

SERVICE SHEET
1st November
All Saints Day



Canticle: A Song of God's Assembled

We have come before the throne of God to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

**1 We have come before God's holy mountain, *
to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God.**

**2 We have come before countless angels making festival, *
before the assembly of the firstborn citizens of heaven.**

**3 We have come before God, who is judge of all, *
before the spirits of the just made perfect.**

**4 We have come before Jesus, *
the mediator of the new covenant.**

**5 We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken: *
so let us give thanks and offer to God acceptable worship,**

**6 full of reverence and awe; *
for our God is a consuming fire.**

Hebrews 12.22-24a,28,29

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Collect

Almighty God,
you have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:
grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints
in all virtuous and godly living
that we may come to those inexpressible joys
that you have prepared for those who truly love you;
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

New Testament Reading.

1 John 3.1-3

¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Psalm 34.1-10

¹ I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

² **My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.**

³ O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

⁴ **I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.**

⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.

⁶ **This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,
and was saved from every trouble.**

⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.

⁸ **O taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.**

⁹ O fear the LORD, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.

¹⁰ **The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Gospel Reading. **Matthew 5.1-12**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

SERMON - All Saints Day 2020

On October 12th, the Church of England Calendar commemorates three lives; Edith Cavell, a committed Anglican and a nurse who cared without partiality for British and German soldiers in occupied Belgium in the first world war and helped the latter escape to Holland. She was arrested for treason and executed. The words on her memorial were spoken the night before she died "Patriotism is not enough. I have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone", words that many in both Britain and Germany would have vehemently disagreed with at the time. The second was Elizabeth Fry, a 19th century Quaker, of very considerable energy who devoted her life to improving conditions for those in prisons and asylums. Yet a recent biographer states she had a "complex personality which could be proud, selfish and ruthless for the cause...yet she had the gift of touching people's hearts by her own deep religious feeling and her passionate concern for good". The third of the triumvirate was Wilfred of Ripon, who died in 709. He had what one might describe as a colourful life, was Archbishop of York as well as Bishop of Ripon, argued with his fellow bishops and the pope, but was instrumental in the Synod of Whitby where the English church aligned itself to the Roman rather than the Celtic model. Contemporary accounts of his life are somewhat circumspect in how they describe his life, suggesting that whilst his gift to the English Church was to make it more clearly a part of the church universal, "his manner and methods were not such as to draw people close to him at a personal level".

Three very different people, three principled, argumentative people who were probably not at all easy to live with, yet all remembered by the church as saints.

Today is All Saints Day, the day when the Church remembers all its heroes of the faith - the church triumphant in heaven, and the church militant here on earth. But let us just consider that word "saint" for a moment. Of itself it has no connotations of exclusiveness, simply meaning someone who is sanctified or holy. In the first verse of his letter to the Philippians Paul writes

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the bishops and deacons

All God's people then are holy, all can be called saints, perhaps with the exception of bishops and deacons (!). Now our Gospel reading today is one of the best known of them all - the Beatitudes, that begin the collection of Jesus's sayings known as the Sermon on the Mount. And the repeating word "Blessed" in its biblical sense means "made holy, consecrated, infuse with holiness". And so the reading is very appropriate for the day. Now one, rather simplistic, way of understanding the beatitudes is thus as a sort of entry level exam for sainthood. Work on the characteristics described in the Beatitudes and you will get to be commemorated by the church when you die. It doesn't seem to work that way however. Perhaps the best you can say for someone like Wilfred in that regard was that he was blessed because he was reviled and persecuted, although there is a strong argument that he brought that on himself. Elizabeth Fry and Edith Cavell perhaps hungered and thirsted for righteousness and showed mercy. But all three seemed to have been somewhat lacking in meekness! The Beatitudes spoken by Jesus are much more subtle than that and it is worth just spending a minute or two looking at how they are put together.

There are nine beatitudes in total, and the first eight have the same form - a blessing; a description of a personal characteristic or action or situation; and a reward, which is easily memorable both for the speaker and the listener. The first and the last both give the reward as "theirs is the kingdom of heaven". This is a literary device, well known in the ancient world, beginning and ending a passage or a collection of sayings. They seem to be in two groups of four. The four contain an alliteration on the letter pi or p - the Greek words for poor, mourn, meek, hunger all begin with pi. The second group of four contain other alliterations on kappa alpha (ka) or delta iota (di) -

again a dramatic literary device of the time; and there is at various points in the verses a duplication of ideas and concepts that is characteristic of Hebrew poetry. In short, the Beatitudes are designed to be spoken aloud, to be remembered, almost as a dramatic piece. Jesus was, as we know, a superb communicator, and we can think of him as carefully constructing the words of the Beatitudes to be spoken aloud to a crowd (and also note that it suggests that Jesus spoke Greek as well as Aramaic and Hebrew). And like any performer, he used his lines in different circumstances. In Luke we see the first four beatitudes, in a somewhat different form, matched with four "woes" (anti-blessings!), again with pi alliteration.

Why go on about this? Simply because, the form of the sayings suggests that one shouldn't interpret them too tightly on a line by line basis, but rather in a more general sense. To some degree the words are chosen for their sound and effect, rather than for by strict rules of logic. If we look at it in this way, we have the repeated promise of a Blessing, followed in the main by a range of either personal characteristics, actions or situations that lead to that blessing - poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger for righteousness, mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking. In some ways the list is similar to what St Paul describes as the fruits of the Spirit, the work of God in the lives of his people. And the rewards are both immediate - God's comfort and mercy as his children, for the church militant here on earth, and offer a promise for the future - the kingdom of heaven, the vindication of righteousness, the vision of God for the church triumphant.

The ninth beatitude however is rather different, although it does repeat the last of the eight - a blessing on those who are persecuted for their faith. For many Christians down the ages, including not a small number of those we call saints, this promise has sustained them through their darkest times.

So the Beatitudes are a very appropriate reading for All Saints day, that exhorts all of us as saints to strive for holiness, but also gives a picture of hope for the future. Both are important. They present to us the qualities of life and the action that are important to God and give the comfort of God's presence to those who need it. But in the dark days that we are living through, when we are concerned about the events in the world around us that seem to be spiraling out of control; as we face the prospect of many more months of restriction and isolation; as we mourn the loss of friends and loved ones, and much else that we held dear; and when it is all too apparent that the Christian faith, and its ethical base on which our society is founded, is being marginalised and those who uphold it face scorn and sometime rage, it is perhaps that vision of the Church triumphant that we need to sustain us. The biblical "big picture" is that God will gather together his people, his redeemed humanity in heaven in all its diversity, from the heroes of the faith to the myriad of saints who have no memorial, that creation itself will be redeemed. But I doubt that is the end of the matter. If it were, one would have to ask why God bothered, what was the point in simply creating humanity just to exist for eternity in heaven. My feeling is that there is an even bigger picture for what lies beyond, that the purpose of God for his creation, our own part in it, which we don't yet see, will ultimately be revealed. And the characteristics of the saints set out in the Beatitudes are those that will be required for whatever that purpose might be.

But we have to begin where we are now, and the exhortations and promises of the Beatitudes remain as our immediate guide and as our vision, as we seek to live out our lives and to witness to a perplexed world in these most difficult times. As they have spoken to God's people down the ages, so they speak to us at this All Saints tide.

Revd Chris Baker

FOR YOUR PRAYERS**ST MICHAEL*****Those newly in need of prayer***

Chris Clayton

Those in continuing special need of prayer:

Sam Bassett, Mark Berry, Elizabeth Chapman, Dorothy Clayton, Jo Cobb, Dottie Collins, Alison Cox-Toplis, Chris Dickerson, Sonia Doidge, Colin Eastwood, Audrey Egleston, Joseph Harrington, Robert Harris, Bill Hill, James Knight, Matthew and Emmeline and their parents, Ruth and Andrew Martel, Marielouise Oliver, Arthur Palin, Nick Rutter, Anthony Staples aged 6, John Tipper, Sheila Vaughan, Judith Watson, Renee Wellings, Peter and Anne Whatson, Felicity Woodfield, Jamie, Gary and Denise, Julian & Wendy,

Those who have died

Ian Watson, Kathleen Kershaw, Margaret Fellows, John Doidge & Yvonne Harper

Years Mind

Ray Allen

ST JOHN

Pat Crowe, Jo Hearn, Ann Kinson, Allan Law

Post Communion

God, the source of all holiness and giver of all good things:
may we who have shared at this table
as strangers and pilgrims here on earth
be welcomed with all your saints
to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Chris Clayton

Please can you hold my son Chris in your prayers. Chris is to have gall bladder removal surgery on 6th November at Walsall Manor Hospital. Whilst surgery is difficult for any one especially at this time Chris has a major anxiety of any hospital treatment needed. The thought or talk of just a simple blood test sends him into a panic attack. Julie and I ask for prayers that Chris has the strength to overcome his anxiety and can bring himself to go through with the necessary surgery and what this entails.

Phil Clayton

CHURCH NOTICES

WORSHIP BY ZOOM is on the first and third Sundays of each month.

Service Today

Sunday 1st November 6.00pm

Theme: A season of Remembrance

Next service

Sunday 15th November 6.00pm

You can join the service from 5.45pm. The service will last about 40mins. ***If you have not had a link by Friday at 11am please contact the office office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk***

ALL SOULS SERVICES

will be on **Wednesday 4th November at 6.30pm** at both St Michael's and St John's.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY @ ST MICHAEL'S

At 10.00am we will hold a shortened service of Holy Communion in church which will be followed by an Act of Remembrance around the War Memorial and on the driveway starting at 10.50. This will include the reading of the names on our memorials and the two minutes silence.

On this Sunday please do not park cars along the left hand side of the drive from the church porch down to opposite the new car park area. If anyone needs to leave before the Act of Remembrance please park in another car park so that there are no car movements until after the service is concluded.

ST MICHAEL'S & ST JOHN'S CHRISTMAS BAKE AND DELIVER SCHEME We are hoping to spread some good cheer (and delicious treats!) and reach out to our church and wider parish community with a new Bake and Deliver initiative this Advent. **Would you be willing to help by baking or delivering?** You can volunteer to do as little or as much as you feel able to do - we would be very grateful to have your help! For further details please speak to Revd Mel (revdr.melclark@gmail.com), the churchwardens, or the clergy team.

NO CHRISTMAS CARDS

Because of Covid-19 restrictions it will not be possible this year for anyone to bring Christmas cards to church to be collected by other members of the congregation. Also it will not be possible to hand out cards personally either at the start of the service or outside after the service. Both of these would be in danger of breaking the social distancing that we have in place in church and the rule of 6 outside church.

I am sorry that this is rather a Ba! Humbug! notice but it will be safer for everyone if we all restrict our card giving to those that we can post or personally deliver.

You might like to donate any money you save on cards to the church or a charity.

Simon Baker, Rector

CHRISTMAS FOOD DONATIONS

Lichfield Foodbank is **now collecting for Christmas hampers**. If you wish to donate, please check the item will be in date till after Christmas.

BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Acts Wednesday 4th November If you would like to join in our Bible Study please contact Angie in the office for the zoom link.

CHURCHES TOGETHER There are new message from Churches Together on our website www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/churches-together.html

THE MEMORY CAFE IS RE-OPENING The Memory Cafe was run weekly in Tamworth Street Methodist Church as a meeting place for those living with memory issues and their carers. It is operated by care agency Home Instead and, since March, they have been working hard to keep in touch with everyone, including organising online events. So it is good to know that the Memory Cafe is **re-opening on Thursday 5th November, 10.00 - 12.00** in the Guildhall (not the Methodist Church). It will obviously be a restricted arrangement and people will need to book, but it is a wonderful resource. Contact Karen Wilkinson on 01543 625002 or email karen.wilkinson@homeinstead.co.uk.

THE FOODBANK is always happy to receive gifts of

- Tinned meat and fish
- Tinned fruit and vegetables, soup and beans
- Rice pudding and custard
- Instant coffee, tea, sugar, long life milk and fruit juice
- Packets of cereals, biscuits and snacks
- Pasta, rice and pasta sauce
- Jam

Items should be **at least 3 months in date** or the Foodbank is not allowed to issue them. If anyone wishes to donate but is unable to shop for Foodbank, we shop most weeks and would be able to buy items for them. Just let us know 01543 255308

Maggie and David

OFFICE – Due to the work that is scheduled to begin on St Michael's Church Roof on **Monday 2nd November**, the office may not be open as normal over the next few weeks. **Before visiting** the office, please give Angie a **call on 01543 262211** to check that the office is open.

WARNING!!!

If you receive an email from: **Revd Preb Simon Baker** and the email address is either:
onlinechurch954@gmail.com churchvicar8@gmail.com

Please do not reply or open any attachments. I never use that title in any emails I send and these are not my email addresses.

If you receive any email that asks you to spend any personal money on my behalf please delete it at once.

Simon

PARISH DIARY

Sunday 1st November

| | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 8:00am | Holy Communion | St Michael's |
| 10:00am | Holy Communion | St Michael's |
| 10:00am | Holy Communion | St John |
| 12:00pm | Baptism: Matthew & Theodore Clay | St Michael's |
| 6:00pm | Evening Worship | Zoom |

Monday 2nd November

WORK STARTING ON ST MICHAEL'S ROOF REPAIRS

| | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 8:15am | Morning Prayer | St Michael's |
| 7:30pm | St Michael's Standing Committee | Zoom |

Tuesday 3rd November

| | | |
|--------|----------------|------|
| 8:15am | Morning Prayer | Zoom |
|--------|----------------|------|

Wednesday 4th November

| | | |
|---------|------------------------|--------------|
| 8:15am | Morning Prayer | St Michael's |
| 10.30am | Bible Study | Zoom |
| 6:30pm | Candles of Remembrance | St John's |
| 6:30pm | Candles of Remembrance | St Michael's |

Thursday 5th November

OFFICE CLOSED

| | | |
|--------|----------------|------|
| 8:15am | Morning Prayer | Zoom |
|--------|----------------|------|

Friday 6th November

| | | |
|--------|----------------|------|
| 8:15am | Morning Prayer | Zoom |
|--------|----------------|------|

Saturday 7th November

Sunday 8th November

| | | |
|---------|---|--------------|
| 8:00am | Holy Communion | St Michael's |
| 10:00am | Holy Communion & Act of Remembrance in Churchyard | St Michael's |
| 10:00am | Holy Communion – Remembrance Service | St John |