

# ***This Week at St Mary's***

**12<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020**

**PREACHING AND PRESIDING THIS SUNDAY** - We are delighted that the Rev'd Canon Professor Alison Grant Milbank is with us. She is Professor of Theology and literature at the University of Nottingham and Canon Theologian at Southwell Minster. She says: "I wrote a book, 'Chesterton and Tolkien as Theologians', which might be worth mentioning in case they wonder why I'm going on about hobbits!"

## **SUNDAY WORSHIP AT ST MARY'S.**

- **Numbers limited to 50, please let the office know** if you are coming. Names to be recorded and kept for 21 days.
- **Automatic hand sanitiser at door and/or wash hands.**
- **All music pre-recorded, no communal singing.**
- **If you use a paper service sheet, please take it away with you.**
- **No collection** - chest by south door for cash, online/standing order options too.
- **Communion, bread only, person administering to wear a mask.**

**CHORAL SCHOLARS CONCERT (August) will be announced soon.**

**PRAYING TOGETHER** 6.30pm every Thursday join via skype for Evening Prayer. Contact Tom to be included on group list (it's fine to join in when you can.)

**THE MEADOWS FOODBANK** - Buy each week an extra (non perishable) item as an act of self giving love, for someone you don't know. Particularly needed now: jam; rice pudding; tinned tomatoes, potatoes, sweetcorn, kidney beans; mashed potatoes; sugar. Let Beth Mitchell 07775707855 0115 947 6736 tony.m1941@icloud.com know when a few to collect.

**GIVING MONEY** - Best done **online** but **cheque** also welcome. Preferable from the church's viewpoint is a **Standing Order** (NatWest 560061 00834602) For **One-off donations**, use either the **QR code** or **Donate button** on the website. *Please continue (better still, increase) your financial support of St Mary's in this difficult economic climate.*

## THE SUMMER DAY (1990) by Mary Oliver (Tess Clothier)

I am one of several million 'non-essential' workers who was furloughed this spring, one of several million who suddenly found themselves with an alarming abundance of spare time and seemingly precious little to fill our days. Some of us learnt a craft, or tended to flowers or vegetables in a garden, or began to tackle the ever-growing 'to-read' pile. Some of us baked bread, or binged Netflix shows, or drank endless cups of tea. We had things in common too - we all lamented the inability to visit family and friends, and we all began to look to nature for comfort and relief, as we sought varying ways to use our allotted 'daily walk'.

I think I am not alone in this newfound curiosity for nature. Oliver's poem addresses this explicitly, with the narrator asking herself, or someone else, all the questions she has about the world around her, almost toddler-like in her inquisitiveness. She looks to the outdoors to fill her time - there is nothing else to do! Learning to pay attention to nature, to be idle, to stroll through the fields and meadows - perhaps these skills and tendencies, learnt in lockdown, will serve us well as we enter back into a 'new normal', with new habits and outlooks to apply to this, our one wild and precious life.

*Who made the world?*

*Who made the swan, and the black bear?*

*Who made the grasshopper?*

*This grasshopper, I mean-*

*the one who has flung herself out of the grass,*

*the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,*

*who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-*

*who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.*

*Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.*

*Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.*

*I don't know exactly what a prayer is.*

*I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down*

*into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,*

*how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,*

*which is what I have been doing all day.*

*Tell me, what else should I have done?*

*Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?*

*Tell me, what is it you plan to do*

*with your one wild and precious life?*

## THE CHURCH'S ROLE FOR OUR CITY IN A TIME LIKE THIS

*(Key points from Bishop Paul's sermon on 5<sup>th</sup> July)*

...far more than resuming services and preparing a welcome to those seeking out a church with newly prompted spiritual questions.

The Church exists to make Jesus Christ known, a commission from God, with no restrictions placed. Our forebears responded to the changing social climate finding creative ways - founding schools, planting churches, feeding the homeless, marking moments of public celebration and national mourning, campaigning for better housing.

Just over 75 years ago Archbishop William Temple said, "*The Gospel is true always and everywhere, or it is not a Gospel at all, or true at all.*" The *Eternal Gospel* of God is the only reason the Church has to exist. We are meant to be the most radical movement for change on the planet, change that is brought about when a heart or soul is touched by the living power of God in Jesus Christ. It motivated Wilberforce to campaign for the end to the slave trade, Florence Nightingale to establish a new movement of nursing and countless hidden heroes in the past and today, who seek to make a difference to the lives of others, especially the poor and powerless.

Jesus' invitation in Matt 11 is not only for the 2% who regularly sit in a church building on a Sunday but for everyone who knows the experience of feeling weary in life, of carrying burdens of expectation, disappointment, failure, grief, shame; who has sensed a deeper need for refreshment that a pint at the pub cannot quench; for everyone who has known an inner restlessness that no amount of money and good friends can ever settle.

I love the way Madeleine L-Engel puts it: "*We draw people to Christ not by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a light that is so lovely they want with all their hearts to know the source of it.*"

Jesus said, '*Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.*' Not that you have to become like us, look like us, pray like us, worship like us, fit in with us to encounter God. Living through a pandemic is an opportunity to consider again what each of us can do to extend this invitation to others, how prayerfully and courageously we find new ways to connect with people in the world they inhabit. Here at St Mary's you were already asking these searching questions moving into a new season of mission. I look forward to continuing to pray and support you with this, in partnership with churches across our city, for the glory of God.

Wherever you are, we extend a very warm greeting to you, especially if you've recently discovered St Mary's

*St Mary's open for private prayer and reflection*

*11.00-3.00 each weekday*

**11.00am SUNDAY SERVICE at St Mary's  
Live & Streamed**

*(See our website and follow the link, including for Order of Service)*

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**Please continue to pray for**

Estelle Barks  
John Bowers  
Rosemary Clark  
John Conway  
Harry Palmer  
Mike Ridley

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