

SERVICE SHEET
8th November – Remembrance Sunday

The 8.00am Holy Communion Service will be shared on zoom

Join Zoom Service

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87558407907?pwd=TFBoMnRoRHkwU3FPLzZhZW1DMXVtQT09>

Meeting ID: 875 5840 7907

Passcode: 019631

There will be a special Remembrance Sunday Service on zoom at 10.30am. You can join the congregation from 10.15am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82168367599?pwd=akc2azFsSE4rbEtqUkFiUFVMSiVMUT09>

Meeting ID: 821 6836 7599

Passcode: 810200

Family Praise for Remembrance Sunday is on the website!

<https://www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/sunday-sermons.html>

Canticle: A Song of Solomon

**Many waters cannot quench love;
neither can the floods drown it.**

**Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;**

**For love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave;
its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.**

**Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can the floods drown it.**

**If all the wealth of our house were offered for love,
it would be utterly scorned.
*cf Song of Songs 8.6-7***

**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 for the Peace of the World

Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth
and peace proceed:
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who take counsel
for the nations of the earth
that in tranquility your kingdom may go forward,
till the earth is filled
with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Amen.

New Testament Reading.

Romans 8:31-39

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

'For your sake we are being killed all day long;

we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalm 70

¹ Be pleased, O God, to deliver me.
O LORD, make haste to help me!

**² Let those be put to shame and confusion
who seek my life.**

**Let those be turned back and brought to dishonour
who desire to hurt me.**

³ Let those who say, 'Aha, Aha!'
turn back because of their shame.

**⁴ Let all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you.
Let those who love your salvation
say evermore, 'God is great!'**

⁵ But I am poor and needy;
hasten to me, O God!
You are my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay!

**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

John 15:9-17

⁹ As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹² This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

SERMON

"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." The thirteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John

A powerful sentence. There is so much in it. Love, Friendship, Commandment, Sacrifice, Grace, Redemption, and more. A sentence which echoes down the decades on this Remembrance Sunday, when we stop to remember the bravery and valour of many who died in war, literally laying down their lives for their friends. And at a time when we face our own battles and struggles, where many are showing the same heroism for the sake of others.

Love.... Jesus certainly praises it in this passage – as a gift from God, an excellence of character, and a way of life. But love is ambiguous -there are different kinds of love. What kind of love does Christ call us to here?

For Christians, the true archetype of love is found within the inner life of God. Jesus calls upon the disciples to render to one another the kind of love that he has shown for them - their love is to be modelled after his love from them – a high bar indeed. But his love for them also has its own source, inspiration and ultimate example in Jesus's relationship with God. The love among the persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, helps us to understand what wondrous love this truly is, and sets out a proper pattern for us in Christian love. It is a love within community. In the words of John 4 "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them".... We love because he first loved us.

But how does this theological account of love relate to friendship? Aristotle believed that friends form each other, emulating and taking on each other's characteristics, both good and bad. *We are known by the company we keep; in fact, we are very likely to become the company we keep.* But in this lies the root to the love that Christ calls us to in our Gospel. Thomas Aquinas applied Aristotle's theory of friendship to our relationship with God. Aquinas suggested that if we emulate those who we become friends with, part of the goal of Christian life should be to become 'friends with God'. Through this friendship, we hope to take on God's characteristics as our own – to love one another as God loves us.

It struck me whilst writing this sermon just how many lenses I was reading the Gospel through – Remembrance, Covid-19, the unfolding story of Christ, the community of John in which it was written, and more. But perhaps that's okay, and actually the point. We do not have to choose between one reading or the other. We just have to recognise the ones that speak to us most. By identifying all the ways we find meaning in the Gospel, we are reminded of how the life of faith keeps expanding and deepening the meaning of Christ's words. It is a process that has helped keep the church vital generation after generation, and it continues in our own lives today.

There are parallels, of course, between these readings. If we read this from the context of the community of John when the Gospel was written, it reminds us of that early Christian

community's sacrifices for the sake of their faith and each other during a time when they encountered increasing conflict and persecution. If we read this in the context of Remembrance, it reminds us of the heroism and sacrifice that saw many lay down their lives for love of friend and country, and for the sake of others. If we read this in the context of our current lives, moving into a second lockdown in our attempt to control a global pandemic, we are reminded of our call to love each other in community, to put others before ourselves by trying to protect each other. We are reminded of the heroism and self-sacrifice of all those who are continuing to venture out whilst we stay in, to keep our children in school, to look after our sick, to keep the country going. Covid is not the same as World-War or the trials of the early-Christians, but there are parallels in examples of the radical love Jesus calls us to in this Gospel. We too find ourselves at our own 'homefront', needing to work together in community in these days of uncertainty and anxiety.

But at the very time when we feel least secure, and most challenged by Christ's words, He offers this astounding statement: "I do not call you servants any longer... but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father". Jesus gives his disciples a new understanding of their relationship. At their moment of anxiety and uncertainty Christ grants them the dignity and responsibility of being friends, of having heard from him everything that he has heard from God. In the Greek it is even more powerful, they are no longer slaves but friends – what love Jesus gives them, and they give to each other is done freely, for reasons of mutual commitment, love and affection.

What then does it mean for us today to be Christ's friends? How do these words redefine the meaning of love, friendship, joy, as we move through difficult times?

If we picture ourselves only as his servants we are losing out on the special relationship that Christ seeks with us as friends. Through friendship we can become more like Christ. And as Jesus tells us in this passage - "You did not choose me but I chose you", this relationship, this friendship, embraces a divine purpose larger than our individual power of choice. For the disciples this was reminder that even though things were about to unravel, they had the assurance they needed to stand steadfast as they encountered intense opposition. For us today, this friendship and love given to us by Christ through God keeps us steadfast in faith, bringing hope and a light during times of darkness. It reminds us that we do not face this alone. Our love for each other comes from an infinite source in God's love. If we strive to be friends with God, as Aquinas suggested, we can hope to emulate God's love for us – and to love one another as God loves us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" We love because he first loved us.

As we approach this Gospel, and the many lenses in which we can read it today, we are reminded that the Word is a living word whose implications grow clearer as we hold the complexities of our life in its illuminating light. Just as these words helped the early Christians in John's community, and those facing the violence and destruction of World War, they can continue to help us today. On this Remembrance Sunday we recall the hope they found in these words and continue to be inspired through it. Through this process we can grow into the words of Christ, leading us deeper and deeper into the meaning of joy, friendship and being chosen by Christ; and leading us in hope, closer and closer to God's kingdom on earth. And as we begin to turn towards Advent, the light shining in the darkness in the coming of our Saviour, hope feels like the right lens to be looking through.

Amen

Revd Mel Clarke

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

ST JOHN

Pat Crowe, Jo Hearn, Ann Kinson, Allan Law

Prayer written by the Dean of Southwark

God of reconciling hope,
as you guided your people in the past
guide us through the uncertainties of the present time
and bring us to that place of flourishing
where our unity can be restored,
the common good served
and all shall be made well.
In the name of Jesus we pray.
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 anyone 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

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHURCH AND WORSHIP DURING THE PRESENT LOCKDOWN

St Michael's Church Lichfield

The Church will be open for private prayer on Sundays from 12.00 – 2.00pm

Thursdays from 12.00-2.00pm

The church will be staffed and there will be the opportunity to light candles

St John's Church Wall

The Church will be open for private prayer on Sundays from 10.00am-2.00pm

WORSHIP BY ZOOM

The **8.00am Holy Communion** service will be shared on Zoom – see readings sheet for link.

This Sunday there will be a special **Remembrance Service** at 10.30am – see readings sheet for link

Our regular zoom worship is on the first and third Sundays of each month.

Next regular 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***

OFFICE – Angie will be working from home during lockdown, so please contact the office via email. office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

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 CHARITY COLLECTION DATES 2020 @ St MICHAEL'S

Donations may be brought to church as part of private prayer on Sunday or Thursday

Sunday December 6th

Morning Services

Donations to 'Angel Tree'

Collection of toys and gifts for women for Pathway

Food for the Food Bank.

Sunday December 13th

Morning Services

Collection of toys and gifts for women for Pathway

Food for the Food Bank

Christmas Eve Christingle

Open Church

Donations for the Children Society, white envelopes and a collection plate will be available in church.

All the arrangements are subject to government guidelines and may have to be changed . We will keep you informed.

Brenda Liptrot

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.

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

BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Acts Wednesday 11th 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 messages on our website

www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/churches-together.html

PARISH DIARY

Sunday 8th November

8:00am	Holy Communion	Zoom
10.30am	Remembrance Sunday service and silence	Zoom

Monday 9th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Tuesday 10th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
2:30pm	Tuesday Club	Online

Wednesday 11th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
10.30am	Bible Study	Zoom
11:00am	Funeral: Margaret Fellows	St Michael's
2:00pm	Funeral: John Doidge	St Michael's

Thursday 12th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Friday 13th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Saturday 14th November

Sunday 15th November

8:00am	Holy Communion	Zoom
6:00pm	Evening Worship	Zoom

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