



## **St Martin of Tours Chelsfield**

*St Martin's worships and serves a loving God,  
reaching out to the community in the name of Jesus Christ.*

**Sunday 8 November 2020**

**THE THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT**

**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

As I write this we have just entered the latest period of 'lockdown'. Having enjoyed the fellowship of worship in church since July it is disappointing that for the next four weeks our church will once again be closed for public worship. Our Government has decreed that in order to reduce the threat of escalating numbers of Covid cases, and the pressure that puts on hospitals and healthcare, we must reduce our contact with other people, and continue to be patient while we wait for the vaccine that offers a more permanent solution to the pandemic. This is hard on our churches, and indeed on families and on many areas of the leisure and hospitality sector, who are only just seeing signs of recovery from the earlier lockdown. Many of us are fed up with waiting.

In today's gospel reading the ten bridesmaids are fed up with waiting too. They have been waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom so that the wedding celebrations can begin. Indeed they have become so tired of waiting that they have all fallen asleep, when suddenly the bridegroom arrives. They need to recharge their lamps to go and greet him, but only half of them are prepared, with lamps trimmed and with supplies of oil to keep the light burning. The unprepared missed out on the celebration!

The reason for the current lockdown we are told is to slow down the spread of the virus in the hope that at the end of the four weeks we will be ready to go out to celebrate Christmas with our families and friends.

The scriptures constantly remind us that God's love is stronger than death. This is the hope to which we can hold, but if we are not careful it is a hope that we are at risk of neglecting. Like the wise bridesmaids, we need to make sure that we keep our lamps supplied with oil, so that our path stays lit, and we will be ready to respond to the joy of Christmas when the time comes.

*Revd John*

*You are invited to spend a quiet time with these prayers,  
readings and reflection.*

*Prayers for the week*

Almighty Father, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of all: govern the hearts and minds of those in authority, and bring the families of the nations, divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin, to be subject to his just and gentle rule; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

[Collect for the Third Sunday before Advent]

God of peace, whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom and restored the broken to wholeness of life: look with compassion on the anguish of the world, and by your healing power make whole both people and nations; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

[Post Communion for the Third Sunday before Advent]



## REMEMBRANCE

Let us remember before God, and commend to his sure keeping those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of mankind.

Almighty and eternal God, from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted, either by death or life: Hear our prayers and thanksgivings for all whom we remember this day; fulfil in them the purpose of your love; and bring us all, with them, to your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ever-living God, we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Most holy God and Father, hear our prayers for all who strive for peace and all who fight for justice. Help us, who today remember the cost of war, to work for a better tomorrow; and, as we commend to you lives lost in terror and conflict, bring us all, in the end, to the peace of your presence; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed: kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## **MARTIN, BISHOP OF TOURS, c397**

*11 November*

Almighty God, who called Martin from the armies of this world to be a faithful soldier of Christ: give us grace to follow him in his love and compassion for the needy, and enable your Church to claim for all people their inheritance as children of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Collect for St Martin]

## *Today's psalm*

### *Psalm 70*

#### *Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies*

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me.

O Lord, make haste to help me!

Let those be put to shame and confusion  
who seek my life.

Let those be turned back and brought to dishonour  
who desire to hurt me.

Let those who say, 'Aha, Aha!'  
turn back because of their shame.

Let all who seek you  
rejoice and be glad in you.

Let those who love your salvation  
say evermore, 'God is great!'

But I am poor and needy;  
hasten to me, O God!

You are my help and my deliverer;  
O Lord, do not delay!

Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

*Today's readings*

*Amos 5:18-24*

*The Day of the Lord a Dark Day*

<sup>18</sup> Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!

Why do you want the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, not light;

<sup>19</sup> as if someone fled from a lion,

and was met by a bear;

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,

and was bitten by a snake.

<sup>20</sup> Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

<sup>21</sup> I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

<sup>22</sup> Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings,

I will not accept them;

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals

I will not look upon.

<sup>23</sup> Take away from me the noise of your songs;

I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

<sup>24</sup> But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

*The First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 4:13-end*

*The Coming of the Lord*

<sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. <sup>15</sup> For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

<sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord for ever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.

*The Gospel according to Matthew 25:1-13*

*The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids*

<sup>1</sup> ‘Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this.

Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

<sup>3</sup> When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them;

<sup>4</sup> but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept.

<sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a shout, “Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” <sup>7</sup> Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> The foolish said to the wise,

“Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” <sup>9</sup> But the wise replied, “No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.” <sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, “Lord,

lord, open to us.” <sup>12</sup> But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you.”

<sup>13</sup> Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

## *Prayers for Return*

How generous is your goodness, O God,  
how great is your salvation,  
how faithful is your love;  
help us to trust you in trial  
and praise you in deliverance,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

King of the universe,  
you show the bright glory of your reign  
in acts of mercy and enduring love;  
raise the spirits of the downcast  
and restore those who have fallen away,  
that we may sing forever of your love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Heavenly Father,  
whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve;  
bless all who, following in his steps,  
give themselves to the service of others;  
that with wisdom, patience and courage,  
they may minister in his name to the suffering and needy;  
for the love of him who laid down his life for us,  
your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Creator God,  
may every breath we take be for your glory,  
may every footstep show you as our way,  
that, trusting in your presence in this world,  
we may, beyond this life, still be with you  
where you are alive and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

### ***Scriptural Comfort***

**'Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand'**

***(Isaiah 41:10)***

**'Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'**

***(Philippians 4:6,7)***

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.'**

***(John 3:16)***

***As we do not know how long this situation will last it is important that we look out for one another.***

***Please let Revd John know of anyone who is ill or in distress.***

***Or if you need prayer or spiritual support,  
or are lonely and just need a short chat please phone***

**St Martin's is closed owing to further Covid-19 restrictions**

**Public worship is suspended until further notice**

**Please check the web site for updates**

Worship from St Martin's will continue to be available online:

- A Sunday service on the web site
- Daily prayer on Facebook at 8.15am on Tuesdays and Thursdays

We are awaiting guidance on opening the church for private prayer

In addition, there will continue to be a quiet meditation in the churchyard on Thursday evenings at 7.00pm and Revd John will continue to celebrate Holy Communion on your behalf in the churchyard on Friday mornings at 11.30am.

**Please note that to accommodate pastoral offices or with any changes to Diocesan or Government guidelines these arrangements are subject to change at any time.**

For more information on St Martin's please visit our web site and Facebook page:

[www.stmartinchelsfield.org.uk](http://www.stmartinchelsfield.org.uk)   [www.facebook.com/ChelsfieldStMartins](https://www.facebook.com/ChelsfieldStMartins)

## Other links and resources



Donate to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal:

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/ways-to-give/donate>

**Daily HOPE** is a national, free phoneline from the Church of England on **0800 804 8044**.

The line is available 24 hours a day and offers music, prayers and reflections, as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone.

For today's online Sunday service from the Church of England visit:  
[www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online)

For other Church of England resources please visit:  
[www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer-resources](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer-resources)

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