

St Mary Magdalen Church, Knighton

Sunday 26th July 2020

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

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



This Sunday we remember our patron, St Mary Magdalen, whose feast day falls on 22nd July each year. Our icon of her, pictured here, was painted by Br. Robert Lentz, OFM , and was originally commissioned for Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, to commemorate the election of Barbara Harris, the first woman bishop in the Anglican communion.

Collect

*Almighty God,
whose Son restored Mary Magdalene
to health of mind and body
and called her to be a witness to his resurrection:
forgive our sins and heal us by your grace,
that we may serve you in the power of his risen life;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

Amen.

When can we re-open our church buildings?

Please be encouraged! At some point we *will* be re-opening our buildings and re-starting worship together! The Government's review of our local lockdown later this coming week will determine what sort of time-scale we can use, but our PCC has already met and agreed the steps we need to take towards making it possible once again to worship in our church – once we have the green light.

August will be time to prepare and to help us it would be very valuable to have your views through our questionnaire. It's still available on our website or directly from Adrian. Full details are in the notes that come with the questions. Very many thanks to everyone who has already completed and returned the questionnaire.

Even when we can meet together, no doubt our life as a church will look and feel very different. It is difficult to feel anything but unhappy and disappointed about this, but as you look ahead do remember how faithful God has been to his people over many centuries of turmoil in the past. Kingdoms and empires have come and gone; there have been wars, famines and plagues before; and society has changed beyond recognition between generations – but our God has remained faithful and true, walking with his people through all these circumstances and upheavals. We can be confident that his loving care will continue and we will never lose his presence, help and friendship in our lives.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13.8)

Adrian

Matthew writes:

To assist with the 'Returning to Public Worship' survey recently forwarded, if you prefer to send responses online instead of via the post, please use this link to be taken to the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8HWXKXG>

TOGETHER in HOPE #togetherInHope

Together In Hope (TIH) is a new project set up by the Diocese of Leicester, the University of Leicester and Leicester City Football Club; it has widespread support from leaders and individuals across sports, business, arts, education, charity,

faith and community organisations. Its prime aims are to remind us about the many good news stories that come out of our city and its life and to help communities across the diocese explore the twin themes of togetherness and hope during the pandemic and its aftermath.

The Cathedral has launched a *Together In Hope* virtual message board, collecting and sharing messages of hope and all churches are being invited to explore with their local communities how best to nurture hope and work together for the common good, under the *Together In Hope* banner over the coming months.

Look out for news of more activities in the coming weeks and get in touch with Adrian if you have ideas about what we could do as a church to help draw our part of the city *Together in Hope*.

“Thank you” to all who work in our care homes:

Sincere thanks to everyone who kindly donated so generously to the Knighton Care Home Staff appeal. We raised in excess of £2400 with donations from parishioners and community alike. We will be distributing £200 each to 12 care homes in the Benefice & ward this week—the gift will be used directly to say ‘thank you’ to the staff for their dedication and commitment over the last months of the pandemic. Particular thanks to St Guthlac's PCC and Cllr Melissa March who have been incredibly helpful with the administrative processes and liaison with the care homes; they have been really touched by the church community's gesture of gratitude, which has meant a lot at this particularly challenging time.

Matthew

HOLY HABITS

How do we live as the Church *now*? - Eating Together

*“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**, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. ” (Acts 2.46-47)*

During this corona virus 'season' I'm reflecting week by week on the 'holy habits' that marked out the life of the first church, as Luke describes it in Acts. Perhaps it is time for us to go back to these key aspects of being the church, in our own challenging times.

Today we've reached the seventh of the ten 'holy habits': *“They broke bread in their homes **and ate together with glad and sincere hearts**”.*

On the face of it this is one of the most straightforward habits that the first Christians practised, but to really understand what it meant to them we need to look a bit further back into Luke's previous writing. In his Gospel Luke includes 60 references to food and drink and ten occasions in which Jesus is seen sharing a meal. This may explain why Luke was particularly keen to place food and eating together at the heart of discipleship community. Eating together allowed the early Christians to continue the way that Jesus himself had lived, sharing “table fellowship”.

The Gospel shows us that Jesus shared food with all types and conditions of people, often the most unlikely or unpopular, and he did this deliberately as a sign that God's kingdom includes everyone, despite our own tendencies to exclude those 'unlike' us. The early church followed

'his example, and their gatherings to eat together were down-to-earth representations of the heavenly banquet that Jesus often described in his parables and through his actions.

It was also at these times of eating together that Jesus himself 'got personal' as he told stories and taught, encouraging his companions to reflect a little more deeply on God and themselves. Here Jesus was entering into the more intimate and open nature of our relationships in those times when we share food. The first Christians also did this, since their shared meals were marked by their 'glad and sincere hearts'. These were clearly unthreatening and welcoming times, when people of all sorts could be themselves, in company with others, accepting each other.

The aftermath of our Corona Virus lockdown will not make it easy to eat together - quite naturally many of us will feel reticent about being so close, for so long, to other people. So we must rebuild our confidence in this key 'holy habit'. Perhaps the weather this autumn will be kind to us and allow us to meet and eat outdoors at first; or perhaps we might start by eating with trusted friends in our gardens. However we do it though, we need to remember the importance of these times and the opportunities they offer to grow in relationship with each other. Re-establishing this holy habit of meeting and eating together will also allow us, as the church, to demonstrate to the world that God welcomes and accepts us all, unconditionally and gladly – and that is a message of hope that we all need to hear.

In the meantime, keep safe and stay well.

Adrian



Listening to God's Word

Our Bible readings for this Sunday, for the feast of St Mary Magdalen, are: Song of Solomon 3.1-4 and **John 20.1-2,11-18**

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." **14** At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

REFLECTION: the Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

“The Apostle to the Apostles”

This title the early Church ascribed to Mary of Magdala shows the esteem in which she was held. She is always listed in scripture first in any group of women, as Peter is seen as the primary man of the twelve. She certainly appears to be a follower and financial supporter of Jesus in his earlier ministry and is highlighted as being a witness to Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

Mary Magdalene is mentioned twelve times in the canonical gospels, that is, more than most of the twelve, and more than any other 'non-family' woman. She also appears to have a similarly important place in a number of non-canonical gnostic writings including a work called The Gospel of Mary. These gnostic writings highlight not only her own import, but also a tension between her and Peter, a tension seemingly based on gender difference and a vying for position. This unsavoury vying for position is seen in other poor examples of male discipleship in the Gospels we have in our Bibles!

Due to 'confusing' sermons by Pope Gregory 1st at the end of the sixth century, Mary of Magdala is seen to be one and the same person as Mary of Bethany and the sinful woman who 10 anoints Jesus' feet. There is no evidence of this, despite the Roman Church wanting to maintain such a synergy. Another interesting theory which has more credibility, is that Mary of Magdala is 'the beloved disciple' of St John. This for some scholars has its merits, as long as we don't extend the thought to her being Jesus' 'lover' or even wife! A very famous scholar with whom I did some work in time past, Raymond Brown disagreed with me... but gently!

I guess the good people of the benefice know all this anyway from years of observing this one of two Patronal Festivals, Mary Magdalen being 22nd of July.

Whether this is the case or not, who can fail to know and be really moved by the tension filled beauty of the Johannine Resurrection text telling of the meeting outside the tomb between Jesus and Mary. Her tear filled eyes mistaking Jesus for the more to be 'expected' gardener. However, his voice speaking her name enables her vision to clear and she realises on behalf of all creation, the enormity of what had happened. We can do little better on 22nd July (or today!) to reread this glorious text in John 20, and rejoice with Mary in the power of the resurrection both for her and for each of us.



“Images of Knighton”

Entries Wanted
for
2021 Calendar
Competition



Have you got a photographic eye, or can you paint, draw, create (any medium) an image of Knighton?

Adult and under 18s categories

The panel of judges is made up of a local councillor, artists, photographer & Vicar

Free calendars to successful entrants

Please send high quality original jpeg images by -

Monday 14th September

to spireappeal@gmail.com

Queries to Rev. Gough-07754961997



St Mary's Knighton Spire Appeal

Church Family News

Sad News: Last week we heard the sad news that our friend ***Ray Wood*** died peacefully at Welford Court earlier in the week. Ray played such an active and cheerful role in church life at St Mary's that he was well known to many, and a great source of encouragement too. He will be very fondly remembered. Our thoughts and prayers are with his children Sue and Dave, and with their wider family.

Ray's funeral will be on Wednesday 29th July, and it is hoped that the hearse will stop by outside St Mary's at around 9.30am for a prayer and a final goodbye from the church he loved.

Brian Small : Early this week we heard from his family that Brian Small had also died, just six weeks after his wife Veronica. Brian, like Veronica, was a real fixture of the life of St Mary's and his contribution over the years was inestimable - he was a member of the PCC until just two years ago and his wise and perceptive counsel, mixed with a hint of mischief, was valued by all the recent vicars.

Brian had been unwell for a long time but seemed to have been successfully adjusting to a different life after a move to a local care home. After a short spell in hospital, Brian died at home surrounded by his family, just as he had wanted. Please remember Helen, Stephen and Judith and their families in your prayers this week. Brian's funeral will be on Friday 14th August and we hope to hold a joint service of thanksgiving for him and Veronica in October.

Moving News: ***Paul and Sue Bonnett*** are on the move north! Having completed the complications of paperwork during lockdown, Paul and Sue are now able to make their long-awaited move to Lancashire. Many of you were kind enough to make a contribution towards their present, as an expression of our appreciation for them as friends and valued church members over many years. We've also compiled a special book of all the messages and memories that you've sent and I'll post this onto them as soon as they are settled.

Paul and Sue, with our thanks and love, we wish you all the very best, and God's blessing in this next season of life.

Adrian

Could you help local Somali children?

With the pandemic forcing school closure, those whose families do not have English as a first language are most at risk of falling behind in their learning. I have been approached by our nearby Somali community asking for help for primary and secondary aged children to assist with tutoring, either online or, when appropriate, in person. If you have any subject, or English language, skills that you may wish to share, please do think about whether you could spare an hour a week or fortnight, thanks. *Matthew*

Knighton Benefice Magazine—The July/August edition of the Magazine is now available and has been sent out by email. Those of you who normally receive our church information by post should receive your copy very soon—please bear with us as we print and post! The magazine can also be seen on the church website. Many thanks to Nigel Siesage and all the contributors for another excellent issue.

Thought for the Week:

"No I do not become discouraged. You see, God has not called me to a ministry of success. He has called me to a ministry of mercy."
Mother Teresa.

"Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up."
St Paul, letter to the Galatians, 6.9

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**Please note that Aphro and Matthew are both taking time off this week
(but not together!)**



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>

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. 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.

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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 pray for all those working towards a vaccine for Covid 19, the Corona Virus. Pray that there will be a spirit of co-operation and shared endeavour, and that the resulting vaccines will be quickly and cheaply available around the world.

Praying for the Church: Along with others across the Diocese please pray this week for rest and restoration amongst God's people, and for everyone who has been caught up in the pandemic and now needs a holiday. Pray for:

- rest and refreshment for all on holiday and safe journeys for all who travel
- ;all those who work in the tourism and hospitality industry, especially those who have been made redundant in recent months, and for struggling businesses ;
- a rediscovery of the concept of Sabbath in our busy world.

Praying for the Parish: Please pray for the peace and well-being of all those who live on Craighill Road, Craighill Walk, Milford Road, Welford Road, Houlditch 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 **Gary Joynes, Anne Squires, Ed Groves** 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: **Ray Wood and Brian Small.**