

The Parish Church of
St Mary the Virgin, Great Shelford



Charity No: 245456

Sunday 15th November, 2020 - Second Sunday before Advent

From Simon

Thank you for your generous appreciations **of the services for Remembrance Sunday; it is good to hear your feedback, both on regular and special services as the lock-down continues.** Thankfully, at least we are able to keep the church open and I encourage you to make a visit during our opening times 9.30am - 4pm every day. Our Sunday morning services are again available as recordings on the website and YouTube channel. The Sunday evening services will continue to be live by Zoom link.

Do take care and look after yourselves in the coming week.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath.

Hymn: Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Be all else but naught to me, save that thou art,
Be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.
2. Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word
Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord,
Be thou my great Father, and I thy true son,
Be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.
3. Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight,
Be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might,
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower,
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.
4. Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Be thou my inheritance now and always,
Be thou and thou only the first in my heart,
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.
5. High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after vict'ry is won,
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxvXGgSIRcs>

Hymn: Immortal, invisible, God only wise

1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

2. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.
3. To all life thou givest - to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish - but nought changeth thee.
4. Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mKr57vtQ-Q>

Collect:

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Post Communion Prayer:

Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament you give substance to our hope: bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

First Reading: Zephaniah 1.7, 12 - 18

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm.' Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them. The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5. 1 - 11

Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing

Gospel: Matthew 25. 14 - 30

Jesus said to his disciples, 'The kingdom of heaven is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his

master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Reflection on this Sunday's readings:

It's not surprising that we've all been shopping online a lot more these days. However boring the thing being delivered, I must admit to being a bit excited when the doorbell rings and the delivery person hands over the latest package. Then, after the 20 seconds of hand washing we're all supposed to do, I tear open the package to find just what I thought I was getting. It's like an early Christmas, but without the surprise!

How disappointing it is though when the thing we've ordered doesn't turn up. In the days before the pandemic, we might have complained about waiting in all day for something; now waiting in all day is our new normal. Still, it is annoying when something doesn't arrive. Somebody in my family is still waiting for something she ordered back in August. It's coming all the way from China and cost her less than a fiver, but it's still really bothering her that it hasn't turned up yet.

Our parable today is about being expectant; about being ready. That's not surprising because it was written for an expectant community. As far as we can work out, the writer of this Gospel (traditionally said to be the Apostle Matthew) was a member of a church that was having a hard time. This is a Jewish Christian community, probably in Antioch in Syria, that feels like the local leaders of the Jewish community have got it in for them. It may well be that there was a move in this town to throw out Jewish Christians from the Synagogue. That did happen right about the time when we think this Gospel was written. It could be that that's why this Gospel spends so much time talking about Jesus's own troubles with Synagogue and Temple leaders.

The writer wants to encourage them that Jesus is with them in their struggles. More than that though, he wants to encourage them that the very same Jesus who shares their struggles is coming back really soon. And when he does he will show everyone that his disciples here and everywhere else they can be found are in the right. The fact that we're reading this Gospel 1,900 years later means it didn't happen in the way they hoped. It's tempting to think of those people as deluded, to think talk of Jesus's return belongs to a simpler time. But it's just as much a part of Christian belief today as it was then. Whether we see that second Advent in history, or encounter Jesus beyond this life's end, we will all meet him and the fulfilment of all God's promises for Creation.

This parable, like the others around it – the good and wicked servants, the ten virgins before it and the sheep and the goats following – are trying to help us see that that idea, that belief, that Jesus will return has an impact on our lives in the here and now. What is that impact?

Let's look a bit closer at this parable and see what we might learn.

The first thing I'd like us to notice is that there's big money involved here. A talent is a measure of silver, about what you'd earn as a labourer, not just in one year, but in fifteen years. In the past I've focused on that word talent and invited people listening to me to think about their talents and how they use them or not for God. That's not a bad thing to think about.

The English word 'talent' that we use to refer to our God-given abilities actually comes from this passage. But today I want us to focus on something else it might symbolise. I think the writer here wants us to think about something really precious. That amount of silver really is a treasure. Where our treasure is, there our heart will be also. That's from this very same Gospel, chapter 6, verse 21. But there are some other things we might

think about.

The first is the treasure of the Gospel itself. The Good News of Jesus Christ has been entrusted to us. It really does make no sense to bury it in the ground, even if it is the ground of our own hearts. This precious treasure is never meant for us alone. It is meant to be shared. What good is news that you keep to yourself? Have you ever had news you were bursting to share but you had to keep it to yourself for a while? I have. It's really hard isn't it!

The new life we've found in Jesus is a tremendous gift for each of us and all of us together. If we hide it inside the walls of our churches or keep it to the people invited to a Zoom call, we're not being faithful to the Gospel itself. The Gospel is meant to produce fruit. Of course, that fruit is the character of God growing in us, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. But it's also meant to be fruitful in terms of multiplying the lives touched by that good news. It's our joy and privilege to be invited by Jesus to share in the coming of God's Kingdom.

That brings us to the next treasure, the treasure of the Kingdom of God. Again in Matthew's Gospel, two very brief parables compare the Kingdom to a great treasure that someone gives everything to get hold of. The Kingdom is the rule of God. We see it pictured throughout the Bible as characterised by justice, peace, love and joy, with no-one left out. Those gifts too, are given to us through Jesus, as much as we look forward to everyone receiving them in full when he returns. But just as with the good news about Jesus, those gifts from him are not to be hidden in the ground, but shared so that they multiply.

How does that happen? When the Master in this story goes away, he gives his treasure to his servants but leaves no instructions whatsoever about what to do. He commends those who have been creative and condemns the one who has shown no initiative. In our waiting for Jesus's return, we are not to be passive. It's not even a matter of just being obedient. The disciples that we're asked to be and make at the end of this Gospel are to be taught to obey everything Jesus commanded, but beyond that, faithfulness is not passive. Just doing what we're told is another way that we can bury the treasure. We're called to use our creativity; to use our initiative.

I wonder what would have happened if one of the servants had attempted a risky venture and lost all the money! Of course, the good news of Jesus and the Kingdom of God is not something we can ever lose through giving it away. Our investment in others always produces fruit, even if we don't always see it ourselves. Only by burying these treasures or abandoning them completely can they be taken from us.

So this parable is not a condemnation of poverty. That would be completely out of kilter with the rest of the Gospel. The harshness of the judgement on the unfaithful servant is because of his meanness. What difference would it make if instead of the judgement, we notice the generous and overwhelming response to the initiative of the other two servants and see it as an encouragement to be open-handed and creative with the gift of the good news of Jesus and his Kingdom. What we've been given was never just for us. We are blessed so that we can be a blessing. We are called to continually give. In doing so, we receive even more.

So let us, in our waiting, joyfully give away the treasure we have received in Jesus and find our hands and hearts overflowing. In doing so, let us be ready to meet his return with celebration, anticipating an even greater reward – the gift of eternal life. Amen



Hello Children Mary Mouse has gone to ground again, until we can all meet together once more. She will be sending regular letters.

Sunday Club will not meet until further notice. We will be offering a regular Mary Mouse letter. For details contact Gillian, gillian.pett29@gmail.com

INTERCESSIONS

Please refer any pastoral concerns for members of the congregation or members of the local community to any member of the Ministry team including our Co-ordinator for Pastoral Services, Mrs Frances Simms. Please pray for the sick, frail, housebound and those in care. Please let the Vicar know about all cases of sickness and others for whom we should pray.

SUPPORTING OUR CHURCH

Before the pandemic we were already concerned about the increasing financial deficit we have been facing for several years. Some of our regular expenses, e.g. utilities, have been reduced during lockdown, but ongoing expenses have continued. Additionally the provision of sanitiser products, signage and other purchases connected with providing online services has added costs. Our greatest expense by far is the Ministry Share paid to the Diocese (currently £52,189 pa), which has to be found every month, under all circumstances. We still very much need the support of all our Church members and visitors.

Donations can be made by:

- Parish Giving Scheme (PCC's preferred option)
- Standing Order or Bank transfer
- Donating via the Giving Page on website <https://www.stmarysgreatshelford.org/>
- Traditional envelope donations (posted through the vicarage letterbox, or left in the collection box at the back of church). Please write your PIN on the envelope, if you have one.

To help further, at no cost to yourself, please Gift Aid your donations if you are able. Our Treasurer Pat Brown is happy to assist with any of the above. Contact details: phone 07811 563597 or email: patbrown2591@yahoo.co.uk . Thank you very much for all your support.

ST. MARY'S GREAT SHELFORD - WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Praying together as a community

At a time when we are all missing meeting to worship together perhaps there are things that we can do to help us feel that we are still a worshipping community, and that we are all thinking of one another. Here are three simple things that we could all do to pray together for each other and our community.

1. At noon each day we could say the Lord's Prayer. You might like to go to the front door and stand in the doorway because we are praying not just for ourselves but for the whole community.
2. If you have a candle, light it at 7pm on Sunday evenings and put it in your front window. Pray for all those who are ill, all those who are alone, and all those who are caring for others. This looks beautiful and is a sign to other people that we are keeping the light of hope for them.
3. In the evenings before bed we could pray for each other, perhaps by saying the wonderful collect for aid against all perils from the Book of Common Prayer.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord, and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of thy only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Services on video:

I am continuing to celebrate Holy Communion and other services for the whole community on Sundays. The videos and recordings are on our web site. In addition you can see them on our Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTxJ8yVmoDeV0r4KAyY5UYw> <<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTxJ8yVmoDeV0r4KAyY5UYw>>) or on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Stmarysgreatshelford/> <<https://www.facebook.com/Stmarysgreatshelford/>> - you don't need to use Facebook to see our posts).

As you watch you can make a Spiritual Communion. The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ. The form of prayer below offers Christians an opportunity to give thanks for their communion with him, particularly at times when they would ordinarily be present at the Eucharist.

The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves. Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the

duty of receiving Holy Communion 'regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost' (Canon B 15).

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

Pauline Pugh RIP: Yvonne's daughter, Pauline, died at Arthur Rank Hospice on Mon. evening after a long battle with cancer. I know that many people have been praying for Pauline, her husband Phillip, Yvonne and the family in recent months. Yvonne asked me to thank everyone for their kindness and support.

Gwen Gresham RIP: We learned recently that Gwen Gresham died on 29th Oct. We give thanks for Gwen's life and her fellowship with us while she lived at Old School Court - may she Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory. Please also remember her son Andrew and the family. Gwen's funeral arrangements are currently being planned.

Edward Bustard RIP: Edward died very peacefully at home during Wed. night aged 95. In recent years he had been very frail and was being looked after by Sonia at home. We give thanks for his life and all that he contributed to the parish and community over the years. Edward was, for many years, secretary of the Parochial Charity trustees and was the lead architect for the new Addenbrookes site when the hospital first moved out from central Cambridge in the late 1960s. Please also pray for Sonia in the days ahead. A private funeral will take place in the coming weeks.

Gift Day 2020 results: I am delighted to report that we received some very generous responses to our annual Gift Day appeal in Oct. In total you have donated £4,580 (Gift Aid yet to be added) this year. The PCC are very grateful for your generous responses.

Hon. Canon of Ely Cathedral: Unfortunately my collation and installation as an Hon. Canon of the Cathedral which was due to take place last Mon was cancelled due to the lock-down. I will let you know about the new date in due course.



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers



CONNECTIONS

provides a hymn and reflection.

Daily HOPE: This is an excellent national Church of England initiative for those who are especially isolated and do not have access to the internet. **Daily HOPE** is a freephone line, available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044**. Callers will hear a special greeting from the Archbishop of Canterbury before being able to choose from a range of options, including Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England's weekly national online service. A section called Hymn Line will also offer callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled 'Hymns We Love',

We are delighted to welcome visitors to St Mary's for private prayer and reflection. The church remains open during this lock-down every day from 9.30am to 4pm.

Vicar:

The Rev'd Simon Talbott

simon@thetalbotts.co.uk

01223 847068

Contact Churchwarden:

Mrs. Stella Nettleton

stella.nettleton@btinternet.com

07763 887953

Reader/Licensed Lay Minister:

Mrs. Maureen Dobson

d-mdobson@hotmail.co.uk

01223 840076

Parish Administrator:

Mrs. Katharin Page

pagekatharin@gmail.com

07710 518220

Pastoral Services Co-ordinator

Mrs. Frances Simms

francesisimms47@gmail.com

01223 845895

Children's work contact:
Gillian Pett

gillian.pett29@gmail.com

Applications for baptisms, marriages and the calling of Banns of marriage should be made please to the Parish Administrator.

15/11/20