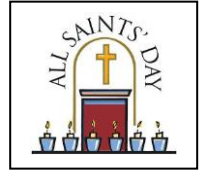




Parish of St. Mary's Swynnerton & St. James' Cotes Heath
Sunday November 1st 2020 (All Saints)
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Loving God
Thank you for all those who have shaped our lives,
but whom we no longer see.
Help us to remember them well,
and trust that they are at peace with you.
Amen.

- In the Christian calendar, All Saints Day, (November 1), celebrates all the saints of God who have been beacons of Christ's light through the ages - people who have warmed and lit the world with their faith and love. All Souls Day, (November 2), is an occasion to remember and give thanks for departed friends and relatives; our love is a bridge between life and death.

This Sunday there will be a short parish Memorial Thanksgiving service at 3pm in St. James' when those named overleaf will be remembered. If you are worshipping at home, our "service of the word" contains prayers suitable for this season.



As the days get darker, one initiative to bring us some brightness is "Light of Hope 2020". This is an open invitation to cathedrals, churches and other institutions to join together and mark the significance of All Saints Day, and its resonance to the situation we are all facing as part of the ongoing pandemic. This weekend, beams of light will be cast into the night sky around Lichfield cathedral as a symbol of hope. Other cathedral cities joining in are Chelmsford, Carlisle, Ely, Exeter, Salisbury and Liverpool. Peter Walker, sculptor and artist explains:

"Light of Hope is an opportunity for us to collectively remember those who have helped and given so much during the past year, as well as take time to remember those we have lost and think about those near to us".

- This Sunday Rev. Noreen Russell will be celebrating Holy Communion at St. Mary's at 10.30.
- NEXT SUNDAY, November 8th there will be a 10.30 Remembrance service at St. Mary's followed by a short Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial. Please book with Ray Lewney.
- It might be hard to find a poppy to buy this year but if you go to the Royal British Legion website, <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/>, you can make a donation and immediately receive a poppy poster to display in your window. The Legion is promoting "My Poppy Run 2020", a way for solo joggers to fund raise in place of the usual park run. It's also encouraging people to join in the "11/11 Challenge" – knit 11 poppies, bake 11 cupcakes, choose a way to fundraise. If you have no computer, you can donate by phone on 0845 845 1945



JOHN 11 17-35. Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept.

November 2nd is All Souls Day and is traditionally when the church celebrates and remembers those whom we have known and loved and who have passed away. To mark this day, we are holding a memorial thanksgiving service at St. James' Cotes Heath. Losing a loved one is one of the most difficult and painful life events that we will all have to go through. The current situation has made this even more difficult with grieving friends and families not being able to say their goodbyes or have the funeral services that they would have wished for their loved ones.

On Sunday we will be reading from John's gospel and it records the events which will lead to Jesus raising his friend Lazarus, back to life. By the time that Jesus reaches Bethany (the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha) the village is in mourning and Lazarus has been dead for four days. Jesus is met in turn by the sisters in their grief and despair with their 'if only' 'Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died'. He does not stop them from bringing their questions and burden to him. But Jesus speaking to Martha points her to the future and what will happen saying, 'your brother will rise again'. But it is not the Jewish teaching about the resurrection at the end of time that he is talking about or that Martha understands, but something far more important than that. Jesus tells her that HE is 'the resurrection and the life', a person, and he is standing right in front of her! 'Do you believe this?' he asks her. It is a question about faith and trust and believing in who Jesus is and his promise.

And that is what Jesus is asking us today. Martha acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God and this is the hope and the promise that we too have in Jesus. That if we believe that he is the son of God and trust in him that he is the Son of God, then we will have eternal life which gives us hope for the future.

The story does not end for the sisters or for Lazarus. As Jesus raised Lazarus, so he will raise us all. **Nicky Beasley.**



This weekend we remember with thanksgiving those who have died and name them before God:
John Smith, Marian Darlington, John Darlington, Edward Swift, Sheila Bennison, Gerald Fox, Bertie & Jean Beswick, Clarice Hall, Peter Tudor, Reg Barley, Elva Wilson, Edwin Cotter, members of the Gaunt family, Paul & Susan Dickinson, members of the Kirkham family, Stanley Unwin, Joseph & Sheila McElroy



Please pray this week for

- Richard Wenger, Fr. Paul Chavasse, Elaine Dulson, Wendy Jackson and Paul Bell, Dot Sargent, Pat Barley, Pat Lawrence, Carol & Martyn Turner, Geoff & Linda Foster, Margaret Bailey, Jonquil and Nick Goacher & family and for the Shaw family in their bereavement.
- Key and essential workers, who continue to work through the second wave of this pandemic; and all those who face an uncertain future in their employment. Our government, that they act in the best interests of all the nation.
- Our Church Warden Ray, the newly elected PCC and the ministry team. Pray that their work is firmly focussed on ministry and Christian growth in our churches and communities.

"You O Lord are in the midst of us and we are called by your name; leave us not, O Lord our God."

Today we remember before God with thanksgiving those who have died, especially those whose memory we treasure.

Blessed are you Lord our God, lover of our souls. You uphold us in life and sustain us in death. To you be praise and glory for ever. Amen.

Confession: **Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the God of love
bring *us* back to himself,
forgive *us our* sins,
and assure *us* of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
All Amen.

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles:
this we have received,
and this we believe. Amen.**

Collect: Everlasting God, our maker and redeemer, grant us, with all the faithful departed, the sure benefits of your Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection, that, in the last day, when you gather up all things in Christ, we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises; 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.**

For our prayer time today, All Saints Day, let us turn our thoughts and prayers to all those saints who have gone before us, praying with thankful assurance that they are now at rest safely with our Heavenly Father.

Heavenly Father, we lift before You, all those family members and friends that we have loved and who are no longer in our sight. Whilst we may grieve for their passing, we thank You Lord for the influence that those we remember had on us during their lives and we thank you that this lives on in us today. We thank You Lord that their race is run and may they rest in peace in Your glorious kingdom. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father we praise You for the men and women of faith who have been an inspiration to us on our Christian journey, for those who have set an example to follow. We remember those who dedicated their lives to Your glory, who stood up for the faith and set themselves against evil. May they rest in peace in Your glorious kingdom. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father we bring before you all those who are unwell at this time, their families and all those who care for them. In a few quiet moments we pray for all those on the prayer list, those known to ourselves and those known only to You. We pray for Your kingdom to come in the places of pain, of weariness, disappointment and fear, to bring about the peace which only You can give and Your comfort which speaks of hope. **Amen**

Heavenly Father for those who mourn the death of a loved one, help us to understand that this is nothing less than a gateway to a new and lasting life in your love and protection. Heavenly Father we thank you for making us and redeeming us, and opening wide to us the gates of heaven. **Amen**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Neither death nor life
can separate us from the love of God
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
All Thanks be to God.

Prayers this week
are written by Nesta Williams

