

# St Mary Magdalen Church, Knighton

**Sunday 17th January 2021**

2nd Sunday of Epiphany

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

## **Collect**

Almighty God,  
in Christ you make all things new:  
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,  
and in the renewal of our lives  
make known your heavenly glory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

Amen



## **“How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”**

I wonder if this quote from Psalm 137 might sum up something of your current feeling about being a Christian during a pandemic and a lockdown which has resulted in all our familiar services and forms of worship being cancelled?

The ancient Israelites, who prayed their aching complaint so long ago, were in exile – living in a foreign country far from home and surrounded by people who cared nothing for their God or their faith. The temptation was to give up trying to be distinctive, but rather to just be like everyone else. If God had forgotten them then why should they make an effort to remain faithful to Him? It must have felt as if the strength needed to trust Him and find hope for a better future was just so far out of their reach.

Perhaps this is your feeling at this moment too.

Psalm 137 is not a happy song. It is made of misery and dejection, bubbling up in desperate anger.... but there is one shaft of light in the gloom. That light is the determination of these ancient Israelites to hang on to the remembrance of Jerusalem. It is a refusal to forget, come what may, where they have come from and all the blessings that God gave them. Their foolishness and departure from His ways have led them to their present dreadful captivity, but they will not forget that vision of life with God that was theirs and, they pray, will one day be theirs again.

We know from the rest of the Old Testament that people of special faithfulness and courage (Nehemiah and Ezra amongst others) would eventually lead a remnant of the people back to Jerusalem, and then rebuild it and re-establish their worship and Godly life together.

For the moment we too are in a sort of exile – unable to worship in our churches or even to meet each other. We too should hang on to all that

we remember about the goodness of God and the life that He so desires for us to have together.

This is a testing exile but it will not be endless – and nor need it be fruitless. If we are defiantly persistent in our prayer, in our good deeds, and in our hope for a better future, then perhaps we will gain new songs of joy and inspiration when the pandemic has passed.

Yours in friendship and Christ's service,

*Adrian*

## **Listening to God's Word**

Our Bible readings for Sunday 17th January are:

### **1 Samuel 3.1-20**

**3** The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

<sup>2</sup> One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. <sup>3</sup> The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup> Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, 'Here I am.' <sup>5</sup> And he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.'

But Eli said, 'I did not call; go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down.

<sup>6</sup> Again the LORD called, 'Samuel!' And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.'

'My son,' Eli said, 'I did not call; go back and lie down.'

<sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

<sup>8</sup> A third time the LORD called, 'Samuel!' And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.'

Then Eli realised that the LORD was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup> So Eli told Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!'

Then Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

<sup>11</sup> And the LORD said to Samuel: 'See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. <sup>12</sup> At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family – from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup> For I told him that I would judge his family for ever because of the sin he knew about; his sons uttered blasphemies against God, and he failed to restrain them. <sup>14</sup> Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, "The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering."'

<sup>15</sup> Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, <sup>16</sup> but Eli called him and said, 'Samuel, my son.'

Samuel answered, 'Here I am.'

<sup>17</sup> 'What was it he said to you?' Eli asked. 'Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you.' <sup>18</sup> So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, 'He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes.'

<sup>19</sup> The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognised that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD.

## **John 1.43-51**

### **Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael**

<sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, 'Follow me.'

<sup>44</sup> Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'

<sup>46</sup> 'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' Nathanael asked.

'Come and see,' said Philip.

<sup>47</sup> When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, 'Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.'

<sup>48</sup> 'How do you know me?' Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, 'I saw you while you were still under the fig-tree before Philip called you.'

<sup>49</sup> Then Nathanael declared, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.'

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said, 'You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You will see greater things than that.' <sup>51</sup> He then added, 'Very truly I tell you, you will see "heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on" the Son of Man.'

## **Homily from Revd Canon Dr Stephen Foster**

The calling of the boy Samuel is set at a watershed of Israel's history. It is fairly early in the life of a nation 'settled' in The Promised Land.

'Settled' though is rather a misnomer. Here, between the period of the Judges and of the King's, things were far from perfect...tribal disputes were threatening to tear the nation apart, as in Judges 21, 'all the people did what was right in their own eyes'...not least the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, corrupt priests and scoundrels...and worse still, from our reading for today, 'the word of the Lord was rare in those days.'

I say this as a prequel to Samuel's call, because this context, this 'sitz im leben' as biblical scholars call it, gives the story a particular import, and 'stand alone' quality. In this sense, this 'call story' like the parables in the New Testament can be applied to any age and culture.

'Speak for your servant is listening.'

So, firstly, is a 'calling' for particular individuals, or for any individual? Is it only certain people who are 'Samuels' in their calling by God, or in this sense, can we all bear the name 'Samuel' in our being?

Often we hear of some professions as 'real callings', where others are referred to only as 'jobs.'

'Speak for your servant is listening.'

Some folk have a very romantic notion of 'call', and apply it only to such societal roles as priest, doctor, nurse, social worker etc...where someone 'other', in our terms God, has overseen a particular vocational road for a particular person, whereas with others, he hasn't.

'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Well, sometimes I think we are rather too precious about 'calling' being for the few. I believe that the canvas of what people can be called to is a lot broader than we might first imagine. Samuel at first was simply

'called' by God to what, he did not know. Then as he grew, he realised the call was to a kind of enigmatic prophecy.

If we 'lie down' and in our passivity, place ourselves in the hands of God, our calling by him in so many ways and to do so many different things can become that much the clearer.

'Speak for your servant is listening.'

I myself found it very hard to listen to God. As a teenager, I was very intent on telling God what 'me, myself, and I' wanted to do!

An airline pilot, a barrister, an opera singer, a lecturer....the list of possibilities seemed boundless. But whilst one or two of these became very much part of me, I knew they were not at my very core. Strangely, the last thing I wanted to be was a priest, the very thing I believe I was/am called to be.

'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Rather like Samuel, in any clarity, I didn't have a sense of God calling me for some time. When I did, I pushed it away..yet still there was a 'nag'. After being selected for training at 19, I wasn't convinced I had heard correctly. Even on the day of ordination, two degrees later at 24, God was annoyingly quiet!

'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Secondly, now substitute St Mary's or St Guthlac's each as a sort of collective 'Samuel'. Then ask, how do we hear God's call to us as a congregation in the power of the Spirit?

Against a background of attentive listening, how do we discern God's call to us in our corporate way forward?...how we discern where he wishes to lead us?

In this story and beyond, Samuel's ears became more and more attuned to the will of God in forwarding the life of a nation...sometimes

successfully, sometimes not...eg in the institution of Kingship.  
Making faithful decisions based on faithful 'listening'  
cannot only be the purview of the Parish Priest, nor just of the PCC, but  
of every Christian heart who asks

'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Lastly, I wonder if the whole Church is actively listening to God's voice in terms of Christian Unity? Following Jesus' words in John's Gospel, are we in our denominations listening to and acting on God's voice that the Church should be one, so that the world may believe?

When I was on General Synod for eight years, the ecumenical debates rightly encouraged and supported local ecumenical partnerships like the one at The University of Leicester. Here we listen to God and each other as we are called to work together for the communities in which God has placed us.

Where we fall down is at a theological level where progress toward 'full visible unity' lags behind excellent local progress such as the above. God's call for us to be one 'so that the world may believe' will not happen until our fractures are healed and we put our energy into helping such healing.

So, how well do we listen when the Lord speaks to us about our own calling, the shared calling of our two churches, and the calling of the whole Church to be one?

'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

I hope and pray we are in each of these ways.

*Fr Stephen*

**Virtual Christmas Fayre:** this has raised the sum of £281.40p. which is to go to the Spire Fund. Thank you for your support - a good sum raised in such a short time! I still have pickled onions, jam, chutney and marmalade available!

To order just give me a ring Tel 2881306 or E-mail

[judiandbernard@talktalk.net](mailto:judiandbernard@talktalk.net).

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

Each day at midday a local church from the South Leicester Partnership will host a midday time of pilgrimage prayer from Monday 18th January.

The theme this year "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit" has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland and expresses their vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Church leading prayers</u>
Day 1	Mon 18 Jan	Lunchtime at 12:00	St Thomas More Church
Day 2	Tues 19 Jan	Lunchtime at 12:00	St John the Baptist Church
Day 3	Wed 20 Jan	Lunchtime at 12.00	Leicester Quakers <i>(Silent Meeting for Worship)</i>
Day 4	Thurs 21 Jan	Lunchtime at 12:00	Stoneygate Baptist Church
Day 5	Fri 22 Jan	Lunchtime at 12:00	Christchurch

### Details for joining our Zoom Pilgrimage Prayers

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87907520377?pwd=Y0JUJ3NoTVdOMk1DRFZtL1ZrM01FUT09>

Meeting ID: 879 0752 0377

Passcode: 467079

### To Join by Phone

Dial by your location: 0131 460 1196 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 879 0752 0377

Passcode: 467079

Here a link to the booklet with details for each day of the pilgrimage -

[link to document](#) [pdf]

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**St Mary's, Knighton** is hosting the Sunday launch service which this year will be via Zoom and anticipated to last for approximately 40 minutes from 6.30pm, **Sunday 17th January**. We look forward to seeing you then, or phone in via the details below. Please contact Matthew if you would like to ready or pray.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/91375339451?pwd=Q1pYNEN2Z3BiYlBWZHp5N0hpd0VKZz09>

Meeting ID: 913 7533 9451 Passcode: 316

Dial by your location 0131 460 1196 Meeting ID: 913 7533 9451

## **A message from the Police about scams and frauds.**

A fake NHS text message has recently been circulating, informing people that they're eligible to apply for the COVID-19 vaccine. The scam message reads "we have identified that you are eligible to apply for your vaccine" and then prompts you to click on a link for further information or to 'apply' for the vaccine. This takes you to an extremely convincing fake NHS website, where fraudsters are attempting to coerce people into divulging personal or financial information. If you receive a text or email that asks you to click on a link or for you to provide information, such as your name, credit card or bank details, it's a scam. Any text message containing a link should be treated with caution. The best way to find information from GOV.UK, or any other agency, is to visit that particular website via a trusted source (such as through Google or Bing) and do not click on links in unsolicited texts or emails. Cold calls regarding the vaccine are also beginning to take place, where scammers are asking people to pay for the vaccine over the phone. If you receive one of these calls, hang up.

## **REPORTING A CYBERCRIME**

We all make mistakes and these days the scams can be incredibly convincing. If you think you, or someone you know has been a victim of online fraud:

- Let your bank know what's happened immediately.
- Report the offence to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or via their website <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>.
- The new COVID Fraud Hotline (0800 587 5030) has also been set up by in partnership with Crimestoppers to enable individuals to report fraud within the public sector during the pandemic. There is also an online reporting feature which can be found here:

<http://covidfraudhotline.org>

If you need to seek further advice you can call us on 101.

## Treasurer needed!



Within the life of any local church, the role of Treasurer is a key one, and not just to balance the books!

All Christians have a Godly call to use our money and other blessings wisely, for the benefit of others as well as ourselves, and to support the life and work of the church. The Treasurer encourages and helps us in this, particularly by watching over how the church handles money - ensuring bills are paid, accurate accounts are kept, and that our money is safe and working well.

Clearly the Treasurer needs to be trustworthy, reliable and capable! They need to be able to work with the PCC and others who also handle our money, and they need to be a person of faith and integrity.

Our current Treasurer, David Stanyer, is going to step down soon after many years of faithful service - we owe him a huge debt of gratitude and there will be occasion for fuller and more public thanks to David later...but in the meantime St Mary's needs a new Treasurer to serve the church in these challenging times.

Please do pray that we will find the right person. Please do talk to anyone you think might fulfil this role well, and please consider if this is something you could offer to us yourself - there is time to learn from David, and to gain the extra skills and understanding that help. A small group of PCC members is also meeting to ensure our new Treasurer has a good 'job description' and proper support.

Do talk to David or myself as well, if you have ideas for our new Treasurer.

*Adrian*

## Mini Musicathon Online

It was disappointing that the Musicathon planned originally for the Spring and then Autumn had to be postponed. As a thankyou to those generous sponsors who committed their support despite the lack of performance, some of the musicians kindly agreed to record themselves for an Online Mini Musicathon. We hope you enjoy the music as well as some of the breathtaking views of theSpire being repaired! Please visit "Knighton Benefice" You-Tube Channel or directly via the link below.

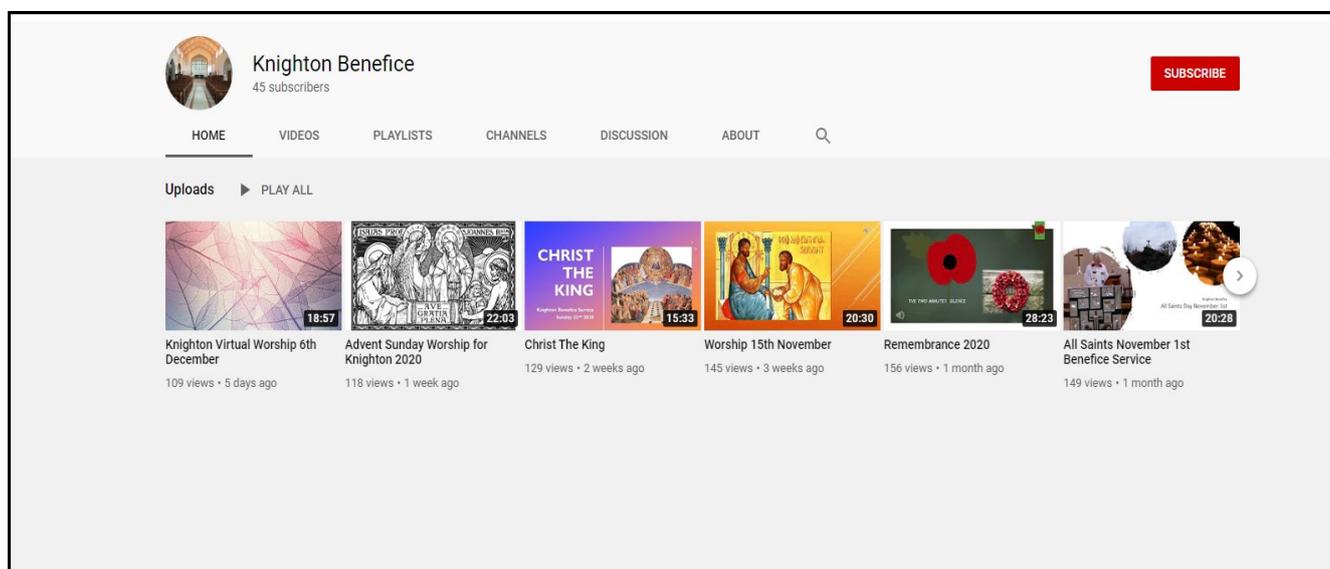
<https://youtu.be/J7I5JQzF7jQ>

## Online Worship and Reflection

Our Christmas services are still available for everyone to view and join in with, on our YouTube channel and website. As we start a new year we will continue to produce a short act of Virtual Worship each week and if you haven't had a look yet can I encourage you to try it out?

Ahead of each Sunday those of you with email will receive the link to watch directly and the video is available on the website, You Tube Channel and Facebook pages. The link to our Youtube channel is

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChYDSfNmiB2Zamsaz\\_EdZSg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChYDSfNmiB2Zamsaz_EdZSg) or access via [www.stmarysknighton.co.uk](http://www.stmarysknighton.co.uk)



The image shows a screenshot of the YouTube channel page for 'Knighton Benefice'. The channel has 45 subscribers and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button. The navigation menu includes HOME, VIDEOS, PLAYLISTS, CHANNELS, DISCUSSION, and ABOUT. The 'Uploads' section is active, displaying a grid of video thumbnails with their titles, durations, and view counts:

Video Title	Duration	Views	Time Ago
Knighton Virtual Worship 6th December	18:57	109 views	5 days ago
Advent Sunday Worship for Knighton 2020	22:03	118 views	1 week ago
Christ The King	15:33	129 views	2 weeks ago
Worship 15th November	20:30	145 views	3 weeks ago
Remembrance 2020	28:23	156 views	1 month ago
All Saints November 1st Benefice Service	20:28	149 views	1 month ago

## **Week of Christian Unity**

Each day at midday a local church from the South Leicester Partnership will host a midday time of pilgrimage prayer from Monday 18th January (details to follow).

St Mary's, Knighton is hosting the Sunday launch service which this year will be via Zoom and anticipated to last for approximately 40 minutes from 6.30pm, Sunday 17th January. We look forward to seeing you then, or phone in via the details below. Please contact Matthew if you would like to ready or pray.

Topic: South Leicester Christian Unity Service

Time: Jan 17, 2021 06:30 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/91375339451?  
pwd=Q1pYNEN2Z3BiYlBWZHp5N0hpd0VKZz09](https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/91375339451?pwd=Q1pYNEN2Z3BiYlBWZHp5N0hpd0VKZz09)

Meeting ID: 913 7533 9451

Passcode: 316

Dial by your location

0131 460 1196 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 913 7533 9451

### **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)

**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.

### **Wednesday Evening Compline**

Our Wednesday evening Compline. Through Zoom has become a feature of the pandemic months. Everyone is welcome to join us, even if you haven't tried it out before, via Zoom or by phone-in from 8pm each week. Do ask Matthew for more information.

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

## **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.

## **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 pray for the people of the United States as their new President is inaugurated this week. Pray for peace and good order, and for a renewed sense of being 'One Nation Under God'. Pray for President Biden and his team as they face big challenges.

**Praying for the Church:** Please pray for Christian Unity in our neighbourhood, in our city and across the UK and the world. Pray that we might all recognise the unity that underlies our faith, whatever it's particular expression, and more visibly be one church in mission, outreach and voice.

**Praying for the Parish:** Please pray for the peace and well-being of all those who live on Lambourne Road, Fairholme Road, Cairnsford Road, Ferndale Road, Northdene 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. We especially pray for **Bob Newell** and **Anne Squires**. 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.: **Hazel Rae-Smith and John Eckersley**. We 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.*