

- - TEAM NOTES - -

The four churches are now open as follows:

St Mary's daily from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

St Mark's 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

St Nicholas' daily 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.

All Saints' daily from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Church services have recommenced. The following are temporary arrangements:

At 8.00 a.m. in All Saints' and in St Mary's (both Holy Communion)

At 10.00 a.m. alternating between St Mark's and St Nicholas' (St Nicholas' today, 13th September)

At 10.30 a.m. In All Saints' (on Sunday 13th September)

At 11.00 a.m. in St Mary's - Holy Communion.

With restrictions in place you may be asked to sit at distance to others - so not necessarily in your usual seat. In the smaller churches particularly, we shall have to leave in a designated order and be requested not to stand and socialise afterwards.

Please note that the services structure across the team of churches is likely to remain the same as the above during the course of September. The 8.00 a.m. service in both St Mary's and All Saints' should continue to be Holy Communion throughout the month.

A simple Sunday service continues to be prepared for the team website every week, including hymns and a short homily www.swanageteam.com - children's activities and a recorded session or zoom family encounter are also to be found on the website.

All Saints in addition to the 8.00 a.m. in the Church, continues with 'Family Worship On-Line' every Sunday from 10.30. Simply go the All Saints website at www.allsaints-swanage.org and follow the links. Today, Sunday 13th September there is to be a service in All Saints' Church at 10.30 a.m. You are asked to register if planning to attend this service - details as to how to do this are on the website and from Tim Silk (see below).

For matters concerning All Saints' during the team vicar vacancy, in addition to the churchwardens who share responsibility for the church with the team rector, Tim Silk is acting as administrator, and deals with day-to-day matters: Tim Silk, Cosy Cottage, Swanage, BH19 3DG (423931 or 07708 668357) email: allsaintsswanage@gmail.com

St Nicholas' Studland have two services which any individual can join via Zoom each Sunday at 10.00 a.m. (if there is not a service in the Church that Sunday) and 6.30 pm every week. To join either service please email Tony to request the link for this Sunday on revtonyhiggins@btinternet.com.

Do access the Swanage and Studland Team website regularly:

www.swanageteam.com

SWANAGE & STUDLAND

TEAM MINISTRY

St. Mary's – St. Mark's – All Saints' – St. Nicholas'

13th September 2020 – Trinity 14

Genesis 50: 15-21; Romans 14: 1-12; Matthew 18: 21-35

Last Sunday, when we heard the Gospel reading Matthew 18: 15-20, immediately prior to today's text, I led us on to the first verse of the Gospel for today, in which Peter asks Jesus the question, "Lord, if another member of the Church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but I tell you seventy-seven times." And then comes today's parable. It is a tricky parable indeed, about a king who dismisses a huge debt owed by one of his servants, but minutes later that man refuses to cancel the debt of a fellow servant who cannot manage to repay either. In fact, this has been described as a "prickly parable", because it seems to be about doing unto others as you would wish others to do to you - so it seems to be pricking the conscience. But that is not the point....

Let us examine it from another angle. How do you feel when something really good has happened to you; some sense of release or removal of an anxiety? Forgiveness is of this order. Someone has been able, because it is within their power to smooth out our life, and it may be at some cost to them, but they have done it. This is an experience of forgiveness, it is an experience of grace. However, in the parable that is before us today, the servant who was forgiven the debt, didn't get it at all did he? Maybe he even prided himself on his own powers of persuasion; he was actually chock-full of his own importance. He felt a million pounds because he congratulated himself on having managed to get himself out of debt. Fantastic! And, he wasn't going to let anyone pull a fast-one on him like that. Hence his attitude to his fellow servant, not just in words, but in physically seizing him by the throat. We know how it ends for him, as the king responds and has him imprisoned.

When it gets to the end of the parable, the key verse is verse 33, and the question, "should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" In other words, it is not that we should do something or act in a particular way *in order* that we may receive what we want. The fact is that we have already been granted it. We have already been forgiven! It is how we respond that is the issue, not how we act in order to get. So, we are not to keep scores, or tot up amounts, or count how many times we forgive. The grace of God is ours; the forgiveness of God is already a promise fulfilled; the love of God is ever present. We have not had to do anything to merit any of these acts of grace. But we can respond to others after their example.

John Mann