

This Week at St Mary's

9 January 2022

MAKE SURE YOUR DOORS ARE UNLOCKED

Mick Fleming was a violent drug dealer. The moment came when he experienced for the first time in his life true freedom and true hope. [Burnley's Pastor Mick: 'If I lock this door, he dies' - BBC News](#)

This interview shows one person living out the truth of what the Angel said to Joseph about the son Mary would give birth to: his name is God with us. The mental illness crisis in so much of our country is bringing people desperate for help to Mick. One, John, is tormented by suicidal thoughts, *"I've just had enough, it's been going on too long."*

"Come on, I want you to take a deep breath," says Mick, holding John in his arms. "Take a really deep breath... So tell me what the panic is?" Fifteen minutes later, John is calmer, with a cup of tea. "Nobody else has listened - he's the only one," he says pointing at Mick.

There's another phone call, from a softly spoken woman. "I can't cope with life, I just want to go to sleep and not wake up. I'm in a dark tunnel and can't get out." Mick pleads with her. "There's always hope. Make sure your doors are unlocked." (The paramedics will need to be able to get in.)

I'm praying that many will respond with an urgency to be there for those who are desperate. God uses anyone whose 'door is unlocked' to be a recipient of His greatest gift, one then to be given away to others. It's so easy to procrastinate and never get round to it...

Emmanuel, God truly is with us. Each of us can be one to listen, to take a genuine interest, to hold someone at the moment of crisis, and bring true hope in the darkness.

Tom Gillman

NEW YEAR PRAYER GATHERING

St Mary's again hosted Nottingham City Prayer at the start of the year. The long winter evenings lend themselves to reflection and resolve. New year resolutions are good, meeting together to pray even better. Instead of NCP's 7.00am meetings (monthly, 2nd Thursday) this is one of two evening meetings in the year, the other being Thy Kingdom Come. The church provided an ideal environ with the decorations still up - this was the eleventh night.

For the Church to be so visibly united is no small thing. Around 175 were present from a wide range of churches across the city. It was good to be together as friends and partners in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was very good too to worship God together, and a music group of young people led us, drawn from different churches. The opportunity to be together in the presence of God is a precious thing, strengthening our unity.

NCP's three banners remind us to pray that Christ's Church is United, that God's Power is Released and that Our City be Blessed. We joined together in prayer for these, hearts lifted to God, confident in His faithfulness.

Rachel Hickson from Heart Cry for Change Ministries, based in Oxford was with us. 'Can't', she commented as we'd all agree, has been such a mantra of the pandemic. She quickly picked up on the acronym **CAN**, printed in the programme. Christian Action Nottingham is a partner organisation of NCP - it works to promote collaboration, relationship and unity among Christian organisations working to tackle poverty in Nottingham. Can, she urged us, is the language of the people of God, people of faith. God is one who holds the keys - what He opens no one can shut and vice versa. He calls his church to be watchful and attentive - like meerkats.

There was a lot to take away from the meeting. What better time than the New Year than to renew our confidence in God and his glorious new purposes, even for Nottingham.

LAST WEEK AT ST MARY'S

We've had wonderful late Advent and Christmas services - in the circumstances of the pandemic, very well attended. The beauty of the church seasonally decorated was much commented on.

EXPLORING FAITH. We will be forming a group in the New Year with those who are exploring the Christian faith. If interested, and/or perhaps considering baptism or confirmation, contact Tom for more details.

HARRY PALMER We were sad to hear of the recent death of Harry - although not a regular member of St Mary's he was of great support to his late wife Brenda (known to many of us here) whom he accompanied on many FOSM occasions, & hosted Mother's Union in his beloved garden, sharing delicious fruits. He will be missed by many & our thoughts & prayers are with his family & friends.

GIVING TO ST MARY'S - we are not taking up collections at this time, but we still very much rely on your financial support. Either use online banking (NatWest 56-00-61, St Mary's PCC a/c 00834602) cash or cheque in the donations chest, the card reader next to the chest, or via the Donate button on the website. Please use Gift Aid if you are a UK tax-payer. Standing order forms are by the south porch.

FROM MEADOWS FOODBANK - please choose us as your local cause on the Co-op Members' website. Log in & select Meadows Foodbank on 'your local causes'. Currently needed - **UHT milk; 500g bags sugar; hot chocolate; jam; small bottles cooking oil; tinned meat, fruit, potatoes; toilet rolls; shampoo; shower gel; toothpaste; laundry tabs; washing-up liquid; or cash donations.** Tues 5.30-7.15, Fri 10-12, Sat 11-1pm NG2 2JD

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

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

10.45am SUNDAY SERVICE in St Mary's Church
also Audio Broadcast live via our website
(follow the link, including for Order of Service)

6.30pm EPIPHANY PROCESSION (Live & Broadcast)

6.15pm WEDNESDAY EVENSONG

6pm THURSDAY EVENING PRAYER (skype) Contact Grant
(gwalton@stmarynotts.org)

CURRENT COVID GUIDELINES

Masks to be worn in St Mary's, please.
Distancing and sanitising as before.
We regret we are suspending refreshments.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR

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