

St Mary Magdalen Church, Knighton

Sunday 21st June 2020

Second Sunday after Trinity

**Join us in prayer this Sunday
and through the week**



Thanksgiving and awareness on Windrush Day

Blessed are you, God of all peoples,, blessed are you for the diversity of life and human experience. We give thanks that our nation has been enriched by the lives and gifts of the Windrush generation. Forgive our blindness to injustice and together may we find a better way. Through Jesus our Saviour, who loves us all, Amen

Windrush Day

Monday 22 June is Windrush Day, when the UK will be honouring the British Caribbean community and their contribution to the nation's life. In the wake of the recent Windrush scandal, and the ongoing call for an end to systemic racism, many churches will be observing 2 minutes of silence during their act of worship on the preceding Sunday, 21 June.

The same Sunday has also been selected by the Conference of European Churches (of which our own Bishop Guli is Vice-President) for churches across Europe to observe two minutes of silence to commemorate all those who have lost their lives on their way to try and find safety in Europe.

We also face the continuing injustices highlighted by the Black Lives Matter protests following the killing of George Floyd in the U.S. Let's all take just two minutes in our worship today to remember, give thanks, and ask for justice and peace between all people.

How do we live as the Church *now*? - Fellowship

‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and **to fellowship.....” (Acts 2.47)**

As we continue to wonder about those things that are key to our life together as a church and that we need to make our priorities, we read that the first Christians were *‘devoted... to fellowship’*.

Drawn together by a new and shared faith in the resurrected Jesus, who shows us the true pattern of human life, the believers knew that spending time together was key. ‘Fellowship’ is simply another way of saying ‘time given to relationships’, and it is the second of the ‘Holy Habits’ the early church developed.

Our society has conned us into thinking that self-reliance and independence are always virtues. We are persuaded that we need to be suspicious of each other and focus on our own needs. But the first Christian churches worked in exactly the opposite fashion. They committed themselves to the time and energy needed to build relationships with each other, even though they were very diverse communities and sometimes they must have found little in common apart from their faith.

As the first Christians continued to meet together they would have learnt, or been reminded, that God seems to have always worked out his purpose through *people*—first the family of Abraham, then the nation of ancient Israel and finally the church. Individuals were important but only because they were part of a network of relationships. The scriptures tell us that God himself exists in relationship—a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. No surprise then that when we are called to live a life that reflects God and his purpose for the world, we are called to live together in fellowship.

During this coronavirus season we have to work hard, and in some way artificially, to build our relationships with each other—we may even feel that relationships are ‘on hold’ for a while. Looking ahead though we can see how important it will be to meet together regularly and encourage and support each other.

Some of this will happen on a Sunday but we ought to make the effort to meet during the week as well. I can testify myself that this is one of the best ways of growing in our Christian faith.

Many churches have homegroups or 'fellowship groups' that meet in people's houses on a weekday evening or day time. During their time together typically 6-10 members may pray, look at the Bible together, listen to each other and give help and support. This used to happen at St Mary's but has largely fallen away, apart from our Lent and Advent groups. Starting up again after the lockdown is an ideal time to reimagine and rebuild our own homegroups as places where we find fellowship in both the best of times and the worst of times.

In the meantime, keep safe and stay well.

Adrian



'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching'

Last week I invited everyone to join a new online group in our benefice, in which we will take seven sessions together to look at the seven big themes of the Gospel of Mark—there are film clips and questions to consider before we meet and then plenty of time to discuss. The group is called 'Christianity Explored' and we'll 'meet' by using Zoom on Tuesday evenings—you can join by phone if you prefer. It would be great to have lots of people joining those who have already contacted me—do please let me know if you can and then we'll set up our start date and send out more details.

Adrian

UPDATE: When will our churches be re-opening?

Across the country Ministers and PCCs have been considering if they are now able to reopen their churches for private prayer and for funerals once more. Some have decided that they can ...and some have decided that they are not yet able to ensure hygiene, distancing and cleaning requirements are met. This of course is the important condition—we may open the church building for private prayer and for funerals ***when all safety and hygiene precautions can be put in place.***

In this coming week the PCC of our own church will meet and we will consider a careful Risk Assessment of our church building and of the congregation's capacity to put in place the social distancing and cleaning measures that will be necessary. We have (many!) guidance documents from the Church of England, the Diocese and the Government to help us but the decisions are difficult ones, and not as straightforward as we would like them to be.

You may have strong feelings one way or the other, as do our PCC members. What will be important though is that we come to an agreement and that it is based on careful consideration of the risks, the opportunity and the needs of the congregation and community.

I will of course keep you updated on progress and decisions but in the meantime please do let me know (by email, phone or letter) if you have views or ideas that would help us in this process. In particular I would welcome offers of help with cleaning or supervising open sessions in the church building, from anyone who is not in a vulnerable group. Without volunteers it seems unlikely that opening the building is realistic.

Do pray for our PCC and Ministry Team as we try to find the best way ahead.

Adrian

Keeping in touch and sharing worship together remotely.

On-line worship Each Sunday we aim to have a short recorded, reflective act of worship by members of St Mary's congregation on both the website and our Facebook page—do have a look and join in worship together.

Wednesday Compline (Night Prayer) - Each week we are meeting virtually for Compline at 8pm on Wednesday. It has proven to be a meaningful way to have fellowship and prayer together as well as being quite good fun, especially as we find our feet with the technology and with more people joining us every week.

You can join by just phoning up and inputting the code or using 'Zoom' online. It has been democratic with several voices joining in with a line of liturgy each. If you would like to participate with a speaking part, please do contact Matthew by 4pm on Wednesday.

To join by phone only, call this number **0131 460 1196** and when prompted input Meeting ID: 746 767 4408

To join by Zoom on the internet, go to this address and click 'Open Zoom'
<https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/7467674408>

Please note there is no Coffee Morning next Thursday, 25th June.

Help needed! During the lockdown the patch of grass outside of the Parish centre has grown, not surprisingly... it now needs a good tidy up from a willing volunteer. You could plug in a strimmer or mower in the Parish office if you have a long cable. If you can help please let Adrian know.



Listening to God's Word

Our Bible readings for this Sunday are:

Jeremiah 20.7-13 and **Matthew 10.24-39**

Jesus issues a challenge and a promise

²⁴ "The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

²⁶ "So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³² "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

³⁴ "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn

"a man against his father,

a daughter against her mother,

a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

³⁶ a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

³⁷ "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Reflection: the Revd Adrian Jones *'Hard words for hard times'*

These are hard words from Jesus, particularly in these hard times. As with all Bible passages they are best considered first in their context. So it helps if we remember that when Jesus speaks these words he is in the middle of giving advice to the twelve apostles, before sending them out 'like sheep among wolves' to proclaim the good news of God's rescue plan. They were going out to meet an often hostile religious establishment, as well as ordinary people desperate for hope.

The *challenge* of Jesus is "do not be afraid of them" - despite death threats, being disowned, the opposition of family and friends, and misrepresentation, Jesus tells his followers 'do not be afraid of them.'

The *promise* of Jesus is that 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered' - despite the voices that will mock, deny, denigrate and attack them, and despite the very real danger they will face, Jesus tells his followers 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered. It is this promise that ought to grab our attention during these hard times.

The weeks of lockdown have been weeks of *grinding* down for many of us. The pressure, strain and anxiety, the constant sense of being vigilant, the mixed and confusing messages from experts and reporters, on top of the isolation from those nearest and dearest, as well as our church family and even those casual meetings on the street ... all may have left us wondering where the joy of life is and what exactly we are worth.

Part of the 'home schooling' for our children recently has been about money, and the hardest lesson has been persuading them that it is not *how many* coins they have in their pocket that matters, but the *value* of them... Here Jesus promises us that *our* value in *God's* sight is worth far more than all the many anxieties and dangers that may surround us. The thing that defines who we are, that puts a value on us, is *not* the fear and threat of our times but the deep and intimate loving care of God.

If, like me and many others, you have found these lockdown days marked

by changes in mood, uncertainty about the future and searching questions about the state of the world, remember both the challenge and the promise Jesus gives us today—but especially the promise.

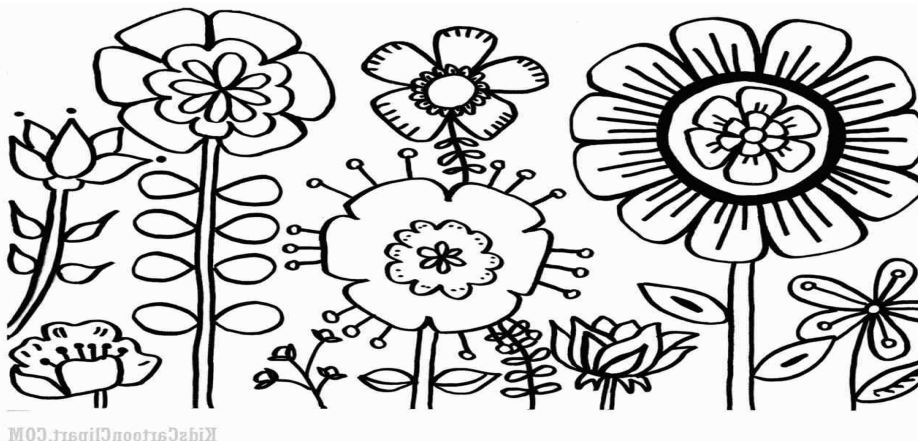
“Do not be afraid of them” is his challenge. “The very hairs of your head are all numbered” is his promise. He notices even when a sparrow falls, and even if it feels as if we have lost our life - for a while at least - if we can bring that loss to him then we can discover how deeply he knows us and cares for us. Once again we can find life.

Amen.

BENEFICE MAGAZINE : *from the Editor, Nigel Siesage*

The next issue of the magazine will be published in early July. Please submit any items for inclusion by Tuesday 30 June to stmaryknighton.magazine@gmail.com. Please share your thoughts about anything of relevant to our Benefice community - including your reflections on and experiences of lockdown.

As many readers will be aware, I had hoped to organise a Knighton Open Gardens event for the spire appeal this summer. As that is clearly impossible, I would like to let people into our gardens through a photo feature in the magazine. Please send me photos of your summer gardens, with or without yourselves in the picture.



Thank you for caring at home and in our community" : this is the message of appreciation that, as St Mary's and St Guthlac's churches, we want to send loud and clear to the staff of our local care homes and to all those carers who have been supporting clients, friends and relatives in their own homes during the pandemic. We are particularly conscious that we have at least nine care homes in our benefice, and that the staff will have been under extraordinary strain and pressure over the last three months—often, it seems, unappreciated by those who make key decisions, and perhaps also by ourselves, until now.

To express our appreciation to these care home workers we are aiming to give a gift to as many as possible—probably a gift token to be redeemed when times are easier and leisure seems possible again. We have a generous grant from our Ward Councillors to start things off, but if each gift is really to convey true appreciation then we want to add to it substantially through our own generosity. **LATEST TOTAL raised is £1,400—many thanks to everyone who has contributed so generously!**

Please do make a contribution to our Carers Fund to show your appreciation. We are collecting money through the St Guthlac's bank account, so please make a cheque payable to 'St Guthlacs PCC' (no cash please) . Alternatively you can pay by Direct Transfer:

Sort code 20-49-08

account 53861341

Reference "Carers"

You can send a donation by post or drop your envelope through the door of 62 Elms Road (Matthew), 5 Church Lane (Adrian) or the St Mary's Parish Centre, Church Lane (but *not* at St Guthlac's Church please!).

Thank *you*, in anticipation, for helping us thank our care staff.

Adrian

InSPIREd

The campaign to save our spire

UPDATE and GOOD NEWS!

Thanks to the generosity and fund-raising efforts of so many people in the St Mary's and the wider benefice community, by the end of May we had raised £40,489 towards the cost of repairing the spire. This means that we have achieved our initial target, despite the very unusual circumstances, in only about 8 months! This certainly exceeds our expectations - but we cannot rest on our laurels.



Our plans have been based on the assumption of substantial contributions from charitable trusts and foundations. Applications have been submitted, but their success is not guaranteed, particularly in these very uncertain times, So if you have been meaning to donate but just haven't got round to it, please give now. Details are on the St Mary's website,

We look forward to emerging from the lockdown hibernation so that we can resume our programme of social and fund-raising events.

Best wishes and thanks,

Nigel Siesage, Chair of the Appeal Group

Adrian Jones, Vicar

News of Matthew's Ordinations as a Priest

Now that Matthew is a year into his curacy with us it is time for him to be ordained not just as a Deacon but also as a Priest. The ordination service has been rescheduled for either 12th or 13th September so do please pray for Matthew and his fellow deacons as they wait in anticipation.



St, Mary's Away Day : Having been in contact with the Warden at The Stable House it has been decided it would be advisable to cancel the Quiet Day Away planned for September 26th. We have however booked another date, Saturday May 8th. 2021.

We hope that you will be able to join us then.—do put the date in your diary for 2021! Thank you. *Doreen White*.



A simple prayer to bring to God at this time:

Father God, we thank you for the gift of relationship and community. We pray that this crisis will bring people together, not drive them apart.

To those of us who are anxious, grant peace.

To those of us who are sick, grant healing.

To those of us caring for others, grant strength.

To those of us who are lonely, grant comfort.

To those of us who are not lonely, grant us to see those who are, and help us to reach out to them in whatever ways we can.

We pray that this crisis will bring about renewed trust in your goodness. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

(adapted from a prayer from Tearfund)

Church Family News

Greetings from Antigua! Our Church Warden Ros Matthew has been in Antigua, her family's home, since the lockdown began back in March. This week she sent greetings to us all at St Mary's. Ros writes *"Thanks so much for all your thoughtfulness. Being here is like 'home away from home'... my cousins have provided well enough for me so there's no need to worry about anything. I am missing being at church and being at home. My fondest regards to all."*

Brian Small would like to express his gratitude for all the messages of sympathy that he and the family have received since Veronica's death.

A Thought for the Week:

Remember, the one who gossips with you will gossip about you....

Whoever derides their neighbour has no sense,
but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.

A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.

(Proverbs 11.12-13)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. *(Ephesians 4.29)*



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.

A new arrival: Many of us will know the Rev Leigh Greenwood, the Minister of Stoneygate Baptist Church. Leigh and her husband are pleased to announce the birth of a daughter, sister to Eddie.

Miriam Henrietta Greenwood was born early last week. Our best wishes to them all.

Contact details:

Vicar: Adrian Jones 0116 270 4268 or 07584 954414

Email: adrian.jones@zoho.com (day off normally Friday)

Assistant Curate: Revd Matthew Gough 07754 961997

Email: revgough@gmail.com (day off normally Friday)

Revd Aphro McCullough: 0116 283 7887

Email: aphro.mccullough@btinternet.com

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

Email: safpta6@gmail.com 07966 376905

Revd Janet Gasper

Email: janet.gasper@hotmail.co.uk 0116 288 9646

Reader: Fiona Wingate

Email: Fiona.wingate@talktalk.net 07515 752954

Churchwarden: Rosalind Matthew

Parish Administrator: James Gutteridge 0116 270 2705

Email: office@knightonparish.co.uk

The Parish Office is currently closed to the public.

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 Lorna Pollard, Planned Giving Scheme Secretary: telephone 0116 2704272 or e mail: stmarysknighton.giving@gmail.com. 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.

giftaid it

Please pray..... "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
(1 Thessalonians 5.16-18)

Collect

*Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

We pray for all those who are unwell at the moment, whether in body, mind or spirit, and all those with troubling investigations and diagnoses. Please do continue to pray for **Ed Groves** and all his family.

We pray for all those on our parish 'Continuing Prayer' list. May they know the power of God's healing love at work in their lives today.

We give thanks for those who have been healed and restored.

We remember those who have died recently and pray for their families and friends: **Brian Pinder., Bill Webster, Michael Howkins**

Jesus said "Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11.28.