

Sunday 13 December 2020

3rd Sunday of Advent

Welcome back to those joining us in church today. Please remember that all Covid safeguards remain in place. Welcome, too, to all joining us on-line.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath - The Prophets

God our Father,

you gave to Zechariah and Elisabeth in their old age a son called John.

He grew up strong in spirit,

prepared the people for the coming of the Lord,

and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins.

Help us, who have been baptized into Christ,

to be ready to welcome him into our hearts,

and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,

the light who is coming into the world.

The Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you:

grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries

may likewise so prepare and make ready your way

by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,

that at your second coming to judge the world

we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;

for you are alive and reign with the Father

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-end

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall

build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Gospel Reading John 1.6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.*' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah,* nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Prayer after Communion

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

The Week Ahead

Today

- 12pm Holy Baptism at St James'
4pm Christingle Service at St James' *seats available – just turn up*
6pm Christingle Service at St Thomas' *all seats are now allocated*

Monday-Saturday

- 9am Morning Prayer *live on St Thomas' Facebook page*
5pm Evening Prayer *live on St James' Facebook page (not on Saturday)*

Tuesday

- 9.30-10.30am St James' open for private prayer
2pm Mothers' Union Eucharist, St Thomas'

Wednesday

Lockdown lunches deliveries
– *please see the information below*

Thursday

- 9-10am St Thomas' open for private prayer
2.30pm Preparation of *Bags of Comfort & Joy*, St Thomas' Hall

Friday

- 9am St James' Church cleaning

Next Sunday (20 December – 4th Sunday in Advent)

- 9.15am Eucharist at St Thomas' & *live on St Thomas' Facebook page*
10.45am Eucharist at St James' & *live on St James' Facebook page*
4.30pm Socially-distanced choir rehearsal, St James'
6.30pm 9 Lessons & Carols at St James' & *live on Facebook*.

Carol Service

The traditional *9 Lessons & Carols* will be at St James' this year (see above). There is space in the nave and gallery for everyone to be socially-distanced. A choir will be singing, socially-distanced, as congregational singing is still not permitted. If you would like to read at this service, please contact Fr David.

Lockdown Wednesday Lunches *continued*

Our meal deliveries continue through December. Fr Andrew is coordinating the project. A voluntary donation of £5 is suggested. Orders must be placed

with Fr Andrew by noon on the previous Saturday(andrewinhaslingden@gmail.com, 07460 899451)

Raft

Please remember that we are still collecting for Raft, our local foodbank in our churches. Items especially needed at the moment include: sugar, adult toothbrushes and tinned potatoes. If you have items to be collected, please contact Fr David or Fr Andrew.

St Thomas' Gift Day

Thank you, very much, to all who supported the Gift Day. Your generosity is very much-appreciated. We will soon be able to let you know how much was raised.

Bags of Comfort & Joy

Thank you for all donations and offers to support this outreach programme. There are currently 54 bags booked so we can still take names and addresses for another 46. Please speak to Fr David or Fr Andrew. Bag decorating and filling this Thursday (see *previous page*). Crafty volunteers welcome. Bring any craft items you'd like to use but we have some resources too.

Lancashire Sings Christmas

Sadly, we won't be able to share this in person this year but it's still going ahead on BBC Radio Lancashire. Tune in on Thursday 17 December at 7pm, at home, to sing along. A carol sheet will be available to download from the website of Radio Lancashire.

Christmas Services

St James' Crib Service will be on-line only this year.

St Thomas' Crib Service is at 4pm (and 6pm if needed). Seats must be booked in advance – please see our website or Facebook page. Speak to Maggi if in doubt.

Midnight Mass in both churches at 11.30pm.

Christmas Day Eucharist in both churches at 10am.

No services in church on Sunday 27 December – on-line only.

For your prayers

Ian, Alan, Brian, Denzil, Alex, Edna Charley, Kathleen, Rita, Dorothy, Jim, Matthew, Jean, Mary, Mother Enid, Judith

RIP: Bernard Martin