



The Parish of
**ST NICHOLAS,
SUTTON**

Priest-in-Charge: The Revd Frances Arnold

The Rectory,
34 Robin Hood Lane,
SUTTON
SM1 2RG



24 May 2020

St Nicholas Church and Coronavirus (10)

Ruth, Benedictine Sisters of Turvey Abbey

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

I often have the radio on in the background, pausing when a word or familiar voice catches my attention. Realising that Rabbi Jonathan Sacks was giving the Thought for the Day, I stopped to listen. I am sharing his reflection with you (almost word for word) because he was speaking about the book of Ruth, one of the most beautiful short stories ever written. Two things coming together during this time of isolation made him 'see the book with new eyes and realise what a contemporary text it is, though it tells of events more than three thousand years ago.'

The two events that just happen to coincide this month are:

Mental Health Awareness Week (18-24 May) - this year's theme is kindness and the Jewish festival of Shavuot/Pentecost (28-30 May) when (the Jewish community) read the book of Ruth - whose theme is kindness.

"The story begins with a couple and their two sons forced to leave home because of famine. They go to a foreign country where their two sons marry local women. Then tragedy strikes. All three men die. The woman, whose name is Naomi, is left a childless widow: the most vulnerable of all positions in the ancient world, because there was no one to look after you.

Naomi goes back home but is so changed that her former neighbours hardly recognise her. 'Can this be Naomi', they ask? 'Don't call me Naomi,' she replies (the word means pleasant). 'Call me Mara' (bitter).

That's how the book begins: with bereavement, isolation and depression. Yet it ends in joy. Naomi now has a grandson. Her daughter-in-law Ruth and relative Boaz have married and had a child. And this is no mere child. In the last line of the book we discover that he is the grandfather of David, Israel's greatest king and author of much of the book of Psalms.

What transforms Naomi's life from bitterness to happiness is described by the Hebrew word *hesed*. When, in the early 1530's, William Tyndale was translating the Bible into English for the first time he realised that there was no English equivalent for *hesed*, so he invented one: the word 'loving kindness.'

Two peoples' loving kindness, Ruth's and Boaz's, rescued Naomi from depression and gave her back her joy. That's the power of *hesed*, love as deed.

One of the enduring memories of the coronavirus period will be the extraordinary acts of kindness it evoked from friends, neighbours and strangers who helped us, kept in touch with us or simply smiled at us. When fate was cruel to us, we were kind to one another. Human goodness emerged when we needed it most. And Mental Health Awareness

Week reminds us that some need it more than most. Kindness redeems fate from tragedy. And the wonderful thing is that it doesn't matter whether we are the giver or the recipient: lifting others, we ourselves are lifted."

N.B. You can hear Thought for the Day via the BBC website: BBC Radio 4 Thought for the Day, Rabbi Lord Sacks, 22 May 2020.

Interesting fact: William Tyndale (born c.1494) was determined to translate the scriptures from the Greek directly into contemporary English and his life's work became the basic working text for those who, at the beginning of the 17th century, were to produce what became known as the *Authorised Version* of the Bible.

Tyndale's translation was bitterly attacked as subversive by the church authorities and he was eventually arrested in 1535 and imprisoned in Brussels on charges of heresy. He was burnt at the stake in 1536.

The college where Tyndale first studied became Hertford College, Oxford, patron of St Nicholas Church, Sutton.

Church of England worship

Bishop Christopher is encouraging everyone to say the Lord's Prayer daily and suggests either 1 or 7 pm.

You can find national online resources including weekly streamed services and daily audio at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

as well as additional worship provision on the BBC, for example Radio 4 Sunday morning worship at 8.10am (or later using BBC Sounds) and the service on BBC1 later in the morning.

From Sunday 17 May, Bishop Christopher's service will be available on his Twitter stream:

@BishopSouthwark and on the Diocesan Facebook and YouTube channels

at <https://www.facebook.com/SouthwarkCofE> and <https://www.youtube.com/user/SouthwarkDiocese>

Please see separate sheet/the website for information about materials available for **Thy Kingdom Come. Nine Days of prayer from Ascension to Pentecost**, 21-31 May 2020

Pastoral Network

A big thank you, as ever, on behalf of all of us, to the Mothers' Union/Lunch Team joint initiative who are continuing with their marvellous work in co-ordinating telephone/WhatsApp support and supply of provisions to those self-isolating.

A particular thank you to Nicki Richards, Jeff Richards, Emma & Keith Cann, Liz & Chris Cann, Lily Bande, Helen Yately, Paul Butler and Diane Young.

'the people who phone us finding out if anyone needs help...I've thought of a name for them ...The Go-To Group, because if anything needs doing, they're the ones we all go to' (comment from a fan!)

Staying in touch

Stay in touch about ways that we can care for you and pray for you. I'd be glad to hear from you.

My contact details are: rector.stnicholassutton@gmail.com 020 8642 3499

Thank you for your calls. I love receiving telephone calls from you.

In particular can I make a plea to those who find themselves in pressing need (or who know of others of our number in difficulties)? Please don't feel that you have nowhere to turn. I really want you to contact me in the first instance. When you do, I will either be able to help you myself or point you in the right direction for access to food or emotional support for people who are struggling during the pandemic.

Love one another

Please continue to watch out for each other and contact me or the wardens, John Kerr or Geoff Rendall, if you are concerned for someone.

And do be assured of my prayers for you. May almighty God keep us safe in body, mind and spirit as we ask him in Jesus' name. Thank you too for your continued prayers and support.

With warmest good wishes to you all,

Frances

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH SUTTON

24 MAY 2020 EASTER 7

IN THE PAST WEEK...

BLESSINGS...

- Clap for Carers
- NHS staff
- Sutton Community Support Hub
- Retail staff
- Sutton Police
- Bus drivers
- Sky, a deeper shade of blue
- Less pollution
- Awareness of social justice issues during the pandemic

WE MISS...

- Worshipping together
- The organ and the piano and Pam, Isabella and Paul's playing
- Sharing the Peace (hands or elbows)
- Hearing from JAM & Spectrum
- Celebrating the church's birthday and our own birthdays together
- Coffee on Sundays and soup on Thursdays
- Light coming through the church windows
- Squirrels in the churchyard
- Pottering around the charity shops
- Coffee in Waterstones

Southwark Diocesan Prayer Calendar (monthly)

can be found at

<https://southwark.anglican.org/information/resources/prayer-calendar/>

(this includes the Anglican Cycle of Prayer)



PRAYERS for...

- those suffering the economic, psychological & social effects of the crisis
- the disadvantaged & the vulnerable
- those in authority, including our local leaders in the Council, the Police, the NHS & our MP's
- essential workers including NHS/Care Workers, Emergency Services, Refuse Collectors/Retail Staff
- faith leaders
- those who mourn

AMONG OTHER THINGS, THIS WEEK I...

- Took part in a weekly Zoom meeting with the Churchwardens
- Helped someone writing a book about their great great aunt's life in Sutton by providing information about the 1940 bomb
- Was moved by the disclosure that the Queen's loyal staff of 22 people chose to quarantine with her at Windsor Castle, unable to visit their families for the duration of the lockdown

Worship

There will be an Order of Service for 10.30am Sunday morning worship each week. I will be leading worship from The Rectory. Please join me by following the Order of Service (which is sent to you and can be found on the website) and singing confidently in your own homes. I think of you all and pray for you each day.

Sunday 31 May is Pentecost, Whitsunday, when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit

I encourage you to make a habit of daily prayer, whether *A Way of Daily Prayer* (attached, or on website under Useful Information-Service Sheets);

Common Worship *Daily Prayer* <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>; or *Book of Common Prayer*.

Bible readings for Morning and Evening Prayer:

Sunday 31 May Pentecost

MP Genesis 11.1-9, Acts 10.34-48

EP Joel 2.21-end, Acts 2.14-21 [22-38]

Monday 1 June Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth

MP 1 Samuel 2.1-10, Mark 3.31-end

EP Zechariah 2.10—end, John 3.25-30

Tuesday 2 June

MP Joshua 2, Luke 9.28-36

EP Job 2, Romans 1.18-end

Wednesday 3 June

MP Joshua 3, Luke 9.37-50

EP Job 3, Romans 2.1-16

Thursday 4 June

MP Joshua 4.1-5.1, Luke 9.51-end

EP Job 4, Romans 2.17-end

Friday 5 June *Boniface (Wynfrith) bishop, martyr, 754*

MP Joshua 5.2-end, Luke 10.1-16

EP Job 5, Romans 3.1-20

Saturday 6 June

MP Joshua 6.1-20, Luke 10.17-24

EP Exodus 34.1-10, Mark 1.1-13

Prayer List – Barbara, Vere, Stan, Roger, Phyllis & Hollis

Departed –Rosemary Armstrong, Alastair, Gwen, Christine Griffiths, John

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide,
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

GIVING DURING DIFFICULT TIMES. THANK YOU to those of you who are able to continue supporting the church by your regular giving during these unprecedented times. This is greatly appreciated.

The church is still functioning at local, national and international level; and it continues to need the financial, as well as the spiritual, support of its members, not least to maintain its support of local parishes and communities.

Some of you have kindly asked for guidance about the most helpful ways in which to make payments at this time and you will have received a message about this from the Treasurer.

St Paul's letters are full of useful advice about Christian giving, especially 2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9; he even gives specific directions in I Corinthians 16.2. It is almost as if he had foreseen our needs nearly two thousand years ago.

With renewed thanks for all your support in word, deed and prayer.

RAMBLES IN THE CHURCHYARD – permitted! Jeff Richards is posting a series of Churchyard rambles.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYTT2iWuCCrQVLU-c81xTmmDcyhmz5hCk>

LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP (St Nicholas, Sutton Baptist, Trinity Methodist/URC – *Churches Uniting in Central Sutton*)

Christian Aid Recipe Collection. The Recipe Collection, which contains over eighty recipes contributed by members of our central Sutton churches, will be sent out by email this weekend to everyone who has requested a copy. It's not too late to ask for a copy on the Trinity website [here](#), make a £5 donation to Christian Aid and enjoy reading and cooking recipes from all over the world with the stories of why they are favourites.

www.stnicholas.suttonteam.org.uk

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