

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

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



Sunday 14 March 2021

**Fourth Sunday of Lent
Mothering Sunday**

A Hymn for Lent and Mothering Sunday:

“For the beauty of the earth”

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light:
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
pleasures pure and undefiled:
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For each perfect gift of thine
to our race so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven:
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For thy church which evermore
lifteth holy hands above,
offering up on every shore
her pure sacrifice of love,
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

words: Folliott Sandford Pierpont (1835-1917)

In the spring of 1863, Folliott Pierpoint sat on a hilltop outside his native city of Bath in Somerset, admiring the country view and the winding Avon River. Inspired by the view to think about God's gifts in creation and in the church, Pierpont wrote this text. Having walked the hills around Bath many times myself, it's easy to see how the inspiration came to him.

Born in Bath in 1835, Pierpont was educated at Queen's College, Cambridge. As he had received an inheritance, he did not need regular employment, although he sometimes taught Classics. His chief interest was writing poetry and hymns, and although he published quite widely in his lifetime, *'For the beauty of the earth'* is the only one of his hymns still sung. He wrote it in 1864, aged just 29, and it is well known as a celebration of the goodness that flows to us all, from the love of God himself. As well as the traditional tune, the modern composer John Rutter has also set these words to music – listen by clicking here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIBkpAm3fhw>

Adrian

Mothering Sunday - more relevant than ever

Social togetherness is more important now than it ever was, and traditional festival days and celebration events in the calendar bring people together and strengthen communities. So it's good to celebrate Mothering Sunday today.

This special day has come a long way from its origins when people used to return to the 'mother church' where they were baptised, but it remains an important time to foster closeness and relationships - we share flowers and gifts with loved ones and remember all those who have shown us mothering care. In church we would usually have a special service, reflect on God's love shown to us, and express our thanks and appreciation for mothers with posies and gifts.

All of this is good but there is another perspective too. Today we are very much more aware of the great variety of mother-child relationships in our society, and that our experiences are not always positive. Mothering Sunday can be a painful day for many people too.

We also know that it is not only birth mothers, and indeed not only women, who can demonstrate the loving care that we think of as "mothering", towards others. Mothering Sunday is becoming a day to remember and celebrate the loving relationships between generations, alongside reflection on the pain and distance that can also be a feature of these relationships - and a day to seek God's healing for our fractured society. Do use the Collect prayer here in the newsletter to bring all of these aspects of Mothering Sunday to God – and we'll celebrate together next year!

Adrian

Collect for Mothering Sunday

God of compassion,
whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth,
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living
that in joy and in sorrow
we may know the power of your presence
to bind together and to heal;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

Easter in the Benefice: a time for patience and celebration

If you've been keeping up with the local news, you'll know that Leicester still has very high coronavirus infection rates, and relatively low vaccination uptake. The City Mayor has asked all places of worship to remain closed for regular services 'for a few more weeks', and Bishop Martyn has endorsed this message, albeit 'with a heavy heart'.

Although our Church Council (PCC) will keep the situation under continual review, at the moment this does mean that we will not be able to have 'live' services together in the church building for a second Easter. I am hugely disappointed by this, but equally aware that our responsibility to our community ought to mean we are cautious. As individuals we may have received a vaccine and begin to feel a little relaxed, but together we need to exercise patience and to *"seek the peace and prosperity of the city"* (Jeremiah 29.7) as a way of loving our neighbours.

We will still celebrate Easter and Holy Week of course! In the next newsletter I'll be able to give you details of how we can still share together in both the profound moments leading up to the remembrance of the crucifixion, and in the greatest of festivals on Easter Sunday.

And let's be hopeful. Restrictions are easing, even if too slowly for our liking, and the PCC has a plan for a gradual re-opening of our building and for picking up our shared life together once this becomes possible. In the meantime, let's remember the hope we have through the resurrection of Christ, that we will shortly celebrate; let's *"live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.... being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and (give) joyful thanks to the Father."* (Colossians 1.10-12)

Yours in friendship and Christ's service,

Adrian

Collect & Readings for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

The Collect

Merciful Lord,
absolve your people from their offences,
that through your bountiful goodness
we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins
which by our frailty we have committed;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

First Reading: Numbers 21.4-9

⁴The Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way.
⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.'
⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.
⁷The people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people.
⁸And the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.'
⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Psalm 107.1-3, 17-22

Second Reading: Ephesians 2.1-10

Gospel Reading: John 3.14-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus: ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

Mothering & Re-Birth in a Time of Pandemic

Revd Matthew Gough

Happy Mothering Sunday! Mothering is something we all have a stake in whether we are mothers or not. Jesus makes clear that mothering is beyond gender (comparing himself to a mother hen, Matthew 23) and motherly love is not confined to biological parenting (see Ruth & Naomi in Ruth 1). Do visit the St Guthlac's news archive

(www.stguthlac-knighton.co.uk/index.php/news/newsletters)

which holds all the previous reflections starting with last year's

mothering Sunday reflection (March 22nd) which goes into more detail. As mothering Sunday fell a little later last year, I recall it being the first Sunday which we had to suspend public worship and the first time we started publishing reflections in the newsletter. One day a historical archivist will enjoy reading cliff edge of pandemic responses between the lively events planned and published in March 15th 2020 contrasted to the abruptly postponed and cancelled the week later.

Today's readings juxtapose life and death. New life from death. The destructiveness of sin appears in Numbers and Jesus compares himself to the sacrificial symbol of sin. The promise of new life through Jesus in both John and Ephesians. Jesus tells us that 'we must be born from above of water and Spirit' to enter the Kingdom of God. In shorthand, many churches talk of 'being born again'. Is that language which attracts or repels? Or, perhaps it is the associations one may have with language that has been appropriated by North Atlantic evangelical Christianity which may resonate with us.

Can being born again be a one off event, passing from 'life to death', 'sin to salvation' be true? Or, can we understand spiritual rebirth in different ways. Can each day be a sense of being reborn? Is being born of Spirit and water a lifelong quest? We may experience the sacrament of the waters of Baptism. The Church teaches that at Baptism, God is working an inner grace. Water is a sign of putting to death the way of sin and embracing Christ. At Baptism, the Church as body is asked to affirm that each of us will affirm and support the person (often a baby) in their faith journey. Once again, a mothering role for us all?

I am confident that for anyone who calls themselves a Christian, something has changed. The purpose of life is different. I am cautious about too much weight being given to the 'experiential', 'feeling the Spirit'. Undoubtedly this happens in

many believers' lives. However, we cannot rely on this sense of feeling to know that we are changed and confirmed as Christ's. We are still called to be faithful when God is silent. Lent, and particularly the pandemic, is such a time where inner faith is challenged.

I am heartily encouraged that a number of mothers have contacted the Church asking for their children to be baptised recently. Perhaps this is a time to hope, to walk through waters when we do not know when they will end. In Jesus' words there is assurance that we do not wholly control our spiritual lives. 'The wind blows where it chooses'. Lack of choice and control has characterised much of this pandemic. However, coronavirus will come to an end and new beginnings will be birthed, however hard it is to currently discern such.

One plan is to plant trees to mark the anniversary of the start of lockdown. It will be a sombre time. However symbolised in that gesture, will be hope. Few, if any, of us reading this will see the mature flourishing of such trees. However, today's children will. We cannot know the future, though the words which our first published reflection ended on are true today as they were last Mothering Sunday, as they were when recorded in Isaiah two and half millennia ago and they will be next year and when the trees are fully grown. **Isaiah 43, 'Do not fear. I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the flames, you will not be burned.'**

PRAYER

Personal

"They tell me, Lord, that when I seem
To be in speech with you,
Since but one voice is heard, it's all a dream,
One talker aping two" CS LEWIS

Church and Community

We thank God for the continued cooperation between authorities and churches across Leicester in their united response to managing Covid. We rejoice at the rapid roll out of vaccinations to different age groups and those most vulnerable. We pray for wisdom and patience for your church in meeting the needs of worshippers and Public Health concerns. We pray for this crisis to be resolved urgently.

Weekly prayer for roads in the parish – **Beresford Drive.**

Nation & World

Lord we pray into the unease and focus on racism and our Royal family. We pray for truth and grace to be at the lips and touch of those leading the monarchy. We pray for Our Majesty the Queens to have wisdom, discretion and courage in her navigating the power vested in her. We pray for all those in this public role hurt, injured and traumatised by the incessant gaze. We pray for openness and vulnerability about mental health to be embraced and for effective support to be available.

We pray particularly at this with the focus on International Women's Day for the safety on our streets and parks whatever the circumstances and times of day a woman may find herself. We pray for justice and protection for those needing to speak out. We pray for men to be convicted of their role in furthering harm, assault and serious crime against women. We pray

particularly for the family of Sarah Everard, that they may know peace and the presence of God in this painful time.

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

Can you help?

Monday midday, we are now being joined by care home residents for our short time of prayer. It would be a great encouragement for more of us to be present to pray with these residents who have been stuck in the home with minimal outside contact. Do come if you can. The joining instructions are on page 13. Thanks, Matthew

WORSHIP INFORMATION

BBC1 Sunday Worship Lent 4: 11.15am Sunday 14th March

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 iPlayer and Sounds apps.

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_Ed_ZSg? 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.

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

Weekly Prayer - by Zoom or Phone-in.

Daily Prayer Common Worship: every Monday at midday;

Morning Prayer Common Worship: every Friday at 8am.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/7467674408?pwd=T3pHbW5XRVh2b29rV3plOTZ1Rm1SZz09>

Meeting ID: 746 767 4408 Passcode: lent

To Phone in- Dial by: 0131 460 1196 (standard call charge)

Input Meeting ID when prompted: 746 767 4408

CONTACT DETAILS

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Revd Aphro McCullough

Revd Janet Gasper

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Churchwardens:

David Hunt
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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

Don't forget to visit the St. Guthlac's Facebook page and website <https://www.stguthlac-knighton.co.uk>

DIARY DATE: ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

This will take place on Sunday 2nd May. More details will follow soon.

ELECTORAL ROLL

If you are not currently on the electoral roll and would like to be entered on it, please contact Jane Wright administrator@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk for a form. Completed forms must be returned to Jane by 4th April if you wish to be entitled to vote at the APCM. The 'Notice of Revision' will be posted on our website and the external church noticeboard from 21st March and gives details of eligibility. Thank you.

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.

STONEYGATE BAPTIST CHURCH WELLBEING CAFE

The Zoom link for the Stoneygate Baptist Church wellbeing cafe, which you are welcome to join any Wednesday at 11am is:

us02web.zoom.us/j/86350559902?pwd=TEwyOWxUZTE0bjhWZFA1Smplbk1YUT09

Meeting ID: 863 5055 9902

Passcode: 216265

In November 2021 the 26th UN Climate Change Conference takes place in Glasgow to set goals for action to address the Climate Crisis

Leicester Quakers are using our Meeting House as a place where we can make known our love for the sacred earth in the face of the threat posed by the climate emergency.

We invite you to join us with your



What do you treasure in the natural world?

What do you hope for from COP 26?

Please send us your response. The journey starts with a window display on April 10th. Something by email (leicesterquakers16@gmail.com) or through the Meeting House front door letterbox by 29th March will be able to be put on display!



**One year on ... marking
the National Day of Reflection
on the anniversary of the first UK
Coronavirus lockdown:
23rd March 2021.**

As you may have heard, Tuesday 23rd March – the anniversary of the UK going into the first national lockdown - is to be a National Day of Reflection, to remember those who have died during the pandemic and to show support for everyone who has been bereaved. An estimated 3 million people have been bereaved since the pandemic began, yet many have been unable to properly say goodbye to loved ones or grieve. This Day is also a time for us all to remember the stress, loss, loneliness and extreme challenges that the last twelve months have brought to everyone.

We are not there yet, but with the end of our lockdown restrictions in sight and the successful roll-out of the vaccination programme, we need a time to pause – with affection for those who have died, respect and gratitude for those who have protected and cared for us, and thankfulness to the God who has walked with us through this extraordinary time.

The end of life charity *Marie Curie* is inviting us all to mark the National Day of Reflection by placing daffodils (fresh, drawn or crafted) in our windows, as a symbol of hope, and at midday to observe a one minute silence. Later, as night falls, we are invited to take a light to our doorsteps at 8pm - a candle, torch or simply the light from a mobile phone – sharing a beacon of support in these incredibly tough times. There are also online talks featuring people who are bereaved, celebrities and expert panellists sharing experiences and answering questions:

www.mariecurie.org.uk/dayofreflection

At St Mary's, the church building will be open for an hour from 11.30am on 23rd March, for anyone who would like to simply sit and take time to reflect, to remember or to pray. At noon we will mark the one minute silence together, and anyone who would like to, can lay a daffodil on the Communion Table as a symbol of loss and remembrance. Later the flowers will be placed in our Garden of Remembrance, on the spot where we aim to plant a tree later in the year as a permanent memorial to all who have suffered during the pandemic. If you would like to join us in church please wear a mask, maintain social distancing and use the hand gel provided.

However you choose to mark the day, I hope you will find the prayers here useful - there is also an illustrated version of one prayer that you can colour as you pray.

Prayers for Marking a Year of COVID-19

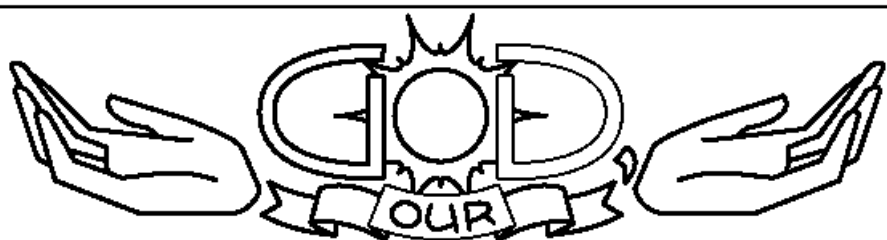
Wonder Worker,
In this year when everything changed,
when we felt worried and weary,
when we wailed and we wondered,
you gave us a promise...
Nothing can separate us from your love.
And nothing will be wasted.
With you at work,
light, life, love, and liberation
always win.
Amen.

God, our merciful maker,
You love the world you made,
and you want us to be whole and healthy.
Yet the world you made is suffering.
The world you made is struggling.
People have died, and people are sick.
Visit us with your mercy and make us whole.
Amen.

God, our loving friend,
The seasons keep changing
but we remain separated from friends and neighbours.
It has been a long year.
We miss the comfort of warm hugs,
shared meals, and friendly visits.
But you sent us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit.
Wrap us in the warmth of our Comforter today.
Amen.

God of all grace and providence,
You are our shepherd who walks with us through every valley.
Be with us today as we mark one year of the lockdown in our
country.
Be the comfort of those who grieve.
Be the strength of those about to falter.
Be love between those separated.
Be eternal rest for those who have died.
Help us to trust you, follow you and love you,
for your goodness today and always.
Amen.





MERCIFUL MAKER,
~~you~~ LOVE ~~the~~ WORLD ~~you~~ made

and you want us to be
WHOLE & **HEALTHY**.

YET the WORLD you made is **SUFFERING.** the WORLD you made is **STRUGGLING.**

~~PEOPLE~~ have died, and ~~PEOPLE~~ are sick.

VISIT US → with your **MERCY**

and make us
WHOLE.
amen.