

SERVICE SHEET
25th October
Last Sunday after Trinity

Canticle A Song of David

**Splendour and majesty
are yours, O God;
you are exalted as head over all.**

**Blessed are you, God of Israel,
for ever and ever,
for yours is the greatness,
the power, the glory,
the splendour and the majesty.**

**Everything in heaven
and on earth is yours;
yours is the kingdom, O Lord
and you are exalted
as head over all.**

**Riches and honour come from you
and you rule over all.**

**In your hand are power and might;
yours it is to give power and strength to all.**

**And now we give you thanks,
our God,
and praise your glorious name.**

**For all things come from you,
and of your own have we given you.**
1 Chronicles 29.10b-13,14b

**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

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures
to be written for our learning:
help us so to hear them,
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them
that, through patience,
and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace
and for ever hold fast
the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us
in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
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 Thessalonians 2.1-8

¹You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, ²but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. ³For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, ⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. ⁵As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; ⁶nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, ⁷though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. ⁸So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

Psalms 90.1-6

¹ Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations.

² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

³ You turn us back to dust, and say, 'Turn back, you mortals.'

⁴ For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

⁵ You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning;

⁶ in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

**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 22.34-end

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' ³⁷He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' ⁴¹Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴²'What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?' They said to him, 'The son of David.' ⁴³He said to them, 'How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴"The Lord said to my Lord,
'Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under
your feet'"?

⁴⁵If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?' ⁴⁶No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Sermon 'Hope in Christ' **by Revd Kareen Lowther**

Do you like those 'fly on the wall' or 'reality' documentaries that seem to fill our TV channels these days? I have to admit to particularly enjoy watching 'Saving lives at sea' and 'Our Yorkshire Farm'! But why are there SO many? Possibly because there are so many channels that need filling. Possibly because we all have a fascination in watching other people's lives, how things work out for them.

When I read the gospel reading for today from Matthew my first thought was that I wished I could have been there to watch this exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees.

This particular question and answer encounter comes after weeks of passages from Matthew's gospel that show Jesus teaching, questioning and challenging those who were identified by their communities as religious teachers, leaders and rule makers and keepers. People who would be able to pick up any scriptural references that Jesus used – such as the parable of the vineyard a few weeks ago, based on a passage from Isaiah. People who knew that Jesus knew they were trying to trick him by their questions, with a view to condemning Jesus and removing him from being a thorn in their sides!

So in today's passage you can just imagine the Pharisees gathered together, plotting their next move.

"I heard that Jesus silenced the Sadducees the other day!"

"Who does he think he is? Coming along and trying to teach us about God's law!"

"And as to his claims that he's the Messiah!!!"

Now they have another opportunity to challenge Jesus, to try and catch him out. I wonder whether the lawyer offered to ask the question or was 'volunteered' by all the others!

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

And Jesus answers, giving the Pharisees (and us) the two commandments that underpin our Christian faith –

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. And you shall love your neighbour as yourself."

This whole exchange has a slightly confrontational feel about it and I've no doubt (if we could've been there to see it) that the Pharisees left muttering and moaning that their plans seem to be constantly thwarted!

The passage from the Thessalonians, on the other hand, has a very different feel about it. Paul is writing to a group of people he obviously holds very dear. People who had heard from Paul the amazing good news about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and, unlike the Pharisees, had responded with open hearts, souls and minds.

I think that we sometimes forget how easy it is for us to turn to our bibles and re-read the stories of and about Jesus. To have our faith reignited and to find encouragement from passages of scripture. Many of the early converts from Paul's journeys wouldn't have even known the Jewish scriptures, and would have been relying totally on the things Paul had told them about while staying with them. So to receive a letter from Paul must have been a cause for much joy!

Just imagine being there for a moment. Maybe you had heard excited chatter out in the street. Going out to see what the commotion was about you hear someone call out:

"Come and listen, there's a letter from Paul!"

What would it have been like to sit and listen, almost hearing Paul himself as the words are read out? Paul reminding them that things hadn't been easy but how important it had been for him to have been able to share God's message with them. Reminding them of their shared journey. Reminding them how dearly they were loved by God and Paul. That lovely line – "we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children."

No muttering and moaning this time I'm sure. But probably a warm sense of being held in the love of God, a renewed sense of being part of a community of hope.

Well we've been thinking about what it might have been like to be there in the past. But what about if someone from the future was to look back at our lives today? Someone, say in a few hundred years, who was reading a book about Britain in 2020?

Covid 19 pandemic. Brexit. The impact of the re-election of Trump on our trade deals. Rising unemployment and poverty. Threat of closures of businesses, schools, sport, art and culture. The heir to the throne concerned about the nation's mental health.

It makes for gloomy reading! I'm not sure I would want to be a fly on the wall watching that unfold!!

But of course that's only part of the picture. People have also shown amazing resilience, care of neighbours, support for organisations such as the foodbanks reaching out to those in need. Many have found a renewed sense of community, the importance of being part of the bigger picture – maybe especially when seeing family and friends has been restricted.

Our experience of church has been challenged and changed too, yet it has been encouraging how many people have embraced worship via zoom or sitting socially distanced!

If someone was to look back from the future at us as people of faith would they see us moaning and muttering about the state of events, or would they find us celebrating being held in the love of God? Would they recognise in us a renewed sense of being part of a community of hope, hope that comes from loving God, our neighbours and ourselves? Hope that comes from believing in the risen Christ and desiring to share that, through our words and actions, with all who need it at this strange, strange time.

Who knows how we will be viewed by people yet to come! But I pray they will above all see a people of love and hope.

"In Christ alone my hope is found, he is my light, my strength, my song;

This cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!

My Comforter, my all in all, here in the love of Christ I stand."

Stuart Townend and Keith Getty

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

ST MICHAEL

Those newly in need of prayer

Joseph Harrington, Peter and Anne Whatson, Chris Dickerson, Elizabeth Chapman, Nick Rutter, Sonia Doidge, Matthew and Emmeline and their parents, Ruth and Andrew Martel

Those in continuing special need of prayer:

Anthony Staples aged 6, Audrey Egleston, Colin Eastwood, Judith Watson, Alison Cox-Toplis, Julian & Wendy, Jamie, Gary and Denise, Sam Bassett, Mark Berry, Dorothy Clayton, Jo Cobb, Dottie Collins, Robert Harris, Bill Hill, James Knight, Marielouise Oliver, Arthur Palin, John Tipper, Sheila Vaughan, Renee Wellings, Felicity Woodfield

Those who have died

Ian Watson, Michael Plimmer, Michael Burns, Peter Forrester, Kathleen Kershaw, Margaret Fellows, John Doidge & Yvonne Harper

ST JOHN

Pat Crowe, Jo Hearn, Ann Kinson, Allan Law

Post Communion

God of all grace, your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry with the bread of his life and the word of his kingdom: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your true and living bread; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

CHURCH NOTICES

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

Sunday 1st 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@stmichaelyjohn.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.

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH ROOF APPEAL. We urgently need money to repair the roof on the southside of the church. If you can donate please use the blue envelopes, fill in the front if you can gift aid and make all cheques payable to the 'PCC of St Michael and St Mary, Lichfield'. Please mark the envelope 'Church Roof'. This will really help the count team Many thanks *Brenda Liptrot*

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.

BIBLE STUDY The Book of Acts Wednesday 28th October If you would like to join in our Bible Study please contact Angie in the office for the zoom link.

FOODBANK DONATIONS 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

THANK YOU to all St John's, St Michael's, Messy Church and First Steps for their harvest donations to Foodbank. The car was so full David had to walk home! We continue to take donations most weeks during these difficult times.

WATERAID Thank you to everyone at St Michael's who donated to WaterAid as part of our Harvest Festival gifts. **We collected £297:36**, plus gift aid, a very generous contribution

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS Congratulations and best wishes to Norah Palin who recently celebrated her 91st birthday.

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

PARISH DIARY

Sunday 25th October

8:00am	Holy Communion	St Michael's
10:00am	Holy Communion	St Michael's
10:00am	Holy Communion	St John
12:00pm	Baptism: Esme Bentley	St Michael's

Monday 26th October

8:15am	Morning Prayer	St Michael's
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Tuesday 27th October

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Wednesday 28th October

8:15am	Morning Prayer	St Michael's
10.30am	Bible Study	Zoom
2:30pm	Funeral: Kathleen Kershaw	St Michael's
6:30pm	Choir Rehearsal	St Michael's

Thursday 29th October

OFFICE CLOSED

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Friday 30th October

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Saturday 31st October

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