

# St Mary Magdalen Church, Knighton

**Sunday 15th November 2020**

2nd Sunday before Advent

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

## *Collect*

Heavenly Father,  
whose blessed Son was revealed  
to destroy the works of the devil  
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:  
grant that we, having this hope,  
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;  
that when he shall appear in power and great glory  
we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;  
where he is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

Amen



## “Keep on keeping on!”

As we experience the second week of our new national lockdown it may feel as if we have to ‘dig deep’ to find the personal strength to stay positive and persevere with the precautions and restrictions we are urged to live by.

I have been encouraged by this picture, which originated from the Methodist Circuit in Sheffield:



The message is important; we need more than rules to find our way together through this pandemic- we need *grace*, towards ourselves and each other. ‘Grace’ can be defined as the undeserved and unconditional love of God, offered to us freely whoever we are. God’s love doesn’t depend on our worthiness (none of us are good enough to warrant it), or our effort (we can’t achieve it by our own work), or our religion (God’s concern is our heart not how well we keep to orthodox belief and practice). God’s love comes without strings – this is *grace*, and this is what we too are called to show to our neighbours and ourselves.

While we and our neighbours may have most of the practical things that we need, even in a lockdown, loving others means that we do need to add a generous measure of kindness and understanding to our relationships and conversations during these challenging times.

Everyone’s experience of these difficult months has been different; it has been shaped by the circumstances of family and work, by our physical

condition, by our personality and character, by opportunity or lack of it, and by so many more factors. Now more than ever, is the time to listen to our stories and to show grace to each other – the last thing anyone needs is judging, gossip and criticism for instance. We need to build each other up through unconditional loving care – the grace that God has already shown to us.

*And*, importantly, we need to show grace to *ourselves*. This is not a good time to judge ourselves harshly if we find ordinary tasks difficult, nor if we find ourselves struggling with feelings and weariness. We are living through difficult times and it is 'normal' for life to feel difficult and much more like hard work.

Can I encourage you to be kind to yourself as well as to others? To make a few more allowances for yourself when you are short-tempered, sad, fed up, worn out or worn down? Can I also encourage you to be *thankful* for every opportunity you have to show grace to other and to receive grace yourselves?

In this way, despite the lockdown, we will follow Jesus when he says 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.

Yours in friendship and Christ's service,

*Adrian*



## **Weekly Worship during the lockdown**

During the new lockdown our church buildings must remain closed for worship together, but that doesn't mean that our worship must stop! As you can read elsewhere, our online Virtual Worship and Compline will continue through the lockdown, and we are also able to open the church for private prayer, each Sunday morning from 9.45am to 11.15am.

As before we will need to wear masks and keep to social distancing guidelines in church, and of course we can't have any structured or shared worship – but God will still be present and will still meet us there. Do drop in at any point to pray, and leave when you are ready.

*Adrian*

## **Church Family News:**

***Gil Parsons*** - Many thanks to everyone who stood outside St Mary's last Monday to pay their respects to Gil Parsons as the hearse called by. Ondre and the family were very touched by your presence on behalf of the whole church and the many who would have been with us for the funeral under normal circumstances. Also very moving was the special version of 'Abide with me', recorded separately and then edited together, by some past and present members of St Mary's choir and the Cecilian Singers which was played as part of the service. In addition to the family tribute, Margaret Bonney spoke about Gil's love of music and singing, and we heard a 1994 recording of the Cecilian Singers, including Gil, singing 'Sing Joyfully'. Despite the restrictions it was a moving and fond farewell. *Adrian*

# Listening to God's Word

Our Bible reading for Sunday 15th November is:

## Matthew 25.14-30

### The parable of the bags of gold

<sup>14</sup> 'Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup> 'After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more."

<sup>21</sup> 'His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

<sup>22</sup> 'The man with two bags of gold also came. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with two bags of gold: see, I have gained two more."

<sup>23</sup> 'His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

<sup>24</sup> 'Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. "Master," he said, "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you."

<sup>26</sup> 'His master replied, "You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup> Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

<sup>28</sup> "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. <sup>29</sup> For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

***"There can be no religion without adventure"***

*– reflection on Matthew 25.14-30, Rev Adrian Jones*

This is a familiar parable for many of us, "The Parable of the Talents", and at one level there is a straightforward understanding of what it might be teaching us: God gives us all different gifts and we are called to exercise them in his service, however much or little we think we have.

When we also remember though, that Jesus gives us parables to prompt questions, to disturb as much as encourage, and to get us thinking and talking (even arguing) about God and ourselves, then we must also look for the buried treasure here as well as all that is more obvious.

Even before this we ought to remember the *context* of the parable and what Jesus is talking about when he gives us this story. At the start of Matthew chapter 25 Jesus says *"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like..."* so we can see that our parable is about God's Kingdom. Then what about *"at that time..."*? Again if we read back in Matthew, we see that this whole section is about 'the end times' when Jesus will return in triumph and judgement. We can see then that our parable carries overtones of preparation and warning as well as encouragement to keep the faith through hardship.

Looking at the parable itself, a good place to start is with the awkward questions that it raises for us, such as:

- If the rich man gave out his money to the servants “each according to their ability” then surely he already knew what the last servant would do with his one bag?
- Equally, the first two servants only did what the master had expected of them... so did they deserve a reward?
- The Master was known to be a ‘hard man’, taking what he hadn’t worked for and perhaps had no right to take.... does Jesus want us to see *God* like this?
- The third servant was scared of the Master, and the rich man’s response to him suggests he was right to be! Is Jesus saying we should base what we do on the *fear* of God’s response?

There is a lot we could discuss together about such questions, and that of course is what Jesus intended! I believe we learn best about God and ourselves when we do it together. Given our current need for brevity however, let me just add a few thoughts.

As this parable comes within a larger passage about the coming end times and judgement, it may be fair to see it as carrying some warning about our personal responsibility for what we do with our own ‘bags of gold’ – but Jesus consistently talks about the *love* of God and his *acceptance* of us, despite our flaws and mistakes.... so it may be more helpful to see the Master of the parable as a *contrast* to God.

Earthly ‘masters’ are likely, as the parable suggests, to take whatever they can, from wherever and whosoever they can – one danger of ‘the end times’ is that we may be lured into going along with this sort of behaviour, even into sharing it’s rewards.

Lastly, although the Master gives according to ability there is no sense in the Gospels that God holds back on his generosity – quite the opposite!

Jesus often says *'How much more will God...'* and St Paul's expectation is that God *'is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine'*. God it seems, gives to us without such limits as our ability.

One commentator, William Barclay, thinks that this parable tells us "there can be no religion without adventure". Can we dare to believe that being adventurous, even risky, with all the blessings and good things that God gives us is the way to live in his Kingdom? Perhaps the way of Jesus is to put aside our human security and to throw everything in with God.

Amen.



The poster features a light blue background with a large snowflake icon containing a pink heart on the left and a holly leaf with berries on the right. The title "2020 Charity Winter Gardens" is centered in a bold, dark blue font. Below the title, a paragraph encourages celebrating communities and supporting local charities. A list of four steps is provided, each with a corresponding icon: a heart, a gift, a QR code, and a smartphone. At the bottom, a row of ten snowflake icons is connected by thin lines to a row of ten charity logos: Lamp, Hope Against Cancer, One Roof Leicester, City of Leicester, Manpit's, foodbank, HOME START Horizons, and a purple heart logo.

**2020 Charity Winter Gardens**

Let's celebrate our communities and support our local charities at a time they need it most.

Taking part is easy and it's open to everyone

1. **Get creative & decorate** your house, window, front garden or office
2. **Choose a local charity** to support at [oldmanandsons.co.uk/charity-winter-gardens](http://oldmanandsons.co.uk/charity-winter-gardens)
3. **Add your charity QR Code** to your display
4. Passers by can donate to your chosen charity by **scanning the code**

Find out more at [oldmanandsons.co.uk/charity-winter-gardens](http://oldmanandsons.co.uk/charity-winter-gardens)

Organised by: **OLDMAN AND SONS**  
THERAPEUTIC GARDENERS



## **Advent 4 All**

**4 Sundays dwelling in the seasonal rhythm of Advent.**

**7-8pm phone in or by Zoom.**

**Hosted by Matthew and the Living Waters Group for breakout discussions.**

**Join us as we explore together how to live well in the 'now' and to prepare for the 'not yet'.**

**To show interest and get joining details**

**email [revgough@gmail.com](mailto:revgough@gmail.com), or**

**phone/ text 07754961997**

### **Important Notice:-**

#### **St Mary's Church Path & Churchyard, Temporary Closure**

After careful planning and preparation, the essential repairs to the church tower and spire have now commenced, with completion expected in April 2021.

Unfortunately, for everyone's safety, for the whole contract period, the footpath through the churchyard, between Brinsmead Road and Church Lane will be closed. To prevent damage to the gravestones, the older part of the churchyard on the North side of the driveway, up to the lych gate, will also be temporarily fenced off.

Access into this area to visit graves and for internments will still be possible, but only by prior arrangement with James Gutteridge in the Parish Office or Revd Adrian Jones or Revd Matthew Gough.

The contractors, MSM, and the PCC, apologise for any inconvenience or upset this may cause, but hope that everyone will understand that the safety of all is of paramount importance during this complex construction project.

Thank you.

### **Contact details:**

**Vicar: Adrian Jones** 0116 270 4268 or 07584 954414

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

**Assistant Curate: Revd Matthew Gough** 07754 961997

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

**Revd Aphro McCullough:** 0116 283 7887

Email: [aphro.mccullough@btinternet.com](mailto:aphro.mccullough@btinternet.com)

**Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster**

Email: [safpta6@gmail.com](mailto:safpta6@gmail.com) 07966 376905

**Revd Janet Gasper**

Email: [janet.gasper@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janet.gasper@hotmail.co.uk) 0116 288 9646

**Reader: Fiona Wingate**

Email: [Fiona.wingate@talktalk.net](mailto:Fiona.wingate@talktalk.net) 07515 752954

**Churchwarden: Sian Howard**

[sian.howard@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sian.howard@tiscali.co.uk) 07932 557646

**Parish Administrator: James Gutteridge** 0116 270 2705

Email: [office@knightonparish.co.uk](mailto:office@knightonparish.co.uk)

The Parish Office is now closed to the public during the lockdown.  
Please feel free to phone or to email. Thank you.

## **Keeping in touch and sharing worship together remotely.**

**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>

## **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 01162704272 or email: [stmarysknighton.giving@gmail.com](mailto: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.....** *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. "* (Ephesians 6.18)

**Praying for the World:** Please thank God for the good news about a possible coronavirus vaccine. Please pray for generosity within drug companies and governments, and a compassion for all the people of the world, so that vaccines can be shared fairly and inexpensively across all nations.

**Praying for the Church:** please pray for all those who are planning events and services for Advent and Christmas, especially those that will reach out to folk who are not normally part of the church's life and worship. Pray that in these strange days many more people may find peace and comfort, even joy, as they discover and follow the way of Jesus.

**Praying for the Parish:** Please pray for the peace and well-being of all those who live on Southernhay Rd, Southernhay Close, Southern Hay Avenue, Cara Close, Estima Close, Westernhay Road.

**Praying for those in need:**

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 **Tony Sansome, Charlotte Muddimer, Anne Ibbs, Shirley and Rex Wills, Bob Newell, Andrew Clarke** and their families. 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. We also remember all those whose anniversaries fall at this time.

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