

Readings for the week

Today	Romans 8 v 1 - 11 Matthew 13 v 1- 9 & 18 - 23
Monday	Luke 19 v 28 - 40
Tuesday	Luke 19 v 41 - 48
Wednesday	Luke 20 v 1 - 8
Thursday	Luke 20 v 9 - 19
Friday	Luke 20 v 20 - 26
Saturday	Luke 20 v 27 - 40



Prayer

The Ministry Leadership Team would like you to pray for the following topics:

1. *Pray for all those still on furlough, those who have become unemployed and those whose businesses are having to close – all those facing an uncertain future. Pray that God may give them his peace.*
2. *Give thanks for the silver linings some people have found in the dark cloud of Covid 19 – new relationships with neighbours, new skills with technology, old hobbies revived or new ones started and time to do things they were too busy for in their pre-virus lives.*

Which of the Minster churches are currently open for private prayer and when are they open? See update below:

Kinwarton	Tuesday & Friday	10.00 am – 3.00 pm
Alcester	Wednesday & Saturday	10.00 am – 3.00 pm
Sambourne	Wednesday & Saturday	10.00 am – 12.00 pm
Haselor	Wednesday	10.00 am – 5.00 pm
Arrow	Saturday	10.00 am – 1.00 pm
Great Alne	Saturday	10.00 am – 2.00 pm
Weethley	Saturday	10.00 am – 6.00 pm



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Welcome to the Alcester Minster Group of Churches Sunday 12 July 2020

Trinity 5 Green

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 8 v 1

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of
the Church is governed and
sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all
your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and
truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus
Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Alternative Collect

Almighty God,
send down upon your
Church
the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in all who
minister the gospel
your countless gifts of
grace;
through Jesus Christ our
Lord.

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Alcester Minster website: www.alcesterminster.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AlcesterMinster

Trinity 5 Thought for the Day' presented by Jane Cornwall

Reading: John 13 v 34

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another".
(John 13:34)

Thought for the Day

This week, we return to our churches with joy and eager anticipation, as we emerge from 'incarceration' and embrace freedom. Enforced isolation has allowed me time for self-reflection and to re-evaluate life in many ways. It has raised questions for me. What has changed? What have I learned from this experience?

Lately, I have been discomfited by the image of two black servants on an emblem in Holy Trinity Church and asked myself: why now, when it has not unsettled me before? Perhaps because of two recent distressing incidents that have since troubled me.

The killing of three people, George Floyd in America, whose last moments were so publicly displayed, and the murders of sisters, Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry in a London park deeply disturbed me.

These murders on opposite sides of the Atlantic troubled me for different but similar reasons. George, killed by a police officer in a seemingly racially motivated incident. Nicole and Bibaa, as described by their mother Mina Smallman, a retired archdeacon, were "*dehumanised*" by police officers who allegedly took 'selfies' and distributed photos of her daughters after death.

Mina believed unconscious bias related to both colour and class influenced how she and her daughters were treated. She said how "*toxic it has become*", referring to the shocking way the officers behaved, how the police seemingly felt so "*safe, untouchable*" that they could defile her daughters' memory in such a way.

Or did those police officers believe black lives don't really matter? You may recall the quite justified public outrage when Jo Cox was senselessly murdered. Here, with hardly a murmur, is an equally atrocious offence against these two sisters. Do status and race sway public response?

Paul says: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*".
(Galatians 3:28).

However, George Orwell's cynical quote from *Animal Farm* also comes to mind: "*all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others*". Has Christ's vision for love, peace, justice, inclusion and equality been truly fulfilled through the ages?

The other day, I listened to Reverend Eve Pitts, Britain's first black female vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Birchfield. On 1 August each year, Reverend Eve remembers with her church those who were enslaved in the slave trade. She goes to church with chains around her waist and ankles, a vivid reminder of the dehumanising experiences that black people suffered 400 years ago.

When asked if she could have one prayer for humanity answered by God, Reverend Eve responded: "*To get rid of the demonic forces of racism. That's what I fight about. Dream about. Sing about. Cry about. I refuse to believe in a God that doesn't care that my race is diminished.*"

Christ led by example, coming alongside and caring for the most vulnerable and marginalised and treating each one the same. God's love in action for all to see. He calls me to do the same. Perhaps His calling was some of the discomfort I was feeling.

I see, hear and am troubled by inequality, racism and prejudice. William Wilberforce said: "*You can choose to look the other way, but never again can you say that you never knew.*" I know, but I also recognise I need to actively respond, if I am to honour Jesus' commitment to me and mine to Him. Perhaps I will join Eve on 1 August.

What troubles **you** this day?

Prayer:

God of Love, God of Peace, this fractured world cries out in pain, Burns deep into my soul, and challenges me, to make a difference.

God of Love, God of Peace, create within me a heart for people, A desire for change, for new beginnings to start this day.

Amen.