

St Nicholas, Chislehurst

Weekly News



20th November 2020

CHURCH DIARY

Sun 22nd 0930 Morning Service (Common Worship) Livestreamed. Minister: Rev'd Harriet Johnson. The written Sermon by Mr Peter Ridge is at the end of this Newsletter.

Thurs 26th 2000 Deanery Synod via Zoom

Fri 27th 1400 Funeral of Bruce Hurn. FAMILY ONLY **Livestreamed.**

Sun 29th 0930 Morning Service (Book of Common Prayer) Livestreamed. Minister: Rev'd June Hurn. Preacher: Mrs Theodora Chamberlain

Organ music for November 22nd

Before Service:

Hymn tune:

Guiting Power ("Christ triumphant, ever reigning") - John Barnard

Liturgical Prelude – George Oldroyd

Hymns: *Let all the world in every corner sing*

(words – George Herbert)

The King of love my shepherd is

(words – Henry Baker)

Concluding Voluntary:

Postlude – Paul Leddington Wright

OUR BROADCASTS These will all be on our Facebook video page:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/stnicholaschislehurst/videos/?ref=page_internal

You do not have to have a Facebook account to take part in or watch our services. However, you might see a message asking you to sign in or create an account, where you will also see an option "not now" which you should click, and the message will disappear. If you still can't access the service, please try deleting your cookies/caches.

If you do not manage to see them live, they remain on the page to view later.

It appears the external microphone we use to enhance the microphone on the phone we use for broadcast malfunctioned for the last two weeks so only basic sound was broadcast. We hope to try out a new microphone on Sunday, which may increase the volume for those watching on tablets or phone.

BRUCE HURN A message from Rev'd June: "Thank you to all the kind people who have sent me letters, cards and flowers to remember Bruce. I am much blessed by your love and your thoughtfulness in recalling your memories of him. He is sorely missed.

There will be a private family funeral at the graveside on Friday, 27th November at 2 o'clock."

The service will be livestreamed via our Facebook page.

PASS THIS ON Some of our friends do not have access to the internet and so cannot join with us in our broadcasts.



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Daily Hope is a FREE phone line which offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England - all at the end of a telephone line.

Options available include materials also available digitally by the Church of England's Communications team such as Prayer During the Day and Night

Prayer updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England weekly national online service. A section called Hymn Line offers callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily.

Please pass on details of this free phone service to anyone you know who may have no or restricted access to the internet, or who feels more comfortable using a phone.

0800 804 8044

CHRISTMAS CHARITIES APPEAL

Thank you to the 33 who have so far responded to the Christmas Appeal. As of yesterday, we have raised over £2000 in support of the charities; Whitechapel Mission, Church Army, Children in Distress and Children's Society. Every penny raised in this way will be split evenly between the four charities – please note that we are only able to take on-line or cheque payments, we cannot receive cash donations at this time.

Please make your gift, preferably online, to the following bank account: St Nicholas Chislehurst PCC; sort code 40-52-40; Account number 00020386. Please give your name and add yes to Gift Aid (if you can) (*50.00 Reynolds Yes to GA*). This will indicate that you have already completed a Gift Aid declaration to St Nicholas or are willing to be contacted about completing one.

If you are unable to give online please make your cheque out to St Nicholas Chislehurst PCC and send it to the Treasurer at the Parish Office, Church Hall, Church Lane BR7 5PE

WHITECHAPEL MISSION

For each of the next four weeks we will be featuring one of the charities supported by our Christmas Appeal. This week we focus on the Whitechapel Mission.



Since 1876, The Whitechapel Mission has been called to serve the men and women caught in the cycles of poverty, hopelessness and dependencies of many kinds, and to see their lives transformed to hope, joy and lasting productivity.

The Mission offers:

- Free food, free showers, free clothing and free advice and counselling to all those in need.
- Free access to medical advice, free access to educational classes and free access to benefits advice, job club and housing advice.
- Daycentre open every day of the year, and staff on-site 24 hours a day.
- Advice centre open until 4pm weekdays.
- Open to all, regardless of their background, race, sex, religion or origin.

During Covid, the Mission has seen:

- 200% increase in people looking for food.
- 150% increase in people looking for advice and counselling.
- 27% increase in requests for referrals to drug and alcohol programs.
- 21% increase in people found a bed for the night.

AND the supply of regular helpers from churches and companies has stopped to reduce the risk to the clients. As most of you know, pre-Covid, every other Saturday a team from St Nicholas would go to Whitechapel and serve breakfast.

Post-Covid the number of helpers coming from banks and other “City” institutions will drop due to the increase in the numbers of those working from home.

So, the need for donations has never been greater.

<https://whitechapel.org.uk/>

Take a look at [this video](#) of what the 6 months to this September have been for the mission as it serves 600 breakfasts a day.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

With just over 5 weeks to go until Christmas, like most things, we will be celebrating in a different way this year. The team at Visit Chislehurst are not going to let that dampen spirits and have launched Chislehurst’s Virtual Christmas Market. No need to stand in long queues or out in the cold weather to do your Christmas shopping this year!

Let's support our local businesses – now more than ever!

Visit www.chislehurst.online for a virtual Christmas shopping experience with Christmas gifts, decorations and vouchers, all just one click away.

SUPPORT BRILLIANT CHISLEHURST BUSINESSES!



ADVENT COURSE 2020 There are still places available on the Advent Course which will be three sessions run by Rev'd Harriet Johnson and will take place between 8- 9pm on Tuesday evenings on 1st, 8th and 15th December.

The candles in our Advent wreath are often taken as symbolising (in turn) Patriarchs, Prophets, John the Baptist and Mary. But why do we remember these people in this way? Our Advent course will look at them in turn, thinking about who they were, what it means to remember them today, and what we might learn from them about God.

Each session will last about an hour and will begin with a general chat and catch up before we discuss the week's theme.

To make the most of our time together Harriet will send out some brief information in advance each week - but if you don't have time to look at this please do still come to the session. If you have never used Zoom before and would like a practice Harriet is happy to talk this through and have a practice with you.

The course will be limited to 15 people so that we can all see each other on screen at the same time.

Please book you place for the three sessions by calling the church booking phone **07547 798266**. If you get the voicemail, please leave a message.

WE INCLUDE IN OUR PRAYERS:

All those in key jobs who are keeping us safe.

And: Angela Anderson, Yvonne Auld, Isabelle Burman, Valerie Burn, Betty Court, Brigitte Davies, Carol Dixon, Eugenia Footman, Michelle Fribbens, Maureen Fricker, Joanna Friel, Gillian Harris, Elizabeth Heath, Max Lardner, Ken Lye, Eric Mountford, The Mouzouri family, Denise Payne, Jeanne Pearce, Judy Peebles, Maria Petrovan, Penny Pinto, Brenda Pocha, Ruth Radley, Peter Rawlins, Rachel Saxby, Lucy Shelford, Tim Shields, Joe Stashko, Pat Taylor and Anne-Louise Whittaker.

Those who have died: Bruce Hurn, Janet Kenny and Joan Wells.

If you know of anyone who should be receiving these emails but isn't getting them, please do let us know – or get them to contact us.

If you have anything for inclusion in our weekly newsletter, please send it to stnickschislehurst@icloud.com

Life is short and we don't have too much time to gladden the hearts those who walk the way with us.

Be swift to love. Make haste to be kind.

and the blessing of God

who has made us,

who loves us,

and who is with us,

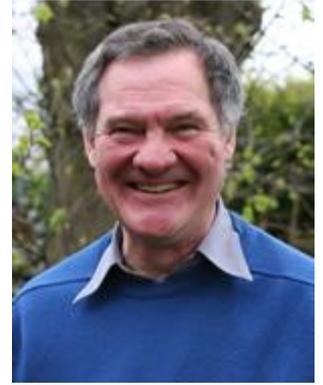
be with you now and always.

SERMON FOR SUNDAY - CHRIST THE KING

Matthew 25: 31-46

Psalm 119: 130 **'The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple'**

Today is the last day of the church's calendar and our Gospel reading for Christ the King reflects this. Matthew has chosen this parable to complete the teaching of Jesus about the end days. Previous parables in this section have preached the need to be faithful, the need to be prepared for the end and the obligation to use the talents we are given. **In this final parable Jesus is explicit about what is needful.** First, let us remind ourselves that a parable is a story to grab our attention; it's a teaching tool to make one main point crystal clear; it's spiritually true, not literally true. It's a story carrying a very important message.



Let's set the scene for the story. Jesus has returned to earth and is seated on a glorious throne as King. Before him stand billions of people from all the nations of the world since time began: you and me as well. It's a reminder that each person in every nation is created and loved by God equally. They (you could say we) have been resurrected to face judgement on how we have lived our lives. We will be there! So imagine the excitement, possibly the dread, but the wonder about what is going to happen next

Within the parable, Mathew adds the picture of the shepherd sorting out the animals. In those days sheep and goats were herded together in the pastures; there was no point in separating them until market day; and any way the animals looked much alike and shared the same pasture; perhaps there's an added metaphor here about people seeming quite similar outwardly but intrinsically different to God who knows the heart of each man and woman. Most of us try to hide our faults and promote our good points; we need to remind ourselves that we may fool our friends, we may even fool ourselves, but God is all seeing and cannot be fooled.

So the king separates the people into two groups: each person wondering what's happening Why am I sent here and not there?

It very soon becomes clear. Jesus speaks to the group on his right hand. You are blessed by my Father: inherit the kingdom prepared for you because:

- I was hungry and you fed me
- I was thirsty and you gave me a drink
- I was a stranger and you welcomed me
- I was naked and you gave me clothes
- I was sick and you took care of me
- I was in prison and you visited me

In consternation and bewilderment they reply: “No Lord, that wasn’t us; we never saw you needy like that”

And the King answers them: “Oh yes; Just as you did these things to one of the least of my family, you did it for me”. **This is the key message of the parable** which I shall return to shortly, but first we want to know what happened to those on the King’s left in this parable.

He speaks: “You that are accursed depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil because when I was needy you did nothing to help me”.

In desperation they call out: “Lord we never saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison”.

The King’s last word to them: “Just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, **you did not do it to me**. You will go away into eternal punishment.

I will confess to you that eternal punishment as described here and in several other places in the Bible, has troubled me. The idea of keeping someone, however guilty, in perpetual agony is cruel and **frankly ungodly**. How could I preach on this parable without clearing my own mind? It wasn’t enough to say to myself, “Oh, it’s just a parable; I can ignore it. So I asked Harriet and she introduced me to a 30 page paper ‘Eternal Torment or Destruction’, written by Professor Rodney Duke. It was a revelation to me. In essence humans do not have eternal souls (check that out in Genesis chapters 2 and 3). So when we die, we die! When the judgement comes the ‘sheep’ are rewarded with eternal life in God’s kingdom, but the ‘goats’ die without eternal life.... That is their punishment .

In this parable Jesus both sounds a warning and promises a reward. We will be judged in accordance with our reaction to human need. It is consistent with many passages in the Old Testament like Proverbs 19: 17 **‘Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and will be repaid in full’**.

William Barclay in his commentary on this passage highlights things about the help which we must give:

- It’s help in simple every day things: the examples Jesus gives are things that anyone can do: a kind word, a practical deed, seeing another’s problem and helping them solve it; going out of one’s way to assist
- It’s help which must be uncalculating; those who helped in the story did not think they were helping Christ; it was natural, instinctive, from the heart
- By contrast the attitude of those who refused help was ‘if we had known it was you, we would gladly have helped’, but you can’t just help anyone

Barclay explains how help when given, is give to Jesus, but help withheld is withheld from him.” God is the great Father; and the way to delight the heart of God is to help his children, our fellow human beings.

Amen