket' view, which while it is true, as Augustine says, that 'God is closer to us than we are to ourselves', he is at one and the same time what we call 'transcendent', or 'other' as described above.

The Christian Doctrine of God has these two poles paradoxically yet truthfully within it. Always good to be balanced!

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 its sister role **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

To assist in our devotions- words from medieval mystic-St John of the Cross from 'Dark Night of the Soul'

Never give up prayer, and should you find dryness and difficulty, persevere in it for this very reason. God often desires to see what love your soul has, and love is not tried by ease and satisfaction.

In the inner stillness where meditation leads, the Spirit secretly anoints the soul and heals our deepest wounds.

In the dark night of the soul, bright flows the river of God.

Community & Church

Lord we thank you for the inspiration of our young people and the Children's Mental Health Week which ends today. We thank you for our own Church Club, Knighton Players and Knighton Youth Group. We pray that in this disconnected time, friendships and stimulation may be forthcoming. We thank you for the leaders and may you encourage them in ideas and enthusiasm to cultivate the faith and belonging of the children and young people in our midst.

We thank God for the services, projects and agencies working amongst those struggling with mental health and emotional challenges at this time. We pray for all those known to us through the drop in clubs we hosted. We thank God for the work of Alzheimer Society and their faithful partnership over the years. We pray for fruitful partnership to continue with Age UK as the first signs of Springs begin to appear and our place in the community as a place of welcome and hospitality may return.

We thank God for our neighbourhood and its concern for those with least. We pray for blessing upon the work of Helping Hands, Leicester South Foodbank and all those who volunteer their time to ensure no family is hungry or suffers the degradation of extreme hardship.

Weekly prayer for roads in the parish – **Aber Road.**

Nation & World

We are thankful for the roll of the vaccine. We pray for the continued co-operation of nations and against richer countries stockpile in fear whilst most countries in African still have to access to vaccines. Help us Lord to love as you love beyond our own interests. We thank God for the challenging prophetic voice of the World Health Organisation calling out to rich nations to not forget their obligations to the poorest. We pray that their voice echoes eternal truths which will convict the hearts of those in power to make change.

We pray for the areas in the world where there is no peace. We name those known to us-Syria, Israel/ Palestinian Authority, Armenia, Myanmar. We pray for Russia and the apparent unjust imprisonment of the opposition leader Alexia Navalny. We pray against those places where strongholds of tyranny have taken root. We pray particularly for the situation in Myanmar where the military have overthrown the election and democratic leaders. We pray too for those Muslim minorities persecuted in Myanmar and China. Lord forgive us where we have been complicit in turning away from injustice for hidden gain. Open our eyes and ears to the consequences of our actions. We pray particularly for the forthcoming campaign of Fairtrade Fortnight from Feb 22nd that our consciences may be stirred and that those in power may act. Help our hearts to care for your holy

concerns of the least-those most affected by climate change, unfair trade, debt and modern day slavery.

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@stguthlack-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 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.

CONTACT DETAILS

Vicar: Revd. Adrian Jones 0116 2704268
adrian.jones@zoho.com

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

Assistant Curate: Revd Matthew Gough
revgough@gmail.com 07754 961997

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 **noon Thursday** to administrator@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk