

ST GUTHLAC'S COMMUNITY NEWS



Parish Church of St Guthlac
Knighton, Leicester LE2 3LF

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

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Sunday 12 July 2020 Fifth Sunday after Trinity

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.

How do we live as the Church now? - Sharing Resources

*“⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ **All the believers were together and had everything in common.** ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. “*
(Acts 2.42-47)

When the first Christians began to meet together as the first church, in Jerusalem following the Day of Pentecost, Luke tells us in Acts that they grew in ten “holy habits” - a shared pattern of life that reflected what they were learning about the person and life of Jesus. I have been reflecting on how this pattern of life might help us to understand how we might live as the church *now*, in the time of pandemic and lockdown, and as we ease out of our restrictions into a changed world.

This week we read about a ‘holy habit’ that is, frankly, one of the most challenging for us in our contemporary society and modern church: the sharing of resources - “**All the believers had everything in common.**”

Here and also in Acts 4, Luke gives us a picture of the first Christians supporting one another and those in need in the wider community by the generous sharing of their resources. They shared and sold possessions to create a common fund which could be used to support those in need of income or resources, and it may also have provided support for the apostles as church leaders. Their actions stood starkly in

contrast to the culture of the time, and it remains so today. Much of 21st-century Western culture encourages us to live separate, independent lives protecting our individuality, our privacy and our belongings, rather than sharing.

‘Having everything in common’ is not about offering others what you can spare. Nor is it about taking from others what you fancy. To share something requires us to change our *relationships*—both with the *things* we are sharing and also with the *people* with whom we share. We have to let go of our control of our things, and have more thought about how we use them.

We also have to let go of our need to be in control when it comes to people; sharing tasks with others, giving our ideas and thoughts to discussions, in building friendships and in working alongside others. We also have to be ready to admit our needs so that we can *receive* from others. We must notice and lay aside our own deep desires to possess more and indulge our greed, and work towards balanced and mutual relationships that are not controlled by selfishness.

This is a challenge! Sharing can be costly and demanding - but it is also the way that we create a church that provokes the world through the demonstration of real love across the whole of life.

Through our lockdown we have all seen the deep need we have for authentic relationships with others, and many people have found new ways of sharing time and gifts unselfishly. Our friends and neighbours know that there is a deeper, more precious and more satisfying way to live—our challenge ‘on the other side of lockdown’ is to show them that this is life together following Jesus, and to welcome them too on our shared journey towards ‘life in all its fullness’.

In the meantime, keep safe and stay well.

Adrian

Prayers continue....

Although our buildings are closed, our prayers continue. Our Ministry Team pray regularly for the church and for all its congregation members, as well as for the wider church family and the local community. Prayer is God's gift to us, and releases his power into situations and people's lives in ways that are often beyond our understanding or imagining.

If you would like to be prayed for, or have on your heart someone ill or in need, then do please let us know. In the first instance contact Adrian or Matthew in confidence. We will ask if you would like a name added to the prayer requests on the newsletter or to our 'continuing prayer list', or if you would prefer not to share your request more widely.

We will pray alongside you for two weeks and look expectantly for God at work. And of course, do pray yourselves—God is listening!

FOR YOUR PRAYERS Please remember those whom we have been asked to keep in our prayers. Please remember those who have died recently including 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** and **Katherine Swanson**.

MALAWI - At this time when Leicester is in lockdown again it may be easy to become focused on our own immediate situation. In your prayers, please take time to remember the people of South America, the Middle East and Africa as cases of Covid-19 start to soar in all three areas. This was brought

home to me when I spoke to a doctor friend of mine in Johannesburg (South Africa) and realised that they reported in excess of 65000 cases in the last seven days. Malawi too is starting to see increasing numbers of infections with 575 cases in the last week alone. Thank you. *Fiona*

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 (usually at the end of June) has been rescheduled for either 12th or 13th September so do please pray for Matthew and his fellow deacons as they wait in anticipation.

Leicester Lockdown and reopening Churches: *we need your views.*

Our 'local lockdown' in Leicester will be reviewed by the Government on 18th July. Along with most others in the city we have taken seriously the need to 'go back a step' and have followed the Bishop's instruction to keep our building closed and continue with worship, prayer and other aspects of our church life in other ways.

At some point (and soon, God willing) the Leicester lockdown will be eased and we can then restart our thinking and preparations for re-opening our buildings—both for private prayer and for public worship.

The PCCs of both St Mary's and St Guthlac's are ready to review our previous discussions about reopening, once we know what the Government has decided. It would also be extremely useful to know what everyone else in our

congregations and wider church family thinks about the prospect of reopening, to support our discussions and decision making.

In order to gather your views we have produced a short questionnaire, which is included with this newsletter. It sets out the background to reopening and asks, in the light of this, what *you* think is the best way ahead at this point.

The national and local situation is changing all the time, but having your views will help our PCCs make these difficult decisions. No doubt there will be a range of views, and not everyone will agree, but this is an opportunity for us all to pray together as we prepare to answer the questions, and so to discover what *God* wants in this situation. Acts 13, verses 1-2, tell us that the Church in Antioch were praying and fasting together when God's Holy Spirit gave them instructions about the next steps they should take.

So please do take a few minutes to read, to pray and to answer our questions. Then please return the questionnaire as soon as you can to Adrian—contact details are on the sheet. You are welcome to remain anonymous if you prefer.

As we look to the future let's remember how faithful God has always been in the past and how nothing can separate us from his love.... and do be reassured that at some point we *will* be able to say once more "*the season of singing has come*" (Song of Songs 2.12).

Adrian

Collect & Reading for the Fifth Sunday of Trinity

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

Romans 8:1-11

¹There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

¹Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!

¹⁸Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth

choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

Mind the Gap *Revd Matthew Gough*

We hear this when using the underground in London tube stations. Mind the Gap.

But it's also doing the round describing phenomenon of our relationships in lockdown. As we are maybe seeing a lot less people. Our social lives have contracted. More time spent alone. More time in introspection. Less busy, Less distractions. More time to ponder. More time to worry. More time to over think the fewer interactions we may have.

Mind the gap tries to get people aware that there is a greater degree of uncertainty in our relations and more scope for misunderstanding and upset on both sides of any conversation.

Perhaps the usual healthy discussion, banter over a cup of tea where you could gently joke at a friend's expense may now be higher stakes as the phone, email, or zoom takes away some of the more subtle pauses of body language, facial expressions and timing which we take for granted in person. Equally I have also found being cooped up at home with several others that sometimes minor, normally, trivial incidents can lead to bickering.

There needs to be a grand amnesty after lockdown-the fall out we had, disagreement, upset wiped clean.

Of course, as Christians we should be above this should we not? Doesn't our faith transform us? If it doesn't what good is it?

We talk about faith as a gift. Gifts are graces given, not our choice. Though the bible also speaks of faith as something we cultivate. It is this gift and cultivation which is helpful to hold in mind when considering Jesus parable about the sower. I would encourage us to regard it having relevance to our lives in two significant ways. Being the recipient of seed AND ourselves as the sower.

I have preached on this passage and emphasised the need for three things to cultivate 'good soil' for spiritual growth- prayer, reading the bible and being in fellowship in church.

However, in the reading Jesus is addressing his disciples not as the soil like recipients, rather, having a role as sower. It is important for us to cultivate our personal faith, but Christ calls us to respond and build his kingdom and share his good news to others.

There are many unloved, and broken people who need to know the love of God in their lives. They are made in the image of God. We all bear God's image, but many among us do not know that love.

We are called to show love and share the good news of the kingdom by both our words and actions.

If we see ourselves as the sower, spreading the good news, building god's kingdom, there is a generosity. Almost lavishness, wastefulness. The sower is not distinguishing between the best and worst of soils-the best or worst people, judging who is deserving or not. And so the challenge is to us-to love without calculation, live lives and share words which point to a hope that we have in Christ. There may someone you know especially at this time needing the encouragement of faith in God.

The good soil is vital for our own faith to flourish but it is required to reproduce, to share-to not keep God's blessings to

ourselves. Rather we are called to love in the way as God loves us-generously and without regard for how much we deserve such love.

And what soil are you?.... today? ... Where you are?

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

There are seven 'parables' in Matthew 13, the word 'parable' deriving from a Greek word meaning to 'throw alongside'. Jesus from his 'pulpit' of a boat...(our pulpits all represent this boat of Jesus) throws his hearers and us stories to get alongside them and us.

These stories are probably the nearest words we have to the actual words of Jesus, ending with a 'mashal' or riddle.

The allegory which follows is added material sufficiently different from the actual parable to suggest it is composed as one 'interpretation' by Matthew. But turning the parable into one allegory and therefore suggesting only one possible interpretation robs the original of its power.

By their very nature, many parables and most especially this one is universal and timeless and therefore easily applicable to our generation in Knighton. The key question posed by this parable is 'What kind of soil are you?' Or how do you react to the Good News in your Christian Faith today and in the situation you find yourself? Obviously, our receptivity, and therefore the kind of soil we are, can change depending on 'the day' and our 'place' on that day.

Similarly in the Parable of The Prodigal Son we are forced to asked ourselves which person we are most like in this timeless, universal story concerning forgiveness.

But for today... as opposed to yesterday or tomorrow... and within the lock down situation we find ourselves, the question remains... which soil are we
... where we are... right now?

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. Please look out for the email giving the link to this week's Sunday Service which will be available on YouTube from Sunday.

Virtual Compline/ Night Prayer at 8pm on a Wednesday. 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 each Wednesday (revgough@gmail.com).

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



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 1525-1530 CONNECTIONS

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

'Church is Changing' on the home page includes copies of reflections and links to the You Tube recordings of virtual services. Newsletters can found on the news page.

FINANCE UPDATE

I thought that it was about time that I gave you a brief update on our financial position. I have provided similar information to the diocese. We are very fortunate in having a fairly healthy bank balance going into this pandemic, unlike other PCC's in the diocese. We have reserves put aside for decorating the inside of the church building and the outside of the hall and, if necessary, both those activities could be deferred if we have to call on those reserves. As things stand at present, I can see no difficulty in us being able to pay both of our commitments to the diocese this year in full. BUT this is only because of the generosity of our donors, mainly in the stewardship scheme, who have continued with their donations in full during this time. Our Vicar and our PCC are truly grateful for your continued support.

During the current Coronavirus pandemic, if you normally bring your weekly offering to church, please put it aside ready to bring to church when things start to approach normality. Whilst we have done all we can to reduce our costs, many still continue, so your regular giving is extremely important, to both preventing the erosion of our reserves (so that decorating, etc. can still happen); and to our collective "Health" and the mission of God here. If you do not use a Standing Order for your giving, why not consider it at this time? Please contact me if you are interested.

For many banks, this can be set up on-line, or I can give you a letter to send to your bank. A Standing Order keeps you in complete control of your donations, you have the ability to increase or decrease donations or to stop them altogether as your circumstances dictate. Also, if you are a tax payer, I can give you another piece of paper to sign that allows the church to reclaim 25% of your donation from HMRC. Apart from the signature, you don't have to do anything. *David Hunt, Treasurer*

Sunday Faith becoming Everyday Faith....

'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching'

Our new discussion and Bible study group began on Tuesday 7th July. We are meeting at 7.30pm fortnightly through Zoom, and you can join by telephone if you prefer. 'Christianity Explored' takes 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. It's not too late to join—please do contact me and I will give you more details. *Adrian*

REQUEST FROM KATHERINE SWANSON Due to Covid, my ward have had to move all our furniture around to make sure patients were able to socially distance whilst with us. Today while moving furniture to create further space, our much needed and years old filing cabinets fell to pieces. We do not have enough cash to purchase more at this point so if anyone has a spare filing cabinet or storage that they could donation to our ward we would be very grateful. Thank you

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