

NewsLink

21 February – 7 March 2021



Churches of North
Bradford on Avon
& Villages

Dear friends,

Below is a reminder of some of the resources available during Lent. Don't forget to collect your *Lent in an Envelope* from our churches.

This week, I thought I would share with you a meditation based on part of our Gospel reading for Sunday, the first Sunday of Lent. Perhaps during our Lent lunch on Wednesday we could share how God is more often at work when we don't see it than when we do? Is this our experience I wonder?

Have a very blessed week,
Ann, Rector

Meditation of John the Baptist (based on Mark 1: 9-13)

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

It took me by surprise, I don't mind admitting it, his going off into the desert like that the moment after his baptism.

You see, I thought that was my role, to fulfil the words of the prophet -

'A voice crying in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord."

And I'd done it well, patiently, faithfully, determined to play my part, come what may.

They'd come in their thousands, flocking out to me like there was no tomorrow – to be baptised, to confess their sins, to await the Messiah.

They were ready and waiting, eager to receive him, hungry for his coming.

And at last we saw him - striding down into the water, his identity unmistakable – not simply Jesus of Nazareth, but the Deliverer, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world!

I was ecstatic, you can imagine.

It was like a dream come true, the answer to all my prayers.

and as he came up out of the water I was waiting for the next move, wondering what would follow.

I'm not quite sure what I expected, but something dramatic at the very least – a bolt from heaven perhaps, a fanfare of trumpets, a raising of the standard, I don't know – but some sign, some symbol to let us know beyond all doubt that the moment had come, the waiting was over, and the kingdom was here.

Only what did he do?

Well, like I say, he disappeared.

No pep talk, no message for the crowd, just off and away without so much as a backward glance, and no hide nor hair of him seen for weeks afterwards.

To be frank, I was annoyed at first, for it all seemed such an anti-climax, but on reflection I can't blame him, for I think it took *him* by surprise as much as it did *me*.

When I recall how he looked coming up out of the water after his baptism, so joyful, so radiant, almost as though he'd heard God rather than me talking to him, I just can't believe he had any idea that minutes later he'd be making off into the wilderness.

It was like he had no say in the matter, as though an unseen hand was guiding him, so that the one event progressed naturally from the other –
a moment of joy – a time of trial;
a wonderful high- a desperate low,
a certainty of faith – a wrestling with doubt.

Yet by all accounts it's been the making of him, almost as if faith needed to be forged on the anvil of temptation, tested to the limit before the weight of the world could be hung upon it.

I think I'm beginning to see it now, to understand that it wasn't just the wilderness of Judea he faced out there, but the desert of the soul, and he needed to experience both if God was to use him, for strange though it may seem, God is often more at work where we don't see it than when we do.

Lent in Lockdown

A reminder that our website gives details of many Lent resources. Copies of the **Lent in Lockdown** booklets outlining the resources and activities on offer, **#Live Lent** booklets are also available in our churches, as are **Lent in an Envelope** containing resources for you to use during Lent, including your palm cross. Do pick one up and also make sure those who are shielding or unable to get to church receive one. Those who receive hard copies of Newslink will receive a Lent envelope to their door.

Do download the **#LiveLent App** and get the daily reflections to your inbox, or as an audio recording and there are family activities and more.

For those without access to the Internet, the **Daily Hope** freephone line on **0800 804 8044** provides hymns, prayers and will also feature the **#LiveLent** daily reflection.

Our **Lent Lunches** on Zoom continue on **Wednesdays 12.30 – 1.30 pm**, to get the link to join, email Denise on nboabenefice@gmail.com

In the later pages of this week's Newslink you will find

- What's going on at St James and Christ Church.
- Information about the 'Easter experience' in our Churches, and much more...

You can read the full version, and access our weekly online services on the website www.nboachurches.co.uk. If you would like to receive a copy of Newslink electronically please subscribe via the website or if you require a hard copy leave a message at the Benefice office on 01225 865046

Thank you from Tessa Stacey

It has been a few weeks; I wanted to write and say goodbye to those I didn't manage to see before I left, whilst also saying a big *thank you* for my kind leaving gifts. These beautiful flowers on a cloudy, cold January day were such a joy.



I am currently making plans for the next stage of my training and the gift of an Amazon voucher will be so useful with the reading list we have been given. The college has a library, but while all training is all online, travelling over to Filton to access them is not the most convenient, Amazon always saves the day!

I have settled into a new pattern, the extra space in my week has felt so welcome. Currently, it is filled with home schooling and catching up with housework, but I am hoping that when schools re open, there may be some Tessa time on the horizon.

I hope all is well with everyone and that the spring may bring the opportunity to join together in your churches and find a way to reconnect.

My time with you always has felt so welcoming and warm, I remember fondly as I take a new path.

Warm wishes to you all,

Tess

News from Christ Church

The South Porch at Christ Church has undergone another transformation as we enter Lent. We are challenging ourselves to do something to help the environment, then writing our pledge on a heart-shaped card and hanging it on a tree (see photo).

As you walk through the churchyard please add your pledge to the tree and let's see if we can get it covered in promises by Easter, and much more importantly let's make a difference to this beautiful world that God has entrusted to our care.



Some ideas: build a bug hotel, a hedgehog house, a newt house; plant wild flowers, plant a tree, turn the tap off when cleaning your teeth, reduce the use of plastic, turn off unused lights, convert to LED bulbs (this will save you money too!). Please let us see some photos of what you do where it's appropriate.

Weathering the storm in South Wraxall - time for hot chocolate!

Warm comfort may come in small ways and villagers and passers by were invited into the church porch to find a treat.

Gill Fairhurst.



Spring is here!

Daphne Cox writes: 'Just wondered if you'd like my 'spring' photos taken on 5 February, yes, the sun did shine.'

'The promise of God fulfilled as we are told in Genesis 8:22 'As long as the Earth endures, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease'



The Easter Experience

Come into each of our churches and follow the Easter story week by week, told through our Easter Experience prayer stations. Suitable for adults and children, starting Sunday 21st Feb with different stations each week until Easter.

Thank you and Marmalade for Sale.

Dorna wishes to thank everyone for the donated jam jars, she now has enough. She now has Seville orange marmalade for sale in aid of Christ Church Community project; £3 a jar. Contact her on 01225 862834

Funerals

Peter Byron-Davies: Friday 26th Feb 12 noon.
St Nicholas Church, followed by burial in the churchyard (Ann)

Peter Taylor: Friday 12th March 11 am.
St Nicholas Church, followed by burial in the churchyard (Ann)

Catherine Rowell: Friday 26th Feb 1pm.
Haycombe Crematorium (Paul)

Ministry Team

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Church Wardens

Winsley:
Roy Ludlow (868779) Linds Batson (720069)
Christ Church: Vacant
Monkton Farleigh: Vacant: Contact Rachel Exley
PCC Secretary (851485)
South Wraxall:
Dave Wyper (865384) Valentine Thornhill
(862552)

Lay Pastoral Assistants

Denise Leigh (863916)
Stephen Pike (782537)
Denise Davies (863678)
Gill Fairhurst (867560)
Daphne Cox (868224)
Elizabeth Bush (866624)
James Middleton (920564)

Children's and Families Worker

Zoe Yeomans - zyeomans3@gmail.com

Do check the website as resources are added regularly and check Instagram and Facebook for all our latest news.

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH - ANNUAL REVISION OF ELECTORAL ROLL AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The annual review of the St Nicholas electoral roll has begun. All members of the congregation for whom we have email addresses have been contacted. Anyone who did not receive the notice or who is not on email should contact the Benefice Office if they need a copy, please.

Also, please note that the St Nicholas APCM will be held this year on Wednesday 21st April at 11.00hrs. The format of the meeting will depend on the restrictions in place at the time and further information will be given when available.