"Welcome to our expanded weekly bulletin at St Chad's. From now on we will be sharing this online, on our website, via email and will also place a number of hard copies in church. As well as continuing with the information for prayer, updates about the current situation and other notices we also plan to include a section offering a reflection on the Sunday readings and some other encouraging material. If any of you have a small piece to offer - could be a word of testimony, a short piece of creative writing, a book you have found helpful, a prayer that means something to you etc. please let the office know”

Worship Every Sunday at St Chad’s
9.30am Service of the Word (Streamed on Facebook)
11.30am Eucharist in St Chad’s

Daily Prayer in Church
Monday - Friday 8.30am
(Excluding bank holidays)

Mid-Week Holy Communion
Wednesday — 10.00am (Streamed on Facebook)
We’ve looked at ‘remembering God’ and ‘finding a space to pray in’ so far in our reflections. These form some foundations for the house of prayer. We are taking the themes taught by Simon Tugwell in his books on prayer as our guide and this week we consider a central truth in the three great Abrahamic religions – that there is no God but God. Judaism, Christianity and Islam – for all their differences – hold this as one. God is God and we are not. There is therefore a distinction between the Creator of life and the creation, between the One who sustains all life and the beings that are so sustained. True prayer begins somewhere in the recognition of this distinction. Yet why does it matter to hold to a conviction about God’s unique other-ness? Perhaps more pertinently does holding this view mean we automatically belittle ourselves and become servile and subservient?

We suggest three aspects of the doctrine of God which help us grow into a life of meaningful prayer. Firstly, we are reminded that we are not the centre of the universe. Secondly, we are not in full control of our own lives. Thirdly, we are, in a fundamental and unavoidable sense, dependent beings who are not autonomous. May be the coronavirus crisis has reminded us that our lives and prospects are woven together in intricate detail with others and that there is an inherent vulnerability in being a tiny part of a huge and complex created order.

In the Genesis accounts in the bible we find the stories which have underpinned our understandings of our humanity in its dependent status. The notion of original sin, which often sidetracks us into speculations about its literal or symbolic meanings, is at heart about the human propensity to think they are at the centre of the world. Tugwell speaks of:

*The awful consolidation of man’s tyrannical empire. But man does not give in: beginning with trying to create himself, he cannot help but try to create a whole universe for himself, a universe from which God is systematically excluded, because man is being God unto himself.*
In the Christian tradition the attempt to be God is not only a form of idolatory but it is also a weighty and unbearable burden, a joyless and humourless existence. The great spiritual teachers often return to a simple scriptural injunction: *vacate et videte* – ‘be still and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46.11). God invites us to take a holiday (*vacate*), to stop being God for a while, and let God be God. This has huge implications for our journey in prayer as it takes the pressure away from us to be heroic, or great performers, or outstandingly holy people. It allows us to be the flawed, fragile and yet glorious beings that we are. As Tugwell notes:

*This is one of those areas where we need to use our imagination in the right way. Too often we do not picture prayer in the way that God invites us here; we think of it as a terribly important, serious thing that we have to do, mentally lining it up with all the other important things that pile up on our desks, those weighty matters that depend on us and require our urgent attention. But God is inviting us to take a break, to play truant. We can stop doing all those important things we have to do in our capacity as God, and leave it to him to be God.*

As we build a house of prayer let’s remember whose building it is and enjoy rest and refreshment in knowing that God is God. If we really struggle to let go of our roles and responsibilities in the place and at the time of prayer why not use Psalm 46.11 as a prayer phrase and gently, lovingly and slowly repeat it as our offering to the Lord – *Be still and know that I am God*. In that deep resting we will find renewal and transformation in God’s good time through the work of the Spirit within us.
Upcoming Occasional Offices:

- 14th September 11am Interment of the late Eleanor Smith at St. Chads.
- 14th September 3.30pm Service for the late Allan Rose at Fradley Crematorium.
- 15th September Service in Church for the late Pauline Brumby
- 18th September 11.30am Interment of the late Janet Cooke at St. Chads.
- 18th September 1.30pm Interment for the late Dorothy Crausaz.
- 26th September 2pm marriage between Graham Entwistle and Melanie Grove at St. Chads.
- 29th September 1.30pm Interment for the late Paul Gicquel at St. Chad’s
Advance notice - APCM date 12th October at 7.30pm

We have vacancies for Churchwardens; PCC members; Churches Together Members; Deanery Representatives. If anyone is interested in any of these vacancies please contact either Rev Rod Clark 262254 or Mim Morris 252848. Thank you.

Simon Foster's ordination as a deacon will be on Saturday September 26th at 11am in Lichfield Cathedral. Sadly, due to current restrictions only two guests can be invited to the service. Please keep Simon in your prayers for this important stage in his ministry journey. The service will be live streamed by the Cathedral.

Ride and Stride — The Staffordshire Historic Churches Trust was founded in 1953 with the aim of helping churches with the cost of repairs. Ride and Stride is the annual sponsored event in aid of county Historic Churches Trusts all over England. It takes place this year on Saturday September 12th.

Participants are sponsored by family and friends to visit as many churches as they can between 10 am and 6 pm. In 2019 113 churches took part in Staffordshire, 46 of them sent out cyclists, walkers, and drivers. A total of £11,000 was raised which will be increased by Gift Aid. The money is used to make grants to churches for repairs and essential maintenance – in 2019/20 grants totalling £16,000 were offered to churches. Half the money raised by each cyclist/walker/driver is returned to their home church.

This year will inevitably be different. Sadly, because of issues with social distancing fewer churches will be open to welcome visitors and offer refreshments. But the need to raise funds for the maintenance and repair of our wonderful heritage of churches is as great as ever. Ride and Stride is also a very practical way to remind ourselves that we are part of something much bigger than our own building and our own congregation, so please think about taking part - as a cyclist, walker driver, or sponsor - and enjoy the day!

For more information contact Jim Dodsworth. Telephone 01543 256636; 07932 913333.
Email: jrdodsworth@yahoo.co.uk

Help raise funds for St. Chad’s:

Christmas cards will be available again shortly at £2.00 per pack and 75 pence per pack goes to the church. Why not send a card this year to someone you have not seen because of lockdown, or someone near you who has been isolated. There will only be 50 packs for sale, so don’t wait till December to order from me.

I have a collection of preserves – marmalade, jams, jellies and chutney. Interested?

Contact me on 256185.

Val
Operation Christmas Child

St. Chad’s will once more be collecting shoeboxes to send to children in need. This message is to give you advance notice so that you can start to buy items or make/knit hats and other craft activities to benefit the children who are also struggling as a result of the global pandemic.

Here’s a message from a local West Midlands volunteer:

“some news from Operation Christmas Child. Simply to say that Christmas is NOT cancelled for OCC this coming autumn!! We are once again planning to send thousands of shoeboxes of gifts into a variety of countries this year, despite the strange and difficult situation we all find ourselves in.

All the details of the coming campaign are on the OCC website, www.Samaritans-purse.org.uk as is information about Shoebox Online, which may suit more people this year.

Operation Christmas Child will be distributing shoeboxes this year, though we may have to make a few changes regarding the collection and processing of the boxes. Support from our local churches is very much appreciated.

Prayer is very important, and the volunteers meet online each week, and are praying for the work of OCC, and for friends and contacts.”

More details to follow later

Linda Clark

Message to those at St Chads

Jane McDermott sends her good wishes to everyone at the church, especially to the congregation which used to meet on a Wednesday morning for the Eucharist. She misses you all and looks forward to the time when she will feel confident to attend a service in church again when the present 'Virus health restrictions' are eased.'

Please acknowledge receipt of this communication as may be appropriate. Thank you.

Electoral Role

If you have any changes to make to your entry on the electoral roll please contact David Burke on deburke24@hotmail.com. All changes are to be made by 29th September, a copy of the Electoral Roll is on display for you to check.
Reflecting on the Sunday Bible Readings for Sunday 13th September (14th after Trinity)

Romans 14.1-12

Matthew 18.21-35

Last week we considered the importance of non-judging. In a world where it is very easy, even a default position, to criticise others this teaching challenges us. Today’s readings expand our understanding of this vital issue – vital, because if we as Christ’s body don’t learn to live out of the promises and commands of the Gospel we have nothing distinctive to offer. We then cease to be the kind of good news community God desires. Whenever I’ve encountered negative judgmentalism from others in the Christian community I’ve wondered if those responsible have really grasped the centrality of non-judging to our faith. To be honest there are times when I’ve wondered if I’ve fully grasped it for myself. So, I pray for grace to go deeper into the wonders of the gospel life.

I want to pick out just two principles from today’s reading which I think underpin this whole teaching. St Paul says to the Romans:

Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God (Romans 14.10)

In our gospel reading Jesus tells a story about forgiveness in which a king has harsh words for a servant who has not passed on to others the grace he has been given himself:

You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy in your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you? (Matthew 18.32-33)
The first principle is that only God is the judge, only God has true authority and we are all in the final analysis accountable to God. To put ourselves in God’s place is a form of idolatry in which we usurp the Lord’s prerogatives. The Christian is called to leave judgement to the Lord and only speak that which will build up and support another’s faith, hence the emphasis on the weaker brethren in the earlier part of our Romans reading.

The second principle, which needs to be held in mind as we ponder judgement which can sometimes feel a fearful thing, is that the king is merciful. We all stand in need of God’s mercy and the good news is that God is forgiving, merciful and just as we bring our sins and shortcomings to him. As the apostle John saw:

If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sin God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1.8-9)

So two key truths to ponder today – God is judge, but God is merciful. Therefore we can have great confidence and faith in his promises. We can be freed of the burden we often carry of judging others and we can know forgiveness and mercy for the times we have forgotten to put into practice the great and liberating realities of the Gospel.

Questions for Application

Personal – are we judging anyone else with negative criticism?
For St Chad’s – how do we deepen our shared life as a community of mercy which trusts in God’s judgement?
For the nation – how might we share the good news that there is a different mode of social being in which we extend forgiveness and mercy?

Revd Rod Clark
Prayer Matters

For baptisms and spiritual growth
For upcoming baptisms.
For those who are seeking confirmation

For the mission and ministry of the church
For Bishop Michael, that his pilgrimage of prayer will be fruitful
For opportunities to share the good news in our parish
For the ministry of Simon Foster, curate designate

For the local community.
For those who live in Pinfold Road, Stafford Road, Kean Close
For all who are isolated and vulnerable
For local community organisations seeking to start their activities again

For the nation and the world
For all in government and for all MPs
For the growth of the work of Green Christian
For the work of Christian Aid

For those in need of God’s touch.
Steve, Max, Kev & Leah, Neil, Helen & Family, Lee, Nick, Olivia & Gary, Roy, Molly, Gary, Jess & family, Alan & Edna, Patrick, Peter, Ann & John & family, Ivy, Caroline, Linda & Alan, Joan, Josie, Tim, Derek, Liz, ’baby Effie’, Sue, Martin, Roger, Sam, Laura & family, Stephen, Patrick, Ann, Sharon, Jay, Michael and family, Paulette, Jacqueline, Danny, Matt, Gwen, Rachel, Paula, Mike, Jane, Freddie, Pam, Roy, Joan and family, Pat, Tony, Olivia, Claire, Ken, John, Victoria, Angie and Family, Gail, Margaret, Simon, Alan, Judith, Catherine and family, Jim, Etty, Simon Naomi and Jon. If you have a prayer request, please telephone Paul on (326458) or the Office (416595). In September we will be starting a new prayer request list. If you wish to ask for prayer for someone in need please contact the office with details. If you have any encouragements of answered prayer please let us know.

For the departed and those who mourn.
Please remember any who have died recently Florence Palmer, Mark Hibbert, Daisy Bright, Margaret Kehoe, Denise, Neil Rowe, Pearl Cliffe, Allan Rose, Pauline Brumby, Leonard Edwards Evelyn Rose Bailey also for those whose anniversaries occur at this time and their relatives and friends.
For all who work for our local Funeral Directors, Crematoria and Cemeteries
CONTACTS AT ST CHADS

Well Cottage, 42 St. Chad’s Road,  
Lichfield, WS13 7ND.  
Tel: 01543 416595  
Email: office@saintchads.org.uk  
Parish Administrator: Tom Millward

CURRENT OFFICE OPENING HOURS  
Tuesday-Thursday 10am-12pm

Rector: Revd. Rod Clark  
Tel: 01543 262254  
Email: revrod.stchad@gmail.com  
You can also contact us through  
Facebook, Twitter and our Website  
www.facebook.com/St Chad's Church Lichfield  
http://saintchads.weebly.com/services.html

Curate Designate: Simon Foster,  
Tel: 07496 638805  
Email: simon.foster@lichfield.anglican.org
Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8 NRSV)