

**St Mary Magdalen Church, Knighton**

**Sunday 3rd May 2020**

Fourth Sunday of Easter

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

*Approaching Worship*

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,  
"I am with you always."  
Be with us today, as we offer ourselves to you.  
Hear our prayers for others and for ourselves,  
and keep us in your care.  
Amen.

*Collect*

Risen Christ,  
faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:  
teach us to hear your voice  
and to follow your command,  
that all your people may be gathered into one flock,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

*Post Communion*

Merciful Father,  
you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd,  
and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again:  
keep us always under his protection,  
and give us grace to follow in his steps;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Guidance in Tough Times

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16)*

In the newsletter last week I encouraged us to add Bible reading to our daily routine, with the conviction that the wisdom and teaching of the Bible is a key way that God brings reassurance to us, even in the worst circumstances. I suggested that we all find, open, use and even memorize our Bible (or at least certain key scriptures!). This week I want to add a note of *caution*.

I say *caution* because the Bible is a powerful book. It has brought peace and purpose to many millions of people but it has also been misunderstood and misused. Over the centuries it has been banned, burnt and vilified. It has also been used as a justification for oppression, violence and prejudice. So we need to tread wisely and with some care when it comes to reading *and understanding* the Bible for ourselves.

Most of us read the Bible because we want to have some guidance and encouragement for our own daily life in the world as it is today, with all its complexities, uncertainties and challenges – and the Bible can certainly give us that! Before we get to that point however we have to learn to ask some basic but vitally important questions.

Firstly, we have to ask ourselves why we are doing this! If our intent is faithful and genuine then God will certainly honour that and help us to grow in our understanding, and this should be our prayer as we start. If, however, we are simply looking for reasons to dismiss or ignore the Bible, then we are unlikely to find any help for life in its pages.

Secondly, we need to ask ourselves if we appreciate the big picture, the whole story of God's dealings with humankind and his rescue plan for us. If we have the big picture in mind then we will more easily make sense of the smaller part of the story that we are reading today.

Then there are three simple questions about the passage in front of us:

what does it actually say?

what did it mean to the writer and the first readers?

how can we apply it to our lives today?

Each of those questions needs rather more unpacking, but even as they stand they provide us with the first steps towards finding the treasures of wisdom and grace that the Bible offers.

There is a final question too: what do other Christians make of my conclusions?

During the coronavirus epidemic and lockdown we are discovering afresh how important it is to be part of the church, the household of God. We need each other for support, encouragement, friendship and for shared wisdom – however much we may feel we are a Bible ‘expert’ or ‘novice’, we need the God-given wisdom of others to help us understand the Bible. It is a task we are given together because we are called to share life together.

Under lockdown we cannot meet as we would like to, but these conversations can still continue – we just need to say *“I’ve been wondering if ..... What do you think?”*

These are tough and extraordinary times, but God is with us and wants to shape us through his Word, ready for the new world that awaits us.

Keep safe and stay well.

*Adrian*

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

**On-line worship** This Sunday, 3rd May, we aim once again 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. We also have an online service of Compline every Wednesday evening -if you would like to take part then do contact Matthew for details. You can also view the service on Facebook.

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](http://www.leicestertreeoflife.org) and also their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/LeicTreeofLife/](http://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](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online)

'**Pray As You Go**' ([www.pray-as-you-go.org/](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/) ) provides a simple Bible reflection each morning, with music to help you pray.

**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>

Don't forget to visit the **St. Mary's website and Facebook page**. Keeping in touch within our congregation and wider community without physical contact is difficult—but easier with social media. Facebook is a helpful 'platform' which can host conversations, images, events and even

live services. If you are interested in joining St Mary's 'Page' you will need a Facebook account. Matthew can help out with any problems, so please do contact him by phone or email. Also do check the website regularly for information, news, prayers and reflections.

### **Reflections for Eastertide with Launde Abbey**

Launde Abbey are offering an opportunity to join them free of charge, for themed reflections. Over the next few weeks David and Helen Newman offer Reflections for Eastertide, an exploration of the implications of Easter faith in contemporary life. To join in, just visit <https://laundeabbey.org.uk/laundeathome/reflections-for-eastertide/>

### **Bishop Guli on BBC Radio 4 Thursday 30 April, 7.45am**

Listen again to Bishop Guli sharing her thought for the day this week by going to the BBC website: [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08bwnbj](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08bwnbj)

**Coffee Morning! (yes, really!) :** you are all cordially invited to a church coffee morning on Thursday 37th May, from 10-11am. We will be meeting in the comfort of our own homes (with whatever type of hot beverage and biscuits that take your fancy!) and sharing in some relaxed and informal chat using our computers, laptops, phones or tablets and "Zoom". If you'd like to join us please send me a quick email and I'll send you some straightforward instructions for making the connection. Drop in at any time! *Adrian* (adrian.jones@zoho.com)

**Christian Aid goes virtual:** We are coming up to Christian Aid Week (10-16 May), and unsurprisingly it looks a little different this year. You can still get involved in various different ways - to see how, visit their website: [www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week)



# Listening to God's Word

Our Bible reading for this Sunday is: **John 10.1-10**

*The good shepherd and his sheep*

10 'Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.<sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.<sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.<sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.<sup>5</sup> But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognise a stranger's voice.'<sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore Jesus said again, 'Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.<sup>8</sup> All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them.<sup>9</sup> I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'

## ***Reflection* by the Revd Aphro McCullough**

I wonder how many of you watch the programme called A Yorkshire Farm? It's about the life of shepherdess Amanda Owen, her husband Clive and their nine children (Yes I did say 9) on their sheep farm in the Yorkshire Dales. It's a truly inspirational story that takes us through all the seasons showing us the beauty and the hardships of being a hill farmer and parents of a large family. All the children look after each other and share in all the joys and sorrows of life on the farm. The children, like the sheep are free to roam but when mum or dad calls they know it's time to go in for tea, or to get ready for school or to help with chores. They hear the call and they respond.

Sometimes Amanda and Clive use quad bikes to get around the fields and moors, sometimes they walk. At lambing time they are outside at all times in all weathers looking for yews who might be in difficulty but otherwise allowing nature to take its course. Their sheep know them and trust them. Like the children they hear the voices of Amanda and Clive and they respond.

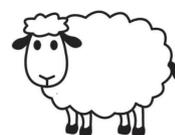
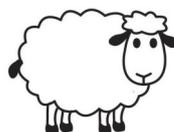
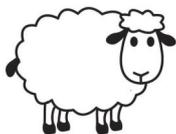
I see so many links between the Owens life and these two parables in John's gospel and I could go on all day .....

The single point I want make today is this, if we hear Jesus' voice, if we respond, if we walk through the gate of life into God's presence we will have life and have it to the full. In this very strange time when we all seem to be frantically filling our days with activity, when we may have become human doings and not human beings, let's try once again to listen for and hear the voice of Jesus in the quiet of our hearts and find the hope, the rest and the peace that he offers us today in this pandemic and beyond into the future.

I am reminded of the words of a hymn, familiar from childhood.:

*I heard the voice of Jesus say 'come unto me and rest  
Lay down thou weary on, lay down, thy head upon my breast'  
I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad  
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.*

May Christ the good shepherd enfold *you* with love, fill *you* with peace, and lead *you* in hope, to the end of *your* days; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you* and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**



**Church Family News:** We've been told the sad news of the death of Terence (Terry) Oswin who was a regular monthly member of our 8am Sunday Service. Terry was always ready for a chat and a laugh, and found great support in his Christian faith—we will miss him. Terry died at home and as yet the cause of his death is still unconfirmed.

We also heard of the death of Margaret Austin, wife of Roger and formerly well-known at St Mary's. Roger hopes to have a Thanksgiving Service for Margaret's life, later in the year at St Mary's.

Some of you will have met Jackie Wood, mother-in-law of Bet Wood who moved to Norfolk last year. Sadly Jackie has had cancer for some time now, and she too died recently. Her funeral is on 11th May.

**JIGSAWS:** The local community have kindly donated a significant number of jigsaw puzzles for people to use who may be isolated and in need of jigsaw stimulation. The puzzles have all been left to decontaminate for at least 5 days and then bagged up. Contact Matthew for a delivery or collection.

**Ramadan has begun:** Each year our Muslim neighbours share a season of fasting and prayer called Ramadan, during which they aim to grow spiritually and increase their giving and service to others. Ramadan 2020 began a week ago and because of the coronavirus pandemic these spiritual disciplines will prove to be an extra challenge. Do please encourage our friends and neighbours by wishing them "Ramadan Mubarak" . Ramadan 2020 ends with the festival of Eid al-Fitr on 23rd May. *Adrian*

***Changes to the way we organise ourselves*** : Keeping the church running during these challenging times means making some changes. We need to be more careful with how we spend our money for instance, because our income from weekly giving and bookings of the Parish Centre has fallen away. To help us deal with this, James, our Administrator, and Mark and Steph, caretaker and bookings secretary for the Parish Centre, have agreed to move onto furlough under the Government aid scheme. This will enable us to claim back 80% of their salary without any loss of income to them.

Adrian will check on the security of our buildings and deal with routine administration—please do bear with him! The newsletter will continue to be published so please send items for inclusion to the usual email address or the office by **Thursday 12.00 noon**, or contact Adrian on 0116 2702705 or 0116 270 4268.

***Ministry Team news:*** During the coronavirus pandemic the Benefice Ministry Team have met regularly online using Zoom to talk and to pray. Much of our time is taken checking that everyone in the two churches is well and safe, and thinking about the best ways to help us all stay connected and worshipping together in some way. We would love to hear from everyone else directly too:

- if you feel isolated or would just like a chat then do please let us know;
- if you are concerned about someone else then again please let us know;
- please give us feedback about the 'virtual services' and the Reflections in the newsletters;
- please let us know if there is something else you would find helpful- we are particularly interested to know if you would like a recorded Eucharist to follow at home;
- and please pray for us! Leading is a strange and unfamiliar task in these strange days.

Thank you - *Adrian*

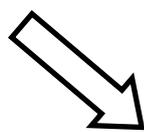
# InSPIREd

## The campaign to save our spire - a progress report

As we have previously reported, thanks to your efforts and generosity, the amount raised by the end of February was £33,400.

Sadly, but inevitably, the Coronavirus pandemic has put our exciting programme of events and outreach to the community on hold, but rest assured that when we all emerge from enforced hibernation, we will bring them back, and they will surely be all the more welcome.

*Nigel Siesage*



**ENVELOPES OR STANDING ORDER** 😊 😊 😊

Have you considered paying by monthly standing order instead of envelopes?

If you would like to do this, please contact Lorna Pollard :  
by telephone 0116 2704272  
or e mail at [stmarysknighton.giving@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysknighton.giving@gmail.com)

**CHEQUES FOR ST MARY'S** Please make cheques for St Mary's payable to **Knighton PCC**.

### 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: Rosalind Matthew**

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

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

The Parish Office is currently closed to the public. Sorry for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.

### 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](mailto:stmarysknighton.giving@gmail.com). If you are a taxpayer and gift aid your giving, our church can claim an additional 25%.

*giftaid it*

**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.**

**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)*

**Give thanks:** for the dedication and commitment to others shown by all our Key Workers.

### **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.

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.

In particular we pray for **Anne Squires, Ed Groves, Gary Joynes, Trevor Gutteridge, all those with the symptoms of Coronavirus infection,** and 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: **Terry Oswin, Lionel Peters, Jackie Wood.**

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