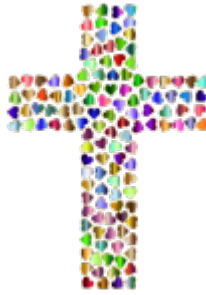


Third before Lent
Sunday, 13th February 2022



Dear Friends,

‘Love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Leviticus 19: 18)

On Thursday of this week, several hundred people gathered to catch a glimpse of Prince Charles unveiling a statue of Licoricia of Winchester, which has now been installed on Jewry Street outside the library. Sadly, in the event, the crowd was to be disappointed, as His Royal Highness tested positive for Coronavirus that morning and was unable to travel. The unveiling was ably carried out by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson. Our prayers are with Prince Charles and the royal household, both for his speedy recovery and in the hope that no-one else has contracted the virus, particularly our Sovereign.

Though unable to be there for the unveiling, I am very much looking forward to going to meet Licoricia for myself. Her bronze statue, created by figurative sculptor, Ian Rank-Broadley FRSS, is depicted holding the hand of her young son, Asher, as they amble along Jewry Street; their home centuries before our being. Mother and son look remarkably lifelike. I wonder how many of us will mistake them for shoppers along this busy thoroughfare in years to come!!



Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire unveils statue of Licoricia of Winchester

Blessed by Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, this project is a remarkably inclusive cultural collaboration which has been keenly supported by faith groups in our City. According to the Arts Council England press release:

The project to install a statue of Licoricia aims to inform people about England's little-known but important medieval Jewish community; to be a fresh gateway to the study of Winchester's royal medieval past; to promote tolerance and diversity in today's society; to inspire women and show the importance of education in providing opportunity; and to be a lasting artistic enhancement to the city of Winchester.

Licoricia was a leading personality in the Jewish community of Winchester in the 13th century. Despite being widowed twice, she successfully brought up her family, conducted her business and prospered in a hostile society. She was a major financier to Henry III and his Queen, Eleanor. Money raised from Licoricia and from the estate of her second husband David contributed to the building of Westminster Abbey and its rich shrine to Edward the Confessor.

Inscribed around the foot of the plinth upon which Licoricia and Asher stand are the words from Leviticus 19: 18: *'Love thy neighbour as thyself.'* The powerful symbolism of these words, written both in Hebrew and the King James translation, draws together the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Islam and Christianity, and underscores our determination to work together, in tolerant respect of others' diversity. Interestingly, a third symbol brings us back full circle to the King James Bible, much of which was translated in Winchester, and links us to our Christian faith and the Cathedral.



Source – Arts Council England

Rather wonderfully, the verse from Leviticus which threads around Licoricia's statue, dovetails perfectly with our set Gospel for this week. And so it should! Luke 6 brings us the Beatitudes – our Christian template for living a righteous and loving life in the blessing of Jesus' light-filled grace.



'Sacred Heart' by Odilon Redon

In bringing God's kingdom values to the people, Jesus fulfils the ancient books of the Pentateuch. He draws us to the heart of our faith, telling us to love our neighbour, just as Leviticus, (the ancient third book of the Torah), documents Moses' teaching of generations of faithful souls to live holy lives before Him. More than this, Jesus takes us right back to the Garden of Eden, reminding us of God's first covenant with Adam and Eve. Jesus lovingly reasserts in our hearts an understanding of the most important of the Commandments, just as surely as God instructed the first of us to be created in His image to love each other, steward the gifts of creation we have been blessed with and above all, to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength. Intrinsic to the commandment to focus God first in our sights, comes the call for us to love our neighbour.

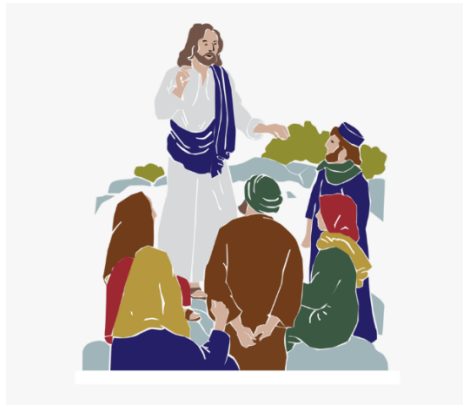
What a gifted statue Licoricia is to the people of Winchester, to its visitors and residents and all in its commercial centre. She becomes the embodiment for people of all faiths and none, of the need to respect, nurture, encourage, support and uphold everyone we encounter – whatever their colour, creed, sexuality or gender. By living out this fundamental text, *'Love thy neighbour as thyself,'* we open ourselves up to the wonderful gift of radiating unconditional love to all from the sacred heart of Christ.

Jax

Rector, The Downs Benefice

Collect Prayer for the Third Sunday Before Lent

Almighty God,
who alone can bring order
to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity:
give your people grace so to love what you command
and to desire what you promise,
that, among the many changes of this world,
our hearts may surely there be fixed
where true joys are to be found;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.



Luke 6:17-26 - Blessings and Woes

He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Looking at his disciples, he said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

'Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

Schedule of Services

This schedule is correct at this time but may be subject to future alterations – please check on our website for the most up-to-date information.

All services start at 10am, unless marked differently on the table below.

We ask that you continue to wear masks and book services by contacting the Benefice Office on 01962 880 845 or office@downsbenefice.org.uk

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>13th Feb</i>			Holy Communion		Morning Prayer
<i>20th Feb</i>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship		8am – BCP Holy Communion	
<i>27th Feb</i>			Morning Prayer	Morning Worship	8am – BCP Holy Communion
<i>2nd March ASH WEDNESDAY</i>	12 noon - Holy Communion with Ashes		Holy Communion with Ashes		<i>With Chilbolton</i>
<i>4th March FRIDAY</i>	2pm – Women’s World Day of Prayer Service				
<i>6th March</i>	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	4pm – Café Church		
<i>13th March</i>	4pm – Evening Prayer for Lent		Holy Communion		Morning Prayer
<i>20th March</i>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship		8am – BCP Holy Communion	
<i>23rd March WEDNESDAY</i>			Holy Communion		
<i>27th March</i>	Mothering Sunday Family Service	Mothering Sunday Family Service	Mothering Sunday Family Service	Mothering Sunday Family Service	Mothering Sunday Family Service