

Bulletin for Sunday 6th December 2020

Notices - please read!

There will be services in church again this Sunday morning - sadly still with no singing. We are now in Tier 2 and all Covid precautions apply as before - remember to wear a mask, use the hand sanitiser, and maintain a distance from all those not in your household. In addition, **because we need to maximise ventilation, it will be extremely cold. Please consider carefully whether it is sensible for you personally to sit for half an hour in very very cold temperatures; and if you do decide to come, wrap up very warmly and bring a blanket.**

There will be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom at 6pm this and every Sunday. The After Church Coffee Zooms are still taking place at 11.30 every Sunday morning. The Monday evening discussion group is meeting on Zoom during Advent, at 7.30pm. You're welcome to join us at any of the above - contact me, Anne, for details.

For everyone's consideration, particularly those in Pulborough: most of us are looking forward to Christmas; many are hoping to see friends and family. Please remember that if you are in church during December and another member of the congregation subsequently tests positive you could potentially be required to self-isolate for 14 days, possibly over Christmas, missing the chance to see loved ones. Worship is important - but there are many ways to worship. For some people this might make worshipping at home in the warm, online or with the Bulletin or the TV, a better option, particularly for Sundays 13th and 20th December.

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Good morning on the Second Sunday in Advent! In our reading this morning we hear of John the Baptist in the wilderness, proclaiming the coming of Christ... out of the bleak discomfort of the wilderness something new and good comes....

Hymn: Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes (R&S 137)

Prayer: God who comes to us
 whether the paths are straight or rough and difficult,
 as we watch and wait for your coming again,
 may we light a candle to prepare the way....
 We ask your blessing on everything we do,
 and everything we bring to you or give in your service,
 today and every day. In Jesus' name. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Isaiah 40: 1-11 and Mark 1: 1-8

Reflection: This passage at the beginning of Mark's gospel is related to the Old Testament reading as Mark begins by quoting from Isaiah's prophecy. But Mark expands on Isaiah's words by linking to John the Baptist - his ministry and his baptism - and then making the further connection to Jesus, explaining that he is far greater than John - so much so, that he baptises with the Holy Spirit. In just eight verses Mark sets Jesus in the context of the Scriptures, and starts explaining who he is... Good News indeed!

The wilderness, where Moses experienced God in the burning bush, and then led the Israelites to freedom in the promised land, is also crucial to Jesus: the location for many incidents in his ministry, from his temptations to the feeding of the five thousand. It is a place we experience highs (mountains) and lows (valleys): but valleys can be lifted up and hills can be made low, so that a road is made - a way for us to encounter God.

May God both comfort us and challenge us to create highways in the wilderness, so that Christ can come to us this Christmas.

Hymn: On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry (R&S 134)

Prayer: God of compassion, you comfort all your people.
We pray for those lost in a wilderness of loneliness,
and for those in need of shelter
on the rough and anxious paths of life...
Comfort those suffering pain and grief...
but gently challenge us all to prepare for Christ's coming.
We pray for our communities, our families and our friends;
and for ourselves as we wait for you...
In Jesus' name we ask all our prayers, Amen

Hymn: Hail to the Lord's Anointed! (R&S 127)

Blessing: May we be prepared for the coming of Christ;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
today and always. Amen

Anne Lewitt