

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
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Sunday 26 April 2020 Third Sunday of Easter

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.

Guidance in Tough Times - “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119.105)

During 2019 accounts emerged from China that Christians imprisoned for their faith were memorized the whole Bible from scraps of paper passed around between them and occasionally smuggled in from the outside. One former prisoner said: “We memorize it as fast as we can because even though they can take the paper away, they can’t take what’s hidden in your heart.”

Over the centuries countless Christians have witnessed to the encouragement and hope that they have found in Bible verses known by heart and that return to them during times of hardship and trouble. In contrast, many of us today fail to take the Bible seriously enough even to read it regularly let alone commit passages to memory.

During this present time of hardship and trouble can I suggest that we all add Bible reading to our daily routine? I’m convinced that the wisdom and teaching of the Bible is a key way that God brings reassurance to us, even in the worst circumstances – and most of us now have a better opportunity to spend time with the Bible than ever before.

Here are some simple steps you could take:

Find your Bible - Different people prefer different translations so make sure you have a version that feels ‘comfortable’. The website Biblegateway.com allows you to choose from almost fifty English versions but the most popular are the Good News Bible and the New International Version. If you would like a Bible of your own then just let me know as I can get one at no cost to you.

Open your Bible – Become familiar with the names of the ‘books’ inside and the sort of writing each one uses. Is this ‘book’ a poem or a letter? A biographical story or gems of wisdom? Perhaps a law code or some history?

Use your Bible – Resist the temptation to start at the beginning! The Bible is not a continuous story and over the centuries Christians have found that certain specific passages are particularly helpful. My suggestion would be to start by finding, and putting a bookmark in, the following places:

- Psalm 23 - The Lord is my shepherd
- Matthew 5, verses 1-12 - The Beatitudes
- Romans 8, verses 35-39 – Nothing can separate us from the love of God

Use your Bible – again! Now set aside 15 minutes each day to read one of the Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus – don't worry about understanding everything at first, just simply absorb the story and consider the person of Jesus. In a simple prayer ask God to show you more each day about how to be a faithful Christian in these difficult times.

Memorize your Bible – Unlike our Chinese Christian brothers and sisters we don't have to worry that our Bibles will be taken away – but we will still benefit from committing key verses to heart. Here are some suggestions to start with. Just choose a verse and regularly repeat it to yourself until it 'sticks':

John 3, verse 16: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Joshua 1, verse 9: *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

Psalm 27, verse 1: *The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?*

John 11, verses 25-26: *Jesus said to her 'I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.'*

These are difficult times for all of us, but also an opportunity to find again the source of our life and faith in Jesus Christ.

Keep safe and stay well.

Adrian

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.

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Please pray for all our local doctors, nurses, care workers and support staff, especially **Amy and Dan Barnes, Lesley Meakin, Katherine Swanson.**

PRAYERS FOR USE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Alongside the newsletter this week we are sending you a booklet of prayers from the Church of England that you may find helpful.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN MALAWI.

At present there are no confirmed cases of Corona virus in the country but there are cases in all its neighbours. Pray that this will last and that simple medical systems will get the necessary support they need should the pandemic reach the country.

FORTHCOMING SERVICES AND MEETINGS

All services and meetings are cancelled for the foreseeable future. The church is closed until further notice. Benefice wide plans for spiritual, pastoral and practical support during these difficult times are being put in place. We have set up contact between members of the congregation. **If you would like to keep in touch by telephone with others in the same situation for a chat and support please contact Tina.** Email: churchwardens@stguthlac-knighton.co.uk

ON-LINE WORSHIP

Compline Night Prayer is becoming a weekly fixture each Wednesday 8pm where we have a chance to meet up as a church (both St Guthlac's & St Mary's) and pray the Night Office together. **Please let Matthew know by 4pm of**

Wednesday revgough@gmail.com if you are going to take part so you can be scripted into the prayer. You will be sent the liturgy beforehand and it will be shown on screen and if possible recorded to broadcast to the wider church. You will need to have set up a Zoom account first, please contact Matthew with any queries. Matthew will send you the link to the meeting which you will need to click on for 8pm.

Sundays at 10am. Every Sunday at 10am on the [@DioceseofLeicester Facebook page](#) there will be a short pre-recorded video providing an opportunity to engage with the Gospel reading of the day. There will be simple prayers, a reading, a brief devotional homily and a creative interpretation of the Bible story by an artist, and a closing blessing. Just follow the Diocese of Leicester Facebook page and join with others around our diocese in experiencing God's word in a slightly different way.

The Community of the Tree of Life, our own Diocesan prayer community based near the Cathedral, is praying three times a day at 8am, noon and 9pm with a short and very simple service. You can hear more by going to this page on the internet: www.leicestertreeoflife.org and also their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/LeicTreeofLife/

The Church of England also has a dedicated web page for information about a range of options for praying and worshipping together: www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online

'Pray As You Go' (www.pray-as-you-go.org/) each morning for a simple Bible reflection

Don't forget to visit the St. Guthlac's website!

The links to the You Tube films of the Holy Week Reflections are also available on the St. Guthlac's website for those who prefer not to use Facebook. The link can be found on the home page under 'Church is Changing'. <http://www.stguthlac-knighton.co.uk/>

Staying Connected-Social Media/ Facebook

To engage a congregation and wider community without physical contact relies upon us using social media. Facebook is a helpful 'platform' which can host conversations, images, events and even live services. If you are interested in joining St Guthlac's 'Page'-you will need a Facebook account. Any problems, please do contact Matthew by phone or email who is happy to help. (See front cover)

BBC 1 Sunday Worship 10.45am (time may vary please check TV guide).This is also available for catch up on BBC iPlayer. The order of service is available at bbc.co.uk/orderofservice.

BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship 8.10am

You can listen to the Sunday service on the radio at the given time, or if you have the 'Sounds' App you can listen to it whenever you want.

Collect & Readings for the Third Sunday of Easter

The Collect

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
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

Acts 2.14a, 36-41

On the day of Pentecost, ¹⁴Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd, ³⁶‘Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.’

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’

³⁸Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added to their number.

Gospel Reading: Luke 24.13-35

¹³On that same day, two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ ¹⁹Jesus asked them, ‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that

they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Jesus.' ²⁵Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

'Thought for the Day' ... The Road to Emmaus.

The Gospel Reading for this Sunday, Luke 24:13-35, although in worship terms occurs two Sundays after Easter, according to Luke alone, actually occurs in the evening of Easter Day. It follows on from the dramatic events of the same early morning.

Two disciples, who are not part of the remaining eleven(24:33), (possibly of the larger group, including women, who are central to the 'discovery' of the Resurrection,) are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Emmaus is a place scholars are uncertain as to its location, but same is not vital to the story. One of the two is called Cleopas, unknown in the rest of Scripture, but at least, he has a name and therefore a gender. I've never really understood why tradition and the various art works of the story have assumed the

other one to be also male, especially as we know that the greater group of disciples had women within it. Hey ho!

The figure of Jesus appears 'normal and human'. The clues given by Jesus as to his identity and the responses of the disciples themselves based on the first 12 verses of the chapter, in their own retelling of the story thus far, don't help 'the penny to drop!' It is only in the meal, where the Greek is almost identical to the words of the Last Supper (22:19), that finally they 'get the picture', and react accordingly.

The story has obvious Eucharistic overtones...it's a Sunday(!)... there is the interpretation of Scripture, there is the proclamation of the Resurrection, there is the Sacrament... all leading to an evangelistic reaction... the truth of the Risen Jesus.

Spiritually, I have never really understood why other scholars seem to have missed a key point which is as plain as day to me. The two disciples are what we would call 'bereaved', and are therefore almost wholly preoccupied with having lost Jesus to the darkness of death. Other 'circumstances' which 'happen along' initially have no effect whatsoever on this single mindedness. It is only after a while, when an action stares them in the face, that they are wrenched out of their all consuming initial 'place'.

Although bereavement for each of us is unique, disbelief and shock do tend to dominate our initial focus.

This seems precisely where the two disciples 'are'.

For me, Luke intends to reflect a pastoral situation alongside the overtly theological ideas mentioned above.

SAF

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING: this has been postponed. Three PCC members and two Deanery Synod representatives will be elected when the meeting eventually takes place and new people are encouraged to get involved. If you would like to stand for election to the PCC or Deanery Synod, or would like to find out what is involved, please speak to Lesley Meakin .

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 2020: 10th-16th May

I would normally be busy with Christian Aid week preparations now, but for obvious reasons there will be no door to door collection this year. Instead, you are encouraged to consider making a donation through the Christian Aid website or by phoning 020 7523 2269. Your donation would be very welcome **now**: no need to await the start of the week proper.

“As the Covid 19 virus spreads across the world, love rises up in response. You’ve already shown incredible kindness to your neighbours. Now is the time to reach out to your neighbours both near and far. Your love protects: From storms, from drought, and now from coronavirus. Your love protects our global neighbours battling the spread of this illness. Your love protects: With soap, clean water and medical supplies.”

By supporting us this Christian Aid Week, you can reach out and protect more of your neighbours today. Thank you! **Lesley Meakin, Christian Aid organiser St Guthlac’s**

BENEFICE MAGAZINE The benefice magazine is still planned for early May so do please let Nigel Siesage have contributions as usual. stmaryknighton.magazine@gmail.com

JIGSAW LOAN Are you desperate for a different jigsaw puzzle to do? Do you have a complete puzzle that you could lend out? If you do, please contact Matthew 07754 961997 or his [email revgough@gmail.com](mailto:revgough@gmail.com). We have been donated a range of landscapes, city-scapes and iconic images-500-1000 piece. Matthew can deliver or you can collect from his house. The puzzles are left in his garage for 5 days for any potential hazardous bacteria to die off, then bagged up for delivery or collection.

WELLBEING TIPS

MIND have produced a range of really helpful tips and factsheets to support us during the Coronavirus situation.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse80ef2>

FEAR NO EVIL Please enjoy this performance by Andrew Oldershaw accompanied by Charles and Julie McDermott all from the St Mary's Worship Band, "Fear No Evil" which you may find an encouragement for a time such as this.

<https://youtu.be/I27MgrDR6uA>

A touch of humour in our dark days: A spectacularly uninformed visitor to the organ loft once asked the composer and organist Widor why some of the keys were white, others black.

'We use the white ones for weddings', replied Widor, 'and the black ones for funerals.' *Thanks to Margaret Bonney for sharing this with us.*

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