



8th November 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we start another national lockdown, for some it means a big change to our daily lives, for others of us this might make little practical difference. But all of us are looking to next month, and wondering whether the lockdown will indeed end on 2nd December, as the government have planned. When, indeed, will these restrictions be over with altogether?

We look forward to that day, whenever it comes. Yet we are none of us in the position to know for certain when it will be. We are having to learn to wait, and to be patient as we do so.

How fitting that today our Gospel reading is about waiting for a future event, who knows when it will occur. Jesus uses the parable of the ten virgins to highlight what it will be like when the Kingdom of heaven comes. It helps to know what the bridal practice was in the Middle East back then. In those days, the wedding would begin with the Groom coming to the Bride's house, to take her to the wedding feast at his house. The bridesmaids – virgins - would accompany the Bride when she went with the Groom.

So half of these bridesmaids are foolish – because they're not prepared. They haven't been prepared with oil for their lamps – so they have to go and find more oil when the Groom does arrive, because their lamps had already gone out, so they end up missing the wedding feast. Those who were prepared, who did have enough oil, were welcomed at

the feast. The Bride is Christ's Church, and we, members of the church, are the bridesmaids, waiting for Jesus to return at the last day. And the wedding feast will be the feast that is awaiting us in heaven, of which communion is just a foretaste.

So this parable about waiting, for that time when Jesus will return to judge the whole world: all those living and those who have died - can also be a more immediate parable about how we wait for the end of this pandemic.

Waiting for freedom from the restrictions we all face at the moment. Or we can look at it with a longer-term perspective, on Remembrance Sunday, waiting for true peace to be brought to this world, when the lion will lie down with the lamb, when there will be no more wars.

How will you be spending the time of lockdown? If you have more time on your hands, what will you do with that? The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have urged the whole church to use the coming month to pray. So, let us all re-focus ourselves to wait upon the Lord. Let us become servants of the church who wait attentively. Let us be prepared to hear God, with hearts that know His forgiveness and love at work. Let us be waiting for God to speak to us. Waiting for prayer to be answered. Waiting for the Lord to return to judge the living and the dead. Waiting for God's Kingdom to come.

Amen.

Tina Upton



NOTICES

Holy Trinity Blacon are the living church of our living God, and we continue to be at work here! If you are able, do check the parish website www.holytrinityblacon.org (especially the Coronavirus Support page) or our Facebook page (holytrinityblacon) for updates.

SUNDAY WORSHIP We are unable to meet together for worship during the national lockdown, but do join us for video worship each Sunday which will be available through our website, and also on our Facebook page.

CHURCH OPEN FOR PRAYER we are able to open the church for private prayer. It is open on Sunday 8th November 10-12 to pray for peace and healing. Then following that, it will be open *each Thursday 3-4pm* for private prayer.

PRAYING FOR BLACON Louise and Tina are taking our exercise particularly along those streets we are praying for each week. Do join us in praying for those residents. This week we pray for: *Donne Place, Kipling Road, Wordsworth Crescent, Wordsworth Mews & Wordsworth Square*

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD We will continue to collect shoeboxes at the church hall 9th-16th November. Additionally, if you prefer, they have arranged another national week of collection after the lockdown, 5th to 12th December. For more information, please see <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

CHRISTMAS PLANS Inspired by the NHS rainbows around the place, what if we put scenes from the nativity in our windows this Christmas? Try www.housingaforest.com/stained-glass-nativity/ for inspiration and there are lots of printable nativity silhouettes free on the internet. Let us know if you plan to take part, so we can form a trail around Blacon.

JOIN US FOR EVENING PRAYER every Wednesday at 5pm via Zoom. This will continue for the foreseeable future. If you are not on the internet, it is possible to join us over the telephone – please contact us in advance if you would like to do that.

BIBLE GROUP continues to meet each Thursday evening at 7.30pm via Zoom. We are currently working through the letter to the Philippians. Do let us know if you would like a link to join.

DAILY HOPE is a free phone line for hymns, prayers and reflections – 0800 804 8044

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