

This Week at St Mary's

22 December 2019

ACTS OF GRACE

On Christmas Day 2016, the singer songwriter George Michael died. Stories then emerged about his wonderful generosity. TV personality Richard Osman tweeted: *A woman on 'Deal or No Deal' told us she needed £15k for IVF treatment. George Michael secretly phoned the next day and gave her the £15k.* On another occasion, he apparently witnessed in a cafe a stranger crying over her terrible debt, so there and then he penned her a cheque for £25,000.

Whilst one might describe those as amazing acts of charity (something given without any obligation to do so) I think many of us would want to use a stronger word. Wouldn't we say they were acts of grace? George Michael owed those people absolutely nothing, but he gave them amazingly generous and potentially life changing gifts.

In one of the Christmas readings, St John singles out the word grace to describe Jesus. He wrote 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.' In those words, John is telling us that Jesus, a man he'd known for 3 years, was pure grace in human form, God Himself.

There's so much in the story of Jesus' life that says the same thing.. that he gave himself absolutely to everyone he met. He didn't have to do any of it, but he went to whatever lengths were necessary, to the point of an excruciating death, all so that you and I can be confident that we are known and loved by God.

At the heart of Christmas is God-with-us (Emmanuel). By the Holy Spirit God is still, in 2019, with us. When we respond to His grace, most simply just with our own heart felt words, we can expect Him to reply, to give us the most amazing gift possible.

Tom Gillman

A very warm welcome, especially to anyone new or visiting St Mary's

We are usually open between 10am and 3pm Mon-Sat and during services on Sunday

LAST WEEK AT ST MARY'S...

Hope Community Gospel Choir concert on Friday was a tremendous success. Denis Tully writes: Magnificent Choir in a magnificent setting, which all made for a very enjoyable evening. Many people were deeply affected by what Jessica said. The event raised £1543 (the cost of one day at Emmanuel House). Please pass on my thanks to everyone who contributed cakes. I had lots of compliments on the quality. My thanks to the PCC and your staff for hosting us.

Sunday - Tom spoke in the morning. What a rich word is COME, especially when used about God. Very relational, about presence and closeness. The One who *came* 2000 years ago will *come back* in glory. Meanwhile He *comes* to us by His Spirit, challenging me to *come* close to all people and let others *come* close to me.

Jamie Franklin curate at St George's in the Meadows at Evensong. He tweeted: Had a great time at St Mary's preaching at their Evensong. Spoke about the implications as Christ as both Judge and Saviour.

School Carol Services - on Wednesday evening, **Nottingham High School** were with us again for this annual fixture. Amazing standard all round and many said it was one of the best they'd been to. Included a duet featuring Benjamin (in our choir) singing Silent Night (in German.)

On Thursday morning, **Nottingham Girls High School**, Juniors and Seniors were with us. A first, wonderful to have a VERY full church (well over 900 people.) Again, an amazing quality of music (including the staff singing Gaudete) and this time a brilliant short talk from Miss Lyn. 'Everyone was talking about it afterwards', so it was reported.

Friday - **Lace Market Carols**, with girls from NGHS singing angelically under the expert direction of Isla Keys. For many people this marked the beginning of Christmas - it was very well attended. Many thanks to Rothera Sharp for seasonal refreshments.

NOW AND COMING UP SOON...

Closing after Christmas & New Year (26 December-1 January). There will be our usual 10.45 Eucharist on Sunday 29 December but otherwise there will be no services and the church & office will re-open on Thursday 2 January. In an emergency please call 07825 041432. **The next issue of TWASM will be 12 January 2020**

WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2020 12-1.30pm INSIGHT MEETING (WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY). All welcome! Nigel Wheatley, Centre Director of intu Victoria Centre and intu Broadmarsh, will give us an *INSIGHT* into the world of shopping and leisure destinations. Our host is **ACAS East Midlands** at their offices in Apex Court, City Link, BBC Island, London Rd, NG2 4LAA. As a buffet lunch is provided please email: lensimmonds@aol.com to confirm your attendance.

Wellbeing at Work course starts 5 February (7.15 - 8.30 am.) This is a new initiative, to be led by Tom and Jo Tatum, Workplace Chaplain. As a Church we want to be part of the realities people at work face each day, so that we can discuss key topics for flourishing and well-being. If you can be part of the small team to assist in the practicalities of running these workshops running over 8 weeks, please let Di know.

Upcoming Services

Sunday 10.45am Sung Eucharist

Sunday 6.30pm Evensong

Tuesday 24 Dec 7pm Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

Tuesday 24 Dec 11.30pm Midnight Communion

Wed 25 Dec 10.45 Christmas Day Communion Service

Sunday 29 Dec 10.45 Parish Eucharist

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Please continue to pray for

Estelle Barks
John Bowers
John Conway
Harry Palmer
Mike Ridley

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