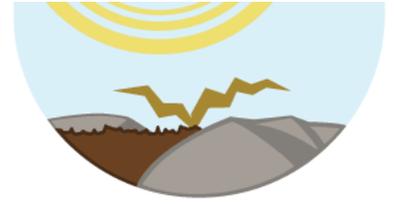




**St Mary Magdalen Church,
Knighton**



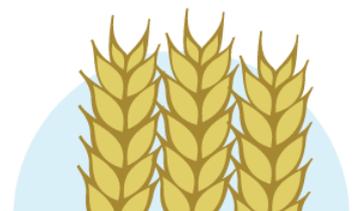
Sunday 12th July 2020

Fifth Sunday after Trinity

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

Collect

*Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.*



Leicester Lockdown and reopening Churches:

we need your views.

Our 'local lockdown' in Leicester will be reviewed by the Government on 18th July. Along with most others in the city we have taken seriously the need to 'go back a step' and have followed the Bishop's instruction to keep our building closed and continue with worship, prayer and other aspects of our church life in other ways.

At some point (and soon, God willing) the Leicester lockdown will be eased and we can then restart our thinking and preparations for reopening our buildings—both for private prayer and for public worship.

The PCCs of both St Mary's and St Guthlac's are ready to review our previous discussions about reopening, once we know what the Government has decided. It would also be extremely useful to know what everyone else in our congregations and wider church family thinks about the prospect of reopening, to support our discussions and decision making.

In order to gather your views we have produced a short questionnaire, which is included with this newsletter. It sets out the background to reopening and asks, in the light of this, what *you* think is the best way ahead at this point.

The national and local situation is changing all the time, but having your views will help our PCCs make these difficult decisions. No doubt there will be a range of views, and not everyone will agree, but this is an opportunity for us all to pray together as we prepare to answer the questions, and so to discover what *God* wants in this situation. Acts 13, verses 1-2, tell us that the Church in Antioch were praying and fasting together when God's Holy Spirit gave them instructions about the next steps they should take.

So please do take a few minutes to read, to pray and to answer our questions. Then please return the questionnaire as soon as you can to Adrian—contact details are on the sheet. You are welcome to remain anonymous if you prefer.

As we look to the future let's remember how faithful God has always been in the past and how nothing can separate us from his love.... and do be reassured that at some point we *will* be able to say once more "*the season of singing has come*" (Song of Songs 2.12).

Adrian

Prayers continue....



Although our buildings are closed, our prayers continue. Our Ministry Team pray regularly for the church and for all its congregation members, as well as for the wider church family and the local community. Prayer is God's gift to us, and releases his power into situations and people's lives in ways that are often beyond our understanding or imagining.

If you would like to be prayed for, or have on your heart someone ill or in need, then do please let us know. In the first instance contact Adrian or Matthew in confidence. We will ask if you would like a name added to the prayer requests on the newsletter or to our 'continuing prayer list', or if you would prefer not to share your request more widely. We can pray with you on the phone, call around and sit in the garden or pray for you later in our regular prayers at home.

We will pray alongside you for two weeks and look expectantly for God at work. And of course, do pray yourselves—God is listening!

How do we live as the Church *now*? - Sharing Resources

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ **All the believers were together and had everything in common.** ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ 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, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. " (Acts 2.42-47)

When the first Christians began to meet together as the first church, in Jerusalem following the Day of Pentecost, Luke tells us in Acts that they grew in ten "holy habits" - a shared pattern of life that reflected what they were learning about the person and life of Jesus. I have been reflecting on how this pattern of life might help us to understand how we might live as the church *now*, in the time of pandemic and lockdown, and as we ease out of our restrictions into a changed world.

This week we read about a 'holy habit' that is, frankly, one of the most challenging for us in our contemporary society and modern church: the sharing of resources - "**All the believers ... had everything in common.**"

Here and also in Acts 4, Luke gives us a picture of the first Christians supporting one another and those in need in the wider community by the generous sharing of their resources. They shared and sold possessions to create a common fund which could be used to support those in need of income or resources, and it may also have provided support for the apostles as church leaders. Their actions stood starkly in contrast to the culture of the time, and it remains so today. Much of 21st-century Western culture encourages us to live separate, independent lives protecting our individuality, our privacy and our belongings, rather than sharing.

'Having everything in common' is not about offering others what you can spare. Nor is it about taking from others what you fancy. To share something requires us to change our *relationships*—both with the *things* we are sharing and also with the *people* with whom we share. We have to let go of our control of our things, and have more thought about how we use them.

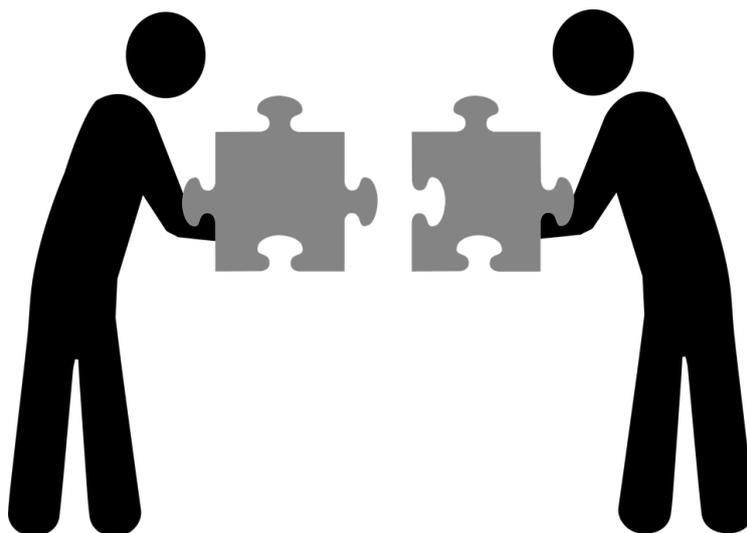
We also have to let go of our need to be in control when it comes to people; sharing tasks with others, giving our ideas and thoughts to discussions, in building friendships and in working alongside others. We also have to be ready to admit our needs so that we can *receive* from others. We must notice and lay aside our own deep desires to possess more and indulge our greed, and work towards balanced and mutual relationships that are not controlled by selfishness.

This is a challenge! Sharing can be costly and demanding - but it is also the way that we create a church that provokes the world through the demonstration of real love across the whole of life.

Through our lockdown we have all seen the deep need we have for authentic relationships with others, and many people have found new ways of sharing time and gifts unselfishly. Our friends and neighbours know that there is a deeper, more precious and more satisfying way to live—our challenge 'on the other side of lockdown' is to show them that this is life together following Jesus, and to welcome them too on our shared journey towards 'life in all it's fulness'.

In the meantime, keep safe and stay well.

Adrian



Listening to God's Word

Our Bible readings for this Sunday are:

Isaiah 55.10-13 and **Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

The parable of the sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.'

¹⁸ 'Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.'



REFLECTION: “Mind the Gap” by the Revd Matthew Gough

We hear this when using the underground in London tube stations. Mind the Gap.

But it's also doing the round describing phenomenon of our relationships in lockdown. As we are maybe seeing a lot less people. Our social lives have contracted. More time spent alone. More time in introspection. Less busy, Less distractions. More time to ponder. More time to worry. More time to over think the fewer interactions we may have.

Mind the gap tries to get people aware that there is a greater degree of uncertainty in our relations and more scope for misunderstanding and upset on both sides of any conversation.

Perhaps the usual healthy discussion, banter over a cup of tea where you could gently joke at a friend's expense may now be higher stakes as the phone, email, or zoom takes away some of the more subtle pauses of body language, facial expressions and timing which we take for granted in person. Equally I have also found being cooped up at home with several others that sometimes minor, normally, trivial incidents can lead to bickering.

There needs to be a grand amnesty after lockdown-the fall out we had, disagreement, upset wiped clean.

Of course, as Christians we should be above this should we not? Doesn't our faith transform us? If it doesn't, what good is it?

We talk about faith as a gift. Gifts are graces given, not our choice. Though the bible also speaks of faith as something we cultivate. It is this gift and cultivation which is helpful to hold in mind when considering Jesus parable about the sower. I would encourage us to regard it having relevance to our lives in two significant ways. Being the recipient of seed AND ourselves as the sower.

I have preached on this passage and emphasised the need for three things to cultivate 'good soil' for spiritual growth- prayer, reading the bible and being in fellowship in church.

However, in the reading Jesus is addressing his disciples not as the soil like recipients, rather, having a role as sower. It is important for us to

cultivate our personal faith, but Christ calls us to respond and build his kingdom and share his good news to others.

There are many unloved, and broken people who need to know the love of God in their lives. They are made in the image of God. We all bear God's image, but many among us do not know that love.

We are called to show love and share the good news of the kingdom by both our words and actions.

If we see ourselves as the sower, spreading the good news, building god's kingdom, there is a generosity. Almost lavishness, wastefulness. The sower is not distinguishing between the best and worst of soils-the best or worst people, judging who is deserving or not. And so the challenge to us is to love without calculation, live lives and share words which point to a hope that we have in Christ. There may someone you know especially at this time needing the encouragement of faith in God.

The good soil is vital for our own faith to flourish but it is required to reproduce, to share-to not keep God's blessings to ourselves. Rather we are called to love in the way as God loves us-generously and without regard for how much we deserve such love.

Rev. Matthew

Watch Out! There are scammers about!

During our lockdown time there has been an increase in telephone and online scams—criminal hoaxers are after your bank details and your money.! Citizens Advice Bureau give us all the following advice to stay safe:

- be suspicious if you're contacted out of the blue, even if it's from a name you recognise;
- if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is;
- never send money to someone you've never met;;
- never give out your bank details unless you are **certain** you can trust the person contacting you ;
- don't be rushed – you never need to make a decision straight away

and if you feel pressured say "no";

- Suspect a scam? Hang up, wait five minutes to clear the line or use another phone to call ;back.

If you need help call Scams Action Service, on 0808 250 5050

InSPIREd

The campaign to save our spire

UPDATE and GOOD NEWS!

Thanks to the generosity and fund-raising efforts of so many people in the St Mary's and the wider benefice community, by the end of May we had raised £40,489 towards the cost of repairing the spire. This means that we have achieved our initial target, despite the very unusual circumstances, in only about 8 months! This certainly exceeds our expectations - but we cannot rest on our laurels.

Our plans have been based on the assumption of substantial contributions from charitable trusts and foundations. Applications have been submitted, but their success is not guaranteed, particularly in these very uncertain times, So if you have been meaning to donate but just haven't got round to it, please give now. Details are on the St Mary's website,.

We look forward to emerging from the lockdown hibernation so that we can resume our programme of social and fund-raising events.

Best wishes and thanks,

Nigel Siesage, Chair of the Appeal Group

Adrian Jones, Vicar



Church Family News

Our stained glass: Although the Church building is closed, we are keeping a close eye on maintenance and repair needs. You'll be pleased to know that work has been completed on replacing the stained glass in one of the Lady Chapel, windows which was broken last year.

A Thought for the Week

Masks are not so good for protecting the wearer, but they protect others from the wearer. So by wearing a mask we protect others, and if they too wear masks then all are protected.

It is an example of the caring way of living.

(thanks to Len Dissado for sharing this with us)



Diocesan Calendar of Prayer: We can join our fellow Christians across the diocese in prayer by using the new Diocesan Calendar of Prayer, just published, to cover the months July-September. You can download the Calendar by clicking here:

<https://leicester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/1593600588.pdf>

If you would like a printed copy, please do let me know. *Adrian*

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)

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.

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 all those areas of conflict and war that are in danger of being forgotten while the world focusses on the pandemic. Pray especially for the people of Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and Israel/Palestine.

Praying for the Church: This week the Diocese was expecting to welcome our partner bishops for a link meeting preceding the Lambeth Conference. That has been postponed until at least 2021 due to the global COVID19 pandemic. Meanwhile our partner dioceses face severe hardship because of corona virus. Please pray for all those affected in the Diocese of Wyoming (USA), Trichy (South India), Kiteto and Mount Kilimanjaro (Tanzania).

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

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