

St Mary Magdalen Church, Knighton

Sunday 22nd November 2020

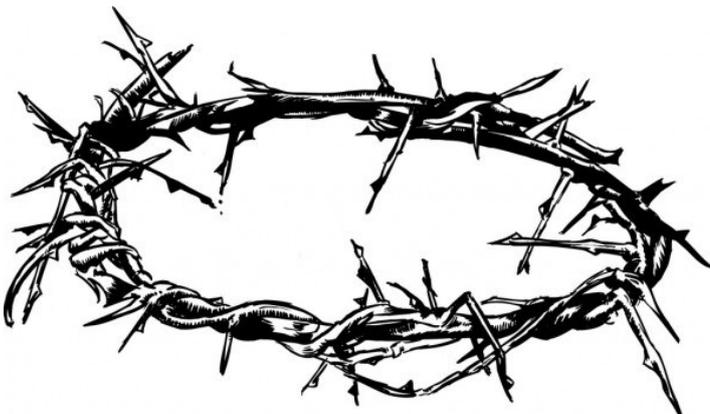
Christ the King

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

Collect

Eternal Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven
that he might rule over all things as Lord and King:
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit
and in the bond of peace,
and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen



“Whatever the weather”

Last week I heard someone talking about having all four seasons of weather in just one day! I knew what they meant - one of those days that combines all the extremes, both good and bad, and consequently leaves us not really knowing how to respond. I don't think I'm alone in experiencing those sorts of days in relation to my feelings and moods as well as the weather during the pandemic.

We're now into the third week of the second national lockdown and as I write it's still very unclear what will happen when we reach the end, on 2nd December. This uncertainty may be one of the main reasons that we feel so up and down at the moment – most of us feel better when life is planned and relatively predictable.

So, as we don't know what restrictions will apply through Advent and up to Christmas we have been planning services and events that are flexible or that can go ahead regardless. Inevitably Christmas will be different this year, for churches as much as everyone else, but we want to ensure that there is a good chance for everyone to be part of some form of Christian celebration.

As long as we are allowed to worship in church there will be regular services in the run up to Christmas and within the benefice there will be a service on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day. There will also be special worship recordings online for those who have internet access.

We aim to keep contact with all our neighbours, and especially the families who normally come to share the celebrations with us – through our Christmas card to every household and a 'special delivery' for children to enjoy.

So please remember that above the clouds the sun is still shining - and we celebrate a God who has shown through the incarnation at

Christmas, his deep commitment to all people.

"He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5.45) so we can be certain that he will be with us *all* whatever the Christmas forecast.

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

Thanks

Tony and I would like to say thank you for your kind thoughts and prayers. We are so happy to report that Tony has recovered well, and he is enjoying the Sunday services and taking part in Wednesday Compline, sending our very best wishes to all, *Tony and Sue Sansome*.

Listening to God's Word

Our Bible readings for Sunday 22nd November are:

Ezekiel 34.11-16, 20-24

¹¹ "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. ¹² As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. ¹⁴ I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will tend my sheep and make them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁶ I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

²⁰ "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: see, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹ Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, ²² I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. ²³ I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken.

Matthew 25.31-end

The sheep and the goats

³¹ 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered

before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ 'Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

³⁷ 'Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?"

⁴⁰ 'The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

⁴¹ 'Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was ill and in prison and you did not look after me."

⁴⁴ 'They also will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or ill or in prison, and did not help you?"

⁴⁵ 'He will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me."

⁴⁶ 'Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.'

Reflection by Revd Matthew Gough

Here we are at the end of the Church Year, with Advent next week, Christ the King-the High point of the liturgical calendar. I must admit I don't feel very high. I wonder if you like me, have had it with Covid-I hate it. Our world's have shrunk. As our freedoms and horizons diminished with normal life as we knew it and took for granted gone.

I wonder if we cannot stand the lack of control which the pandemic has brought. Though I note many of parishioners who manage to cope the best, are those who are used to isolation, impairment and restrictions dues to health and mobility conditions.

Our reading today, has weakness at its heart. How we identify with and find Christ amongst the weak, poor, vulnerable and lonely. It's a challenge to the Protestant mind-set as it appears to reward salvation based on good works rather than faith alone, How we look after the 'least' echoes into eternity deciding our destination into heaven or eternal fire. We pay more attention to it as it is the only Eternal Judgement Passage in the Gospel of Matthew and it doesn't appear in the other gospels.

The language of brothers being the least has led some commentators to conclude that Jesus may be talking about his disciples, How we look out for those following Christ matters. And in following Christ, one should suffer and struggle and therefore we should help them, and that is us, then we help each other. Most writes seem to conclude the poor are the poor of society and how we help them, shows how close we are to Christ -the natural outworking of our faith should lead us to help the destitute.

20 years ago, I was working in Israel amongst homeless Russian immigrants. I spent a brief time teaching them English. And the many of the homeless were addicted to drugs and alcohol and often found lying around on benches or slumped on the ground in the Mediterranean sun. One of their community's main leaders was a guy called Alex who himself has gone to Israel from Russia as a missionary to the homeless but himself managing to end up homeless and needing to get himself off

alcohol which he did. Christ worked through him and he had the respect and high regard of all the other homeless men. It taught me something about God working in surprising ways even when things do not go as planned, even the ways that Christian plans say they should.

This high point of the Christ the King is in part using this gospel of Matthew as it promises the return of the Son of Man which is the finale of the Christian story. We look forward to a time of Jesus' return. Advent will be a time of preparation. In 2020, we will not have our usual comforts and freedoms, perhaps we will better identify with the least. Perhaps we will see more of Jesus in others, and experience Christ in our own sufferings.

That is the comfort I take. That again and again we most likely find Christ most when we are least and in our own weaknesses. In this time of preparation, may we know Christ as we learn to dwell in a state of vulnerability.

Matthew





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
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



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

Living in Hope-York Advent Course

4 Advent Sundays, Starting 29th November 7-8pm.

Getting to the heart of Advent's message, how we live our lives in preparation for the return of Christ.

We will focus each week on the York Course themes of Living well, Dying well, & and the afterlife (Hell? Heaven?). The big questions we all ask in an enquiring, supportive space, hosted by our Living Waters group.

£2 suggested donation for the course book.

You can join in over the phone or on Zoom.

Contact Matthew to secure a place and a booklet and the joining details.

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 (day off normally Friday)

Assistant Curate: Revd Matthew Gough 07754 961997

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

Revd Aphro McCullough: 0116 283 7887

Email: aphro.mccullough@btinternet.com

Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster

Email: safpta6@gmail.com 07966 376905

Revd Janet Gasper

Email: janet.gasper@hotmail.co.uk 0116 288 9646

Reader: Fiona Wingate

Email: Fiona.wingate@talktalk.net 07515 752954

Churchwarden: Sian Howard

sian.howard@tiscali.co.uk 07932 557646

Parish Administrator: James Gutteridge 0116 270 2705

Email: 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. 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 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 Elms Road, Knighton Drive, Knighton Road, Northcote Road, Newstead 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. In particular we remember **Joy Drinkwater**.

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.