

ALL SAINTS NEWS

15th November 2020
Second Sunday before
Advent

A Confidence of Hope

This morning I planted my tulip bulbs. I lovingly pushed them deep into the compost in three layers in enormous pots. Covered as they are with a layer of gravel for drainage on top, it's hard to believe that when Spring comes we will see the first green shoots push through towards the light after a winter of the roots establishing themselves in the darkness. Those pots, sitting silently outside our window, are a universal sign of hope as the winter months beckon.

Surely hope is something we all need to know at the moment.

Hope is something that is not easy to define, however. It's a word whose rich meaning has been somewhat diluted through general use. We "hope" it isn't going to rain or that we won't miss the train. We "hope for the best" and even "hope beyond hope"! I recently spotted some skin cream called "Hope in a Jar." Whether purchasing it and lathering it on every morning is what is meant by "hope beyond hope" is anybody's guess!

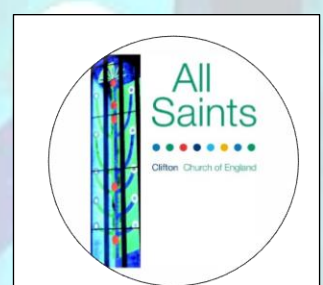
For most of us though, hope involves looking forward with- even the tiniest glimmer of-optimism; looking beyond the known of now to something as yet unknown and choosing to have faith in future circumstances that we can't determine or imagine. Yet hope has the potential to be more solid than we might think, more supportive, more long-lasting.

Hope is like a sofa: it needs good upholstery. We want to sit comfortably in hope: it needs to hold us on days when all we want to do is flop into it's comforting folds for refuge as well as offer the strength to keep us upright on those days when we need to sit up and take notice. Hope, if we understand it in the right way, offers structure as well as comfort; solidity as well as shape; longevity as well as immediate functionality.

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As Christians we often capitalize Hope to signify “something more”: an eternal hope. In a life of faith, we have recognized the need to hope in something more than circumstances or humanity. Many of us may also have learned-perhaps the hard way- that nailing our colours to the mast of human hope is never enough and that there is a reality greater and more permanent than us, where true Hope really can be found.

Rowan Williams calls this hope “a settled confidence” and Thomas Aquinas long before him ‘orientation to a future good that is difficult but possible.’ Hope, he says, involves trust. Trust that is not based on how we feel or on what happens next, but on divine truth. There’s our solidity, our good upholstery: that our hope is built on the divine truth that we recognise as God.

For those of us old in the faith as well as years our memory (however faltering) helps. We can look back over our lives and recognise what has sustained us in hope before. Not because hope will always lead to the same place or the same results in the same way: often quite the opposite. But because God’s faithfulness –and the hope that results from it- is sure in every circumstance, even when we aren’t.

This kind of eternal hope, although we can rely upon it, isn’t something we can plan for. It’s an unknown. God is both what we know already and what we’ve yet to know. To have all the details in our care would be to shrink the landscape of that hope, dilute it’s wonder or undermine its promises. But recollections of our faith can aid our confidence in it. Memories, individual and community faith practices, open expectations and fresh perceptions of God all give hope a rootedness-especially in dark places. Part of the value of that memory stems from our understanding of the importance of narrative: of story. Our faith story, the faith stories of others and the story of God at work in the world. (We’d do well to read some in these uncertain times.)

Our world, however bewildering at times, has a source and destiny beyond anything that we can understand. It is imbued with mystery yet scattered with pin-pricks of light that is hope, often just out of sight and sometimes apparent at the most unexpected moments. We just need to look.

Hope, like the planting of my bulbs, is a trusting balancing act between loving action and sure faith and the embracing of a mystery that is-thank goodness- far beyond our comprehension. It is the deep love of God in Christ that takes the fear out of the mystery and enables us to hope in it.

So, I pray...

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” *Ephesians 3:17-19 (NRSV)*



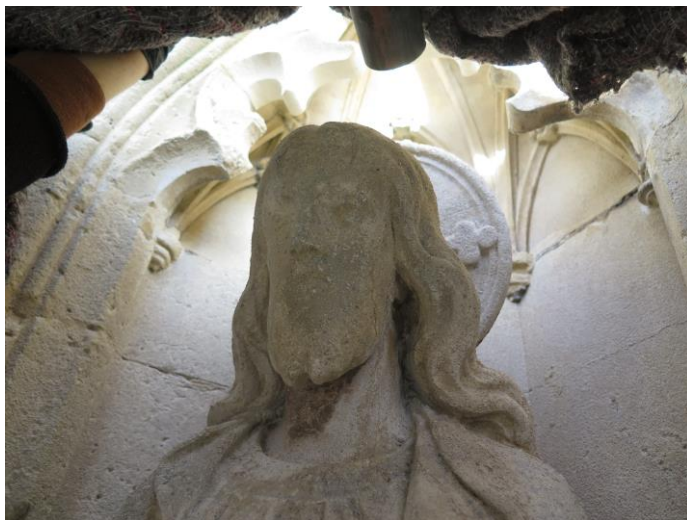
Mother Wendy Bray



The Richard Chapel re- emerges during lockdown !

The period of lockdown has coincided with the completion of the work on the Richard chapel masonry so many will have missed the removal of the scaffolding and the restoration of the masonry. The effect is transformative as should be apparent from these photographs.

Our stonemasonry team are to be congratulated on the excellent result they have achieved. There is just a small amount of work to be done in tidying up some loose ends before the project is finally concluded. This will be undertaken by Lydia, pictured below, who has worked on the Chapel every day and in all weathers.



More good news.

The proposed improvements to the forecourts (including provision for a permanent accessible entrance to the church, secure paving, additional lighting and new noticeboards) have now met with approval from the planners and the diocese. This is all subject to the approval of detailed drawings and specifications which will take a little while but there are grounds for optimism. We are on the way!'

Gospel Reading for the second Sunday before Advent

Matthew 25:14-30

'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. but the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

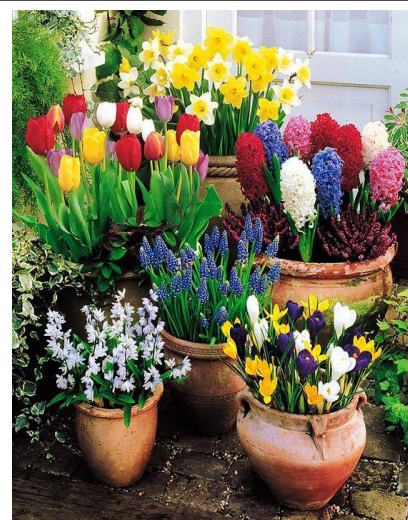


POTS AND POTS....

All Souls Day , All Saints Day and Remembrance are all fast approaching. To mark this season of remembrance and also of hope, EVERYONE is invited to bring a POT of BULBS to place in the Atrium courtyard in memory of someone you think of especially at this time.

Your pot can be of any size or type, planted with spring flowering bulbs.. which may give us extra joy at Eastertide (early April this year) .

Pots can be left in church at any time in the next few weeks. If you wish to bring more than one that is fine.



Phone Befriending Volunteers Required!

With a resurgence of Coronavirus and a second lockdown upon us, vulnerable people are once again finding themselves more isolated than ever, particularly as winter approaches.

'Two's Company' is a telephone befriending programme being run through churches across the UK, with a local branch co-ordinated by Liz Leaman of Holy Trinity Church Hotwells.

The service is available to anyone over the age of 18 – of any faith or none – and aims to provide much needed companionship in the form of a regular phone call.

More volunteers are now needed to join the Holy Trinity Hotwells' current team of befrienders and would particularly suit those who have a warm, friendly and empathetic character and can relate to people of different ages and backgrounds.

Two's Company operates from within a nationally recognised, robust framework and safeguarding is a priority for those making and receiving calls. Full training will be given to all volunteers.

If you're interested in volunteering then please contact Liz Leaman on **07458 300210** for more details.



On Wednesday 4th November, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and Bishop of London called the Church of England to prayer for the nation throughout the month of November. They offer a series of weekly prayers.

Monday

Pray for - Schools and colleges, children and young people

We pray for all those involved in the shaping of young lives. We give God thanks for the sacrifice and commitment of teachers and all those involved in serving children and young people in education.

We pray that all might be nurtured and cared for and that every needful resource would be made available – that all lives can flourish even in these difficult times and that no-one would be overlooked.

Prayers Requests

'In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.'
(John 14: 19).

Please let Fr Charles know of anyone who would like to be remembered within the weekly prayer list – or anyone who you would like to be remembered in prayer.

Please pray for : Mercedes – please help her to stay happy and to receive all the help she needs.

Healing for Sierra in New Zealand

Those who we remember in our Prayers

Sunday Tabitha Clark, Marjorie Polyblanc, Ruth and Richard Harding, Katie Norman
Neal Gordon, Jean Callow, Sarah Bradley, Immie, Enci and Katherine King,
Veronica Hayfield Garfield Griffiths Maureen Turnbull Brian Davidge Malcolm Powell

Monday John Bradley Robert Paul, Nicky Cousins, Peter Maine

Tuesday Chris Callow, Judy Torrens, Margaret Swindale,
Diana Verity, Peter Martin

Wednesday Felicity Firth, Kate Thomas, Adam Holmes

Thursday Nancy Kwasnicki, Richard Harris, Matt Mumford

Friday Charlotte Hopkins, Andy & Gina Ford, Elisabeth Morgan

Saturday Merryn, Caroline Semon, Roger Durbin (Pr), Nicholas Edwards, Lori Houlihan,
Alan & Poppy

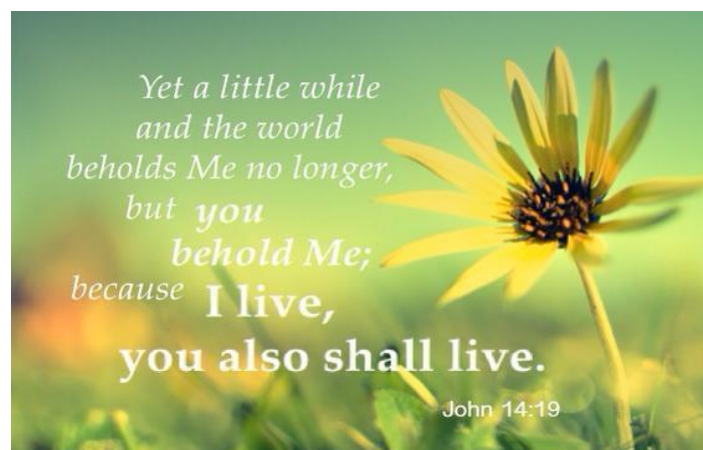
All those who come into our church to find the comfort of our Sacred Space.

The Departed

Raishan Panther Peter Quimby Charmaine White David Bounds Dave Gillott.
Chris Neubert Denise Horobin

Years' Minds - this week we remember:

Jo McKie Arthur Miles Mary Rowe Dorothy Ching Roy Morris
Jeremy Winston (Pr) Mike Lindsey



ALL SAINTS PRAYERS

Monday 16	Margaret, queen, philanthropist 1093 Edmund Rich, archbishop 1240. Pray for our library services, which, struggling before the Covid crisis, are now being asked to think creatively in order to adapt and respond to the varying needs of service users. For many, libraries are not just an educational hub, but essential for social contact. Pray for wisdom for decision makers and providers juggling limited financial resources.
Tuesday 17	Hugh, Bishop 1200 Pray for those who work outside in inclement weather, maintaining vital services.
Wednesday 18	Elizabeth, princess, philanthropist 1231 Pray for midwives, maternity units and health visitors as they help parents and families with the birth and early days of new babies.
Thursday 19	Hilda, abbess, 680 Pray for Bristol City Council and for staff involved in the very many different aspects of its service to the city. Pray for those making decisions about funding priorities and cuts.
Friday 20	Edmund, king, martyr 870 <i>Today is Universal Children's Day.</i> Pray for children known to you; for our children at All Saints and for those caring for children who live in poverty or with disadvantage.
Saturday 21	<i>Today is World Television Day.</i> Pray for those making programmes to educate and entertain, that the choices they make in broadcasting may contribute positively to the lives of viewers.
Sunday 22 Sunday next before Advent	Christ the King God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory. Amen

