

# - - TEAM NOTES - -

**Following the Prime Minister's announcement of a second national lockdown** due to the risk of allowing the coronavirus pandemic to spread more rapidly than the country can cope with, churches have once again been informed that Sunday and weekday services are no longer allowed, with the exception of funerals. This period of four weeks sees us through to the beginning of December. Services have returned to being on line as in the months between the end of March and the beginning of July.

However:

The **four churches are open** as follows:

St Mary's daily from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

St Mark's 10 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon. on Sundays

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.

**A simple Sunday service** continues to be prepared for the team website every week, including hymns and a short homily [www.swanageteam.com](http://www.swanageteam.com)

**At 10.30 a.m. in All Saints'** - A service is recorded and broadcast each week. Simply go the All Saints website at [www.allsaints-swanage.org](http://www.allsaints-swanage.org) and follow the links..

**St Nicholas' Studland** holds a service which any individual can join via Zoom at 10.00 a.m. and at 6.30 pm every week. To join the service please email Tony to request the link for this Sunday on [revtonyhiggins@btinternet.com](mailto:revtonyhiggins@btinternet.com).

**St Mark's now has a service recorded** and which is accessible on the St Mark's FaceBook page and on the St Mark's webpage of the team website (see below).

**The December/January issue of Church Alive!** is due to be printed this week and in it we shall give some idea as to what we have planned for the Advent and Christmas period in the four churches. It is all provisional, of course, but we hope that everyone will have a chance to celebrate in Church as well as access recorded services on-line as well.

**The Advent Carol Service** which takes place in the evening of the First Sunday of Advent each year, is being moved to the second Sunday, in view of the fact that we shall still be locked down next Sunday. So, all being well, it is to be at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday 6th December at St Mary's Church.

# SWANAGE & STUDLAND TEAM MINISTRY

**St. Mary's – St. Mark's – All Saints' – St. Nicholas'  
22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 – Christ the King  
Matthew 25: 31-end**

The parable of the sheep and the goats is one that should encourage and support us in seeking Christ in others, but may, potentially, disturb us and make us uncomfortable because there is, deep-rooted within us, a feeling of inadequacy; a sense of insecurity, a desire, a longing, that we could always be doing more. Have we missed seeing Christ in another? Yes, of course we will have done, but this isn't about what we have missed, it is to help and encourage us, to see Christ in our midst, every day.

When you think about it, Jesus had much to say about (and to) the ruling elite of the religious leaders in Jerusalem, and he condemned them on numerous occasions for their hypocrisy. Many didn't listen to him, but there were also those of humble heart, and who were deeply attracted to Christ's teaching; whose eyes were being opened to who Jesus was, Nicodemas and Joseph of Aramethea amongst them, and they would have been encouraged by him.

There is another side of this parable before us this morning, and that is underlined by the designation of this Sunday as the Festival of "Christ the King". This recognises that the parable of the sheep and the goats, though spoken of by a wandering rabbi of Israel is going to be fulfilled in an eternal and spiritual way, as Christ through Cross and Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, returns in glory to the Throne of Heaven. By being who he is, he becomes the one who is sick and who is visited; the one thirsty who needs a drink. The parable is, in fact, more than a gentle reminder, it is a judgement on the way that human beings act towards one another.

Our helplessness in the face of humanitarian disasters has, increasingly over the decades of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, have brought us to see Christ in the role of servant; binding up the wounds of our broken world; restoring and healing from his incarnational presence. He is with us in the darkness; suffers with the desolate, and bears up those who fall. The Graham Kendrick hymn "The Servant King" has helped us to regain a balance in this, for Christ's humanity is held with his divinity; his servanthood with his kingship. A particularly striking verse and chorus run:

Come, see his hands and his feet; the scars that speak of sacrifice. Hands that flung stars into space, to cruel nails surrendered. *This is our God, the Servant King. He calls us now to follow him. To bring our lives as a daily offering of worship to the Servant King.*

So, yes, this is a festival of climax today; the Christian Year beginning, as it does, on the announcement that the Messiah is coming, ends with the Ascended Christ reigning in majesty from his throne above. It is also a reminder to us to see Christ as both God and Man; as exalted King, yet giving himself to human flesh and dying on a Cross.

John Mann