



This week at St Mary's Sunday 25 November 2018

MO, WHO WAS CONFIRMED, TELLS HIS STORY

I immediately think of the story of 'the Lost Son', Luke's Gospel chapter 15, when I think of my own story. Changing a couple of names and places, it's my story.

I have lived in Nottingham for the last 18-19 years, so instead of a "country far away", I could say "West Bridgford". I know what a severe famine is like. I have made lots of mistakes but some of the stuff that happened wasn't my fault – like in a severe famine, a change in the law, my solicitor disappearing with my documents, my money, and...

If all of these bad things hadn't happened, I wouldn't be here today. At the time, I used to say it looks like God has forgotten me. But now I put it differently. The son was lost, so God did me a favour. Actually, I have an expression to describe when I've got a difficult time: Now I am on God's Radar.

The second part my story is even more important, Can I go back to church now? I waited and waited for years when I lost everything, wanting to go back to church. Has God gone? Does He forgive me? It was between me and God so I couldn't lie or get away. For many hours I talked to my priest friend in Los Angeles. Many times I tried to come back to church but I couldn't. A couple of times I got half way, but turned back home. A couple of times I came near the church door but couldn't go in.

My priest friend was saying, just go to church and you'll get what you want. Finally I decided to go for one minute. I said if I saw a sort of sign, I'd stay, otherwise I'd leave!! I didn't know what to expect, I definitely didn't expect everybody to be clapping for me. So I came to church quietly and stayed for less than a minute which felt like hours. I didn't see or feel any sign, so I left. I felt ashamed and embarrassed to stay longer.

I didn't think anyone had noticed me, but suddenly someone tapped on my shoulder. He said something like, "are you ok son, or is there a problem why you left church?" I remember my answer. I said "I have no idea". He was a retired Vicar, Graham Burton, who put his arm round me and asked me to go inside and have chat. I did.

I couldn't have asked for a better sign than this, could I? And everything happened in less than a minute.

Mo Ashtari

Visiting Preacher David Cole – today 10.45 am

David is coming to speak on behalf of Five Talents <https://fivetalents.org> This is an Anglican Church inspired charity which speaks of a 'different' way of being a missionary. The charity, through local partners, makes available small loans to allow people to start new small businesses. It's mainly operational in Sub Saharan Africa. David lives locally and there will be an **opportunity to meet him after for a Q and A over a cup of tea or coffee, so do stay for that.**

Praying for £47,000 Please join with us in praying that we will more than bridge the gap of the 2018 projected deficit (see TWASM 30/9/18). If you feel you would like to be part of the answer to these prayers by either making a one-off donation, or by setting up or increasing a Standing Order to St Mary's, this would be very much appreciated. **Complete one of the One Off Donations or Standing Order Forms** (on the display board behind the Donations Chest given by the Friends) to participate, and put it in one of the envelopes marked for the Treasurer.

SOLOMON'S KNOT CONCERT (Christmas in Leipzig) 1 DECEMBER 7pm Bach's Magnificat in Eb. Solomon's Knot return to Nottingham, following their performance of Bach's Mass in B-minor last year. The programme will also feature Johann Kuhnau's Magnificat (Bach's predecessor as Thomascantor in Leipzig) and Johann Schelle's short advent piece which will provide a rousing introduction. Solomon's Knot's singers all sing from memory and the collective performs without a conductor. The Times gave them a 5* review following their recent performance at the Barbican Bach Weekend in June. Tickets £20 unreserved from Royal Concert Hall 0115 989 5555 / TRCH.co.uk

HELPING ON SUNDAY MORNINGS. We need to increase the number of people who help by preparing the Altar Table on a Sunday morning. It would involve arriving at about 10.00 and getting everything out and arranged. Simple training. Please could you contact Di if you'd like to consider it.

RAISING MONEY FOR EMMANUEL HOUSE. Having already raised £3,000 this year, we are aiming to boost this to over £5,000 in the run up to Christmas. See Beth Mitchell's article (4 November,) she is co-ordinating donations. Please either use the **envelopes on the Donations chest** by the south entrance or **pass contributions to her**. If you choose to make your donation **directly to Emmanuel House**, please let her know of your gift.

SPECIAL REFRESHMENTS ON 2 DECEMBER after the morning service, real coffee, homemade cakes and Christmas cards will be part of our final push - as a church - to raise this £5000 for Emmanuel House. Please come prepared to enjoy and to give generously.

DENIS TULLY, Emmanuel House's Chief Exec, is preaching at 10.45 Service on 9 Dec.

St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival Saturday 8 December – Friday 21 December. This year we are again holding a Christmas tree Festival, with all profits being donated to Emmanuel House. Please spread the word to friends and family to visit our beautiful church during this period. Donations can be made either during the festival (there will be a special box) or through the parish office.

Threads Through Revelation has been touring cathedrals during the last three and a half years and its final destination is Southwell! This amazing 14 panel exhibition by Jaqui Parkinson is probably the largest work of textile art by a single artist in the world. An estimated 700,000 people have been to view it, provoking discussion and interest in the most challenging book of the New Testament. It will be in the Quire of the Minster from 16 October to 30 November. Please tell your friends and come see!

Winter Shelter.....Emmanuel House is now providing beds for rough sleepers, in addition to the ongoing, daily work of Emmanuel House with some of the most needy and vulnerable folk in Nottingham. As a congregation, we want to be able to support, and to demonstrate our support, for such Christian love in action. They need volunteers to help run a safe and smooth experience for each and every individual who requires shelter this winter. There are different types of volunteer roles (preparing simple meals, checking-in guests, help set-up/take-down) which can be found at www.emmanuelhouse.org.uk/volunteer-at-the-winter-shelter or 0115 950 7140 ...and please see our new Sock Box in the church!

Silver Smartie Appeal From Advent Sunday tubes of Smarties will be available for members of the congregation to collect 20p pieces in aid of the Overseas Committee support of Five Talents, CARF, and our CMS partners.

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**Please continue to pray for**

Estelle Barks

Debbie Butler

Daniel Hanson

Pauline Miller

Harry Palmer

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This Week's Services

Sunday 10.45am Sung Eucharist

Sunday 6.30pm Choral Evensong

Wednesday 8.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 6.15pm Choral Evensong

Thursday 1.15pm Holy Communion

Advent & Christmas Services

Sunday 2 Dec 6.30pm Advent Carols and Procession

Monday 24 Dec 7pm Christmas Eve Nine Lessons & Carols

Monday 24 Dec 11.30pm Midnight Communion

Tuesday 25 Dec 10.45am Christmas Day Sung Eucharist



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