



“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

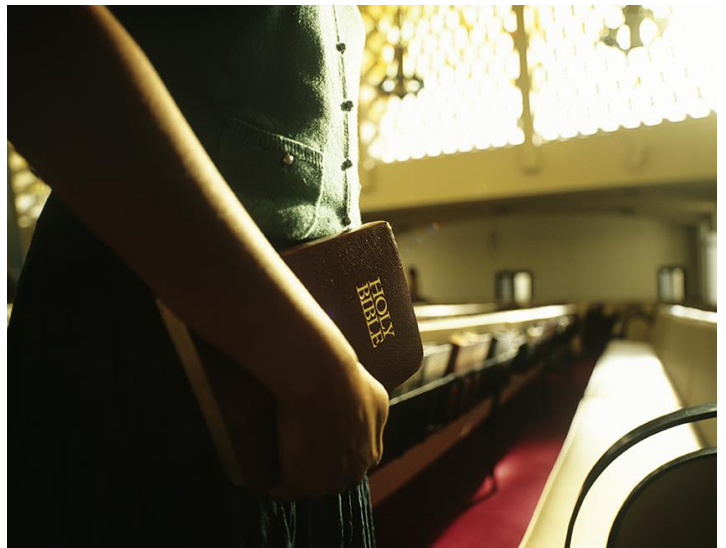
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Jesus Christ in Matthew's Gospel, Ch. 11, verses 28-2

It has been wonderful on Sunday mornings to see members of the church family returning to physical services after such a difficult year. Yes, there are compromises such as still no singing or refreshments. Yes, we maintain social distancing and wear masks, BUT there is something very special about Christian fellowship that just cannot be replicated by online services. God meant us to be united with one another in faith. Just think of all those images in the New Testament: one body with many parts; one building made of many stones. We all have our place and we all have our part to play. We give and we receive. We are strengthened by being part of a whole. Praise God that the UK is making strides in combatting covid and many now feel comfortable in coming out to church, but we are still praying for and supporting those who do not yet feel able, for a whole host of different reasons, to come out yet.

Lay Worship Leaders

The shape of the Church of England is changing. In the future there will be fewer ordained clergy, and those that remain will have more of a co-ordinating and teaching role. This is not necessarily a bad thing! For too long there has been an unhealthy divide between clergy and laity, with a tendency to see the vicar as doing everything- after all, that's what they are paid for. They are the church professionals. A more helpful and biblical approach is to take seriously 'the priesthood of all believers', an idea you can read about in 1 Peter Ch. 2. The Holy Spirit has been poured out on *all* believers. We all have been given gifts to be used in the service of God and others. It is a joy to see local people using their God-given abilities in leading worship in the parishes of Lechlade, Eastleach and Southrop. A commissioning services recognises these gifts in people, their training, releasing them for service and ministry.



**Commissioning service with Revd Andrew Braddock
10am, Sunday 2nd May**

Hardship Fund

Over the past year many families and individuals have been hit very badly. Many jobs have been lost, leading to poverty, housing issues, deprivation and family breakdown. The pandemic crisis has also had a very negative impact on people's mental health and wellbeing. As a parish church, part of our mission is to help the community around us. To that end, the PCC has agreed to establish a new Hardship Fund.

Our Treasurer, David Williams, has provided the official description of this fund:

'Established in 2021 to hold donations received to alleviate hardship and poverty for those living in Lechlade and the immediate surrounds and to pass on and make donations to charitable organisations who support those in financial hardship. The PCC has initially identified CAP ('Christians Against Poverty') operating from an office in Highworth as such an organisation; however, this can be extended to foodbanks or similar bodies offering support at the discretion of the PCC. The making of cash donations to individuals is specifically excluded from the purposes of this fund.'



There are different ways to give to our new Hardship Fund. Please see our parish website:

<https://www.stlawrencelechlade.org.uk/donate-to-st-lawrence/>

Or, you can speak to our Treasurer, David Williams, on 01367 253953. (Please ensure any donations for this fund are clearly marked.)

'Thy Kingdom Come' Prayer (13th - 23rd May 2021)

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer. During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come (Ascension to Pentecost), it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

- Deepen their own relationship with Jesus Christ***
- Pray for 5 friends or family to come to faith in Jesus***
- Pray for the empowerment of the Spirit that we would be effective in our witness***



Please see the TKC website for great resources and videos for individuals, churches and families. Also check out 'Cheeky Pandas', brilliant resources to connect children and families with God.



Prayer Triplets Tea

The network of prayer triplets at St. Lawrence church invite you to join them for afternoon tea! Pull up a chair, bring your favourite beverage, your favourite biscuit or slice of cake, and join our online time together.

There will be some input on various aspects of Church life from both nearer home and further afield, and an opportunity to pray to our Father in Heaven.

Denver Keegan is our Prayer Triplets Coordinator and she would love to hear from you if you would like to join a triplet. Being encouraged and being accountable to others is often a great help in cultivating a healthy prayer life as a disciple of Christ. Zoom link available from Parish Office.

(Picture is for illustration purposes only...)



**Prayer Triplets Tea
3pm, Saturday 8th May**



Don't Forget...

You can always email prayer requests in complete confidence and we guarantee someone will pray for you:

prayer@stlawrencelechlade.org.uk

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Mission Partners – Diocese of Dornakal & iServe Africa



It is our privilege and joy to partner with our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. We have long-standing relationships with different Christian organisations and individuals around the world. The situation in India because of covid is getting worse and it is thought that the official death toll of more than 200,000 people is vastly underestimated. The Diocese of Gloucester writes:

***Dornakal** is predominantly rural with small populations centres, but the virus is sweeping through the towns and villages and there is a severe shortage of hospital beds and oxygen. Sadly, two of the clergy have died, with many being infected or in hospital. The second wave has also postponed the process of electing a new bishop, to replace Bishop Prasada Rao who died in office in October last year. Our Link Officer in Dornakal, Mr Shubhakar Ashirvadem, writes: "You are all in our daily prayers. Please pray for the Diocese of Dornakal and for India."*

iServe Africa are one of our partners based in Kenya.

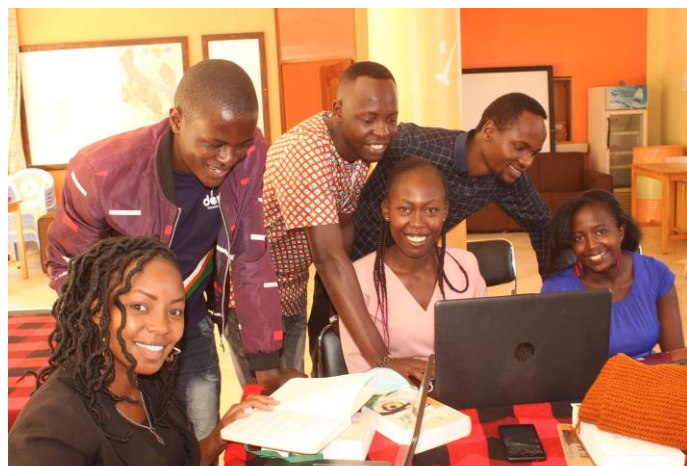
They write:

Why do we exist? The need for faithful gospel workers in our continent cannot be over emphasized. There are not many Gospel workers in the field. Those available, either lack training in faithful Bible handling or avenues to expose them to practical gospel work.

It's for this reason, that iServe Africa was born with the vision to influence leadership in Africa and the world by raising a generation of servant leaders and faithful Bible teachers. Our Mission is God's mission and therefore our task is to be aligned with the gospel as we submit to the father's will. Our vision is to train and equip gospel workers to be faithful in handling God's Word and be ready to go out and be servants of this very gospel. Our hope is that they would grow in these two aspects.

Fourteen years down the line, this vision has not changed. Our task then is to keep producing fruit until the Lord of the harvest returns. The way to achieve this is to faithfully pass on the gospel to others who will in turn entrust it to other faithful ones.

...And the things you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. – 2 Timothy 2:2



Over the years, we have had over 250 young people come through the training and have had an experience of one to two years on different cross-cultural mission work. Some have later moved on to influence different spheres such as missionary work, pastoral work, and others to the market places.

Our posture and approach to this great work is prayer and Partnerships. This work has been and is still being supported by gospel hearted individuals. We look up to our father for providence as we carry on his mission.



Sermon series – Jeremiah the Prophet



Over the past few weeks, we have been looking together at the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah. It is often a sombre exploration of disobedience and judgement, but all the way through there are flashes of God's mercy and forgiveness- He has not given up on his people! It is like the sun being glimpsed through dark storm clouds.

Jeremiah is one of the longest books in the Bible and can be hard going, so why not watch this really helpful video (7min) from the Bible Project and try to put it all in some sense of order and context?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSK36cHbrk0>

Explore the many other BibleProject videos - major themes, characters, as well as most of the individual books of the Bible. Well worth your time!



and finally...

We are surrounded by 'a great cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12: 1) – men and women of faith, who inspire, teach and challenge us.

George Whitefield was one of the greatest evangelists and preachers this country has ever seen (and there have been quite a few!). He was a Gloucester lad, born in the Old Bell Inn in Southgate Street, which his parents kept. He attended the Crypt School and preached his first sermon in St. Mary de Crypt Church.

God greatly used Whitefield to bring many to Christ in the 18th Century, both in England and in America.

He had the most astonishing voice, which carried well even outdoors to crowds of thousands. Church Historian Thomas S. Kidd notes, 'The famed Shakespearean actor David Garrick admired Whitefield's oratorical skills but apparently did not embrace Whitefield's gospel. (Garrick reportedly said that Whitefield could "make men weep or tremble by his varied utterances of the word 'Mesopotamia.'")

Let us pray that God would once again pour out His Spirit, bringing revival and filling this land with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ's name,

Andrew Cinnamond

Vicar of Lechlade, Eastleach and Southrop

