

ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST AIDAN AND ST CHAD NOTTINGHAM



NEWSLETTER

May–Jun 2023 : Cost £1.00



The former monastic church of St. Mary, Stow, Lincs

THE PARISH OF ST AIDAN AND ST CHAD, NOTTINGHAM

Worshipping in the Church of St Aidan,

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Newsletter: May – June 2023

CHRIST IS RISEN!

COME HOLY SPIRIT!

As I write, we are approaching Palm Sunday, and beginning our journey to the day of our Lords resurrection. As you read this, we will be celebrating the joy of The feast of Pentecost.

This feels very much a ‘Liminal Space’; a transitional period. We are on the precipice of something new but not quite there yet. It’s as if one is standing in a doorway between 2 rooms and you can’t move forward or backward. We hover between what was and what’s next. It is not unusual, that, when people look at liminal spaces, they feel a sense of uncertainty, unease or even fear.

However, there are proven strategies to help people handle liminal spaces and even thrive during them. One of these, I believe, should be a part of the life of every Christian. This is to have a ‘gratitude attitude’. To become increasingly aware and grateful of the blessings in one’s life.

In the Old Testament, thanksgiving was central in the life of God’s people. The temple liturgy offered sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise, and psalms sang continually of thanksgiving to God.

“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High; to declare Thy steadfast love in the morning, and Thy faithfulness by night. “

The apostolic scriptures and the lives of the saints abound with thanksgiving to God for all things. ***“Let there be no filthiness, nor***

silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving . . . always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father” (Eph 5.4, 20).

As Orthodox Christians we are to be grateful people every day of our lives – our main worship after all is our thanksgiving service, the Eucharist. We give thanks to God each time we celebrate the Liturgy. Giving thanks is the very reason that we gather together. We not only offer thanksgiving in the Liturgy, we also receive it in the Eucharist. The Orthodox Church has been doing this for 2000 years even through all the periods of tragedies and persecutions which have befallen we Christians in history. Think for a moment, during the liturgy, when the priest comes out and he looks at the people, what does he say? He says, ***“Let us give thanks unto the Lord.”*** What do we sing, ***“It is meet and right.”*** And again, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the priest says a final prayer of thanksgiving, recognizing that every blessing we have in this life has its source in God ***“ . . . For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from you, the Father of lights, and unto you do we send up glory thanksgiving and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”***

The truly spiritual person is the one who is grateful for everything. He is the one who receives everything with thanksgiving, and who knows that he has nothing except what he has received from God (cf. Jn 3.27). As we continue our walk with the Lord let us pray that we might develop a gratitude attitude. Let us learn to look at what is around about us and what is supporting us, remembering the words of St Paul, ***“Rejoice always,¹⁷ pray without ceasing,¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit.”*** (1 Thess. 5: 16-19, NKJV)

Our Life

Memory Eternal

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the repose of our dear friend, and brother in Christ, Alan Marshall, who peacefully passed away 19th January 2023 aged 78 years. Alan, a long time warden of The Minster Church of St Mary, **Stow in Lindsey**, has for a number of years facilitated and enabled us serve the Liturgy at St Marys'. On Wednesday 1st March Alan's body was received into Stow Minster, to lie overnight, before his committal at Woodlands Crematorium, Scunthorpe, on Thursday 2nd March. We give thanks that Fr Ian and Frances were able to attend and represent us.

University Chaplaincies

The Chaplaincy work of Fr Julian and Fr David continues. There have been very encouraging signs of growth both in Nottingham and Leeds Universities.

Our Eucharistic Community in Leeds had been greatly blessed now that Fr Ephrem is able to serve Liturgy in the Emanuel Centre Chapel every Sunday when Fr David is not there. This is greatly appreciated by students and other Chaplains. Two students have been received and chrismated in recent times; students form the choir and worship is enhanced.

Our Archbishop has invited us to apply to him for funds to further enhance the work of the Orthodox Chaplaincy.

The process of becoming an Orthodox Christian is very similar to the process of getting married as it involves the same basic movements of courtship, engagement, and marriage. Just as is the case in marriage, this beautiful process is deeply personal. It has been a great joy for us to be a part of this process as Jaz "Maria" Higgs was baptised and Chrismated on Great on Holy Saturday (see page 15 We welcome 'Maria into our family and pray that God will grant her 'Many Years'

Lent Services

It has been a joy to come together and to participate in our additional Lent services. It is always a joy, to celebrate the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and Great Compline and The Canon of St Andrew, during the weekdays of Lent. Thank you to all who have participated, in whatever capacity.

Holy Week & Pascha

“It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O ye peoples: Pascha, the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God hath brought us from death to life, and from earth unto Heaven as we sing the triumphal hymn. - Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.’

What a joyful and uplifting time together, and what a what a feast we enjoyed on the Sunday of Pascha. One again we give thanks to all who have given, so generously, in so many ways to enhance the brightness of this Feast of Feasts. – CHRIST IS RISEN!

On the Tuesday of St. Thomas week, according to the order instituted by our Holy Fathers, we called to remembrance, in Paschal joy, all those who have died from the beginning of the ages in faith and in the hope of resurrection and life eternal. Having previously celebrated the radiant feast of Christ's glorious Resurrection, the faithful commemorated the dead today with the intent to share the great joy of this Pascha feast with those who have departed this life in the hope of their own resurrection.

All were most welcome to join us.

Following the brief service we visited the graves of our departed loved ones at Wilford Hill and then moved on to visit the graves at Redhill, Bulwell, Southwell and Castle Donnington Cemeteries,

Christ has risen from the dead,
Trampling down death by death.
And on those in the tomb bestowing life

Parish Advisory Council & Trustees

Meetings of these two bodies took place in March and high on the agenda was the financial situation at St Aidan's. We had been informed that our gracious hosts were experiencing difficulties, having just received some larger than expected gas bills, with insufficient funds to pay the bills. As a result, our hosts were having to take emergency action to raise funds to consider what changes will need to be made for the future if closure of the church building was to be avoided

Our Trustees approved an initiative to pay a slightly increased financial commitment to St Aidan's as a regular monthly direct debit to St Aidan's. This was gratefully received, and we have now been informed that sufficient funds have been raised to meet the current obligations and work is continuing to formulate a plan for future sustainability.

Keswick & Archpriest John Musther

The obituary for Fr John prepared by Fr David with help from Fr John's wife Jenny has been published on the Deanery Website with the Eulogy which our Archbishop Nikitas delivered at Fr John's funeral.

Fr David was in Keswick for Palm Sunday which fell this year over the Western Easter weekend. On Good Friday which is always a very special day and again sunny and warm, he joined with Churches Together. There was a procession of witness from the Lakeside to the Hall in the Market Place, two carried a full size cross; the procession halted four times to hear an appropriate gospel reading followed by a prayer lead by the local Catholic priest and a hymn. The event was well supported and provided a good witness.

Funeral of Fr John Musther

On Monday morning, the day before the funeral, Fr John's closed coffin was brought into Braithwaite Church at 10.00 am. Fr David received the coffin and sang the Panikhida. He began the Vigil by

reading the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, The Gospels were then read continuously by members of the congregation in rota, whilst Fr John rested with tall candles on each side of the coffin and votive candles before the iconostasis. Fr David noted that there was no one on the rota for 3.00am 4.00am and so he went to the chapel, there to find ten young men and one woman in the Church with the Gospel clearly ringing out. By 4.00 there were fewer in the Church but the reading of the Gospel continued and Fr David stayed for another hour. He describes the wonderful deeply penetrating atmosphere of continuous prayer enveloping all present, he intended to read matins, but found the atmosphere of prayer so intense that words were not appropriate. By sitting in the presence of Fr John and those who had been so inspired by him and his ministry, was profoundly spiritually uplifting. It was amazing to find so many young people prepared to spend the night with him and joining in the continuous reading of the Gospel which made it so alive

At 9.00am, the day of the funeral, Pre-Sanctified Liturgy was served, being within the Holy Fast. Then, at 11.30am, Fr John was taken to St Kentigern Church in Crosthwaite, Keswick for the funeral and burial. The very large church was full, the choir sang well and the service was led by Archbishop Nikitas with Bishop Raphael and four priests in attendance. Archbishop Nikitas' eulogy was excellent, enlightening and a deeply moving and personal tribute to Fr John. We must hear it again when the video of the funeral is made available.

What does *for in the midst of life we are in death* mean?

These words, taken from The Book of Common Prayer, 1662, Burial of the Dead, are often shared at graveside services. They are a **poetic and scriptural reminder that life is short, endings can happen unexpectedly and – most importantly – that life and death co-exist all the time, all around us.**

Memory Eternal

Sarah Westwood died and was buried on Apr 24th at St Nichols. Marston Trussel. She and Joseph visited our church several times a year although living near Melton Mowbray. It was always a delight to have them with us. Sarah was always gracious. She and Joseph had a small holding with lots of animals. Joseph sends his good wishes but is no longer able to travel.

BAPTISM

Christ is Risen, dear friends! How lucky we are to greet each other like this and continue to celebrate the Resurrection. For me, the Paschal joy is heightened because I can delight in finally calling you all my sisters and brothers in Christ (and greeting you as such) because I was baptized on Holy Saturday.

Since my baptism, I have been so happy. I will not give detail on the baptismal rite, since you can read it or you have experienced it yourself, but instead, I will briefly discuss my road to baptism and what I am enjoying most as someone newly illuminated.

I was not baptized as an infant; I come from a distinctly atheist background. Neither of my parents attended church, and only one grandparent out of four had any religious inclination. With this grandmother, I would occasionally attend a Methodist church in my childhood. Despite my family's irreligiousness, I was not baptized as a rite of passage or an 'expected' thing to do. Furthermore, I was born three months early to parents who initially thought they would be childless; the medical staff and my parents were focused on keeping me alive for the first year of my life and were not interested in baptizing me because it didn't mean anything to them.

Fast forward to my late teenage years, when I became an avid medieval enthusiast and visited churches as a hobby. I found Quakerism and had my first taste of Christianity. A few years later, I had deeply personal experiences with the Mother of God which I will not go into here, but perhaps I will talk about it one day. As a response, a friend and I became

interested in different ways that Christians worshipped, and vowed to attend as many different services as we could. So, we came to St Aidan's, and I felt at home. I never expected to; I walked in with preconceived ideas of the eucharist, saints, and icons, as many previously Protestant people do. But then I found myself attending regularly. I would feel upset at the idea of not attending; at the same time, I was seeing Fr Julian regularly on campus for prayers and discussions. I couldn't shake the feeling that this was my path-Orthodoxy and all its people, alive and passed away, were saying, 'here we are, come see!'. Slowly, my ideas changed; in particular, I watched, avidly as the faithful lined up for the eucharist every week. Initially, jealousy was at the forefront for me- I struggled with the idea I could not join in and knew I desired it deeply. But that desire was confusing for me. I had never belonged to a denomination where the eucharist was important, so my newfound desires felt out of place. But I realized I couldn't keep watching; I could be on the sidelines, so close to Christ and yet unable to partake. Jealousy turned to awe (thanks to more education!). I started going up for blessings during the eucharist so I could be close to the chalice which contained the body and blood. I silently cried several times. This deep need, alongside learning about Orthodox Christianity, made me realize that I had one option for the future of my earthly life: be baptized.

We sing, 'For as many of you have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, alleluia!' at Theophany and it is a particular favourite of mine; hearing it sung on Holy Saturday brought me such happiness; I remember looking around the church and smiling so widely.

And, joyously, the baptism has happened! The partaking of the eucharist has been the most transformative thing for me; the excitement and joy I feel, like a small child receiving a present (and we are receiving a present!), has not left me. God is very good to me, and I can't wait to continue to grow in my understanding of Him and His Church. We rise out of the baptismal water with new life, ready to continue our walk with Him renewed; I cannot wait to continue walking with him. Who knows which path He will lead me?

With much love and joy,

Maria (Jaz)

THE PPE SCANDAL (personal protective equipment)

Frances

It is easy to be wise after the event.

During the Covid crisis the supply of PPE equipment went from Famine-Panic-Glut.

In 2023 millions of these items went to the equivalent of Army surplus auctions for re-sale but rarely sold for more than the reserve. Masks were available at £250 for 360000 but most ended up being burnt. Some of the equipment was discarded as it did not meet government inspections and was regarded as sub-standard.

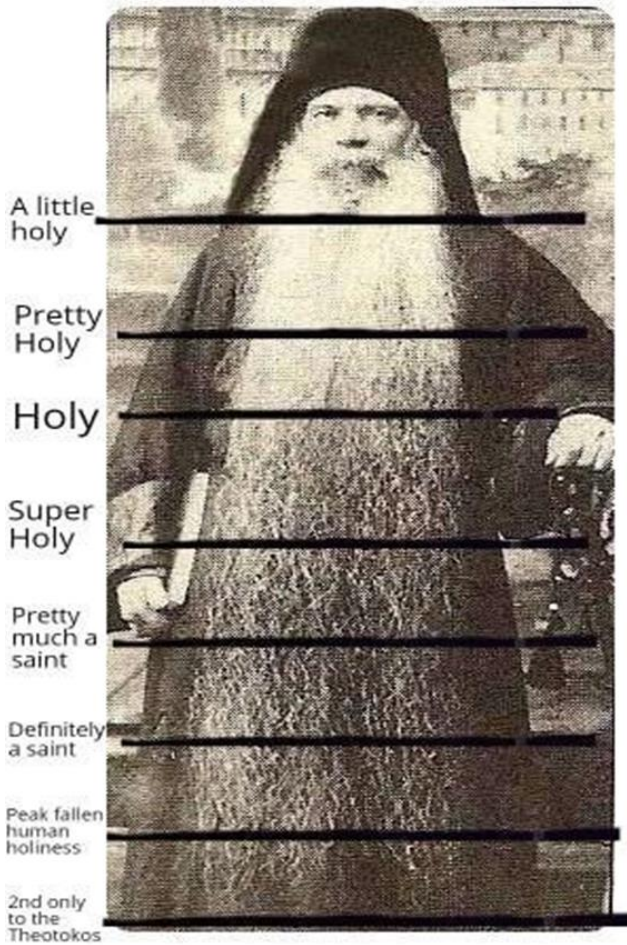
Care homes were over-supplied with enormous quantities of gloves, masks, aprons and sanitizers. There was a storage problem and the solution for the care home next door to us was to hire **two full-sized skips** to remove the surplus. Storage was uneconomical as the space was needed for residential care. The home owner asked me to take as much as I could use or give away. I took about 12 cartons and that caused a short-term storage problem in our hall but we are now down to 9 bottles of hand sanitizer. I was very pleased to distribute some of this to the congregation after the liturgy in Nottingham.

The Government had to dispose of 6 billion items of excess PPE. The cost of storage and distribution (I find this hard to believe) was more than the value of the items so disposal and burning was the ‘solution.’ Millions were spent on obtaining PPE and millions on disposing of the surplus. That does not sound like ‘caring for the planet’.

THURSDAY, 29 JUNE 2023
(The Feast of the Apostles)

The Divine Liturgy will be served in
STOW MINSTER
Commencing at 10 30 a.m.

Beard to Holiness Chart



Are we being short-changed?

Modern Technology

I watch a line of students from the 6th Form College waiting at the bus stop near our house. They do not talk to each other. They are all engrossed in checking Facebook and WhatsApp etc. They have to do this for fear of ‘missing out.’ Losing their phone would be a major catastrophe. I now understand this dependence as communication by phone is an essential part of life. We have been without proper communication since Apr 5th. Our internet provider caused national problems by changing something that worked into a hub which did not work. Most customers were sorted out quickly but we are still waiting for help. Contact with the internet provider was impossible. Passwords were not accepted or contact was with a recorded message with a few options which end up with ‘I didn’t quite catch that. Try again later. Hours were wasted with no result apart from frustration. Try the land line. Nothing happens or I can hear them but they can’t hear me. People try ringing us and hear a dialling tone. No bell rings at our end so we have no idea that anyone is calling. Internet connection was unreliable and the luck of the draw. All this was happening whilst we were trying to book flights to Sicily and obtain essential on-line boarding cards . At one time there was a possibility that I had booked four return flights or none. Our phone land line had been connected to someone else but that was sorted fairly early in this saga.

Those are the reasons why this newsletter is later than normal and we are still not sorted!

Frances

Quotes by Thomas Edison

“I have NOT failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work”





CHRIST IS RISEN!



A warm welcome to Maria Higgs, who was baptised and chrismated on Great and Holy Saturday