



Welcome to
St John the Baptist, Midsomer Norton
21st February 2021

Sunday Services on YouTube

During lockdown we will be recording and uploading the 9.30 service to YouTube. You will be able to watch the service from around 11am each Sunday. The link to our YouTube channel is on the front page of the [church website](#).

Please pray for:-

The Residents of: Chapel Row, Chapel Road & Chapel Court.

The Sick:- Rachael Macfarlane, Miranda Cooper, Rose Stenner, Paul & Margaret Knott, Irene Leet, Fr Roy Boots, Nicholas Hambleton, Betty Chiplin, Ethan Horwood, John Lewis, Patricia Flagg, Pat Gilham, Bishop Peter Hancock, Vince Marriot, Christopher Watts, Faye McDermott, John Norman, Joan Martindale.

Years Mind:- (M) Norman Edgell, Hilda Heaney, Jack Tucker (T) Gerald Wills, Ruth Greenaway (W) Thomas Keevil, Edward Landry, Wilfred Dowling, Edna Gannaway, David Cox (T) Violet Crocker, Reginald Pratten (F) Dorothy Lea.

The Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Reading from the book of Genesis chapter 9 verses 8 – 17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ‘As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’ God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.’

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
Blessed are those who have endured temptation;
they have stood the test and will receive the crown of life. *James 1.12*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark chapter 1 verses 9 – 15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized 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 forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord ,

Praise to you, O Christ

A Reflection from Fr Guy

Jesus said, “Believe in the good news.”

There doesn't seem to be a lot of good news around at the moment. It is easy to feel depressed and despondent about a whole range of problems which seem out of our control. There's plenty apparently to confirm the view that the world we live in is far from perfect, and couldn't possibly have a loving and compassionate God at its centre.

However, there appears to be light at the end of the COVID tunnel, with the encouraging role out of the vaccine program and the falling rates of infection and deaths across the U.K. Let's hope!

“Believe in the good news,” Jesus encourages his earliest listeners, according to Mark.

The good news is that the kingdom of God is close at hand. In the rest of the first chapter of Mark's Gospel we follow Jesus as he demonstrates what that means. He calls followers; he teaches with authority; he casts out demons; he heals the sick; he gathers crowds. The kingdom of God is a place where people are drawn to listen to the truth proclaimed; it is a place where the sick find healing; it is a place where evil has no power. Jesus proclaims that it is here, now. Not in the far distant future; not somewhere above the clouds; but here, now, among ordinary people in Galilee.

But of course, Mark knows that it's not that simple. At the end of the chapter, we find Jesus telling people not to tell others about him. Mark knows that Jesus was not the runaway success that one might have expected. Mark knows that Jesus' influence seemed minimal, that the crowds were fickle, that the authorities were quick to act, and that Jesus was arrested, tried and executed.

He also knows that the kingdom did not die with Jesus, that the power of evil proved ultimately ineffective, that there was new life for Jesus the other side of death. He is writing for people who know that too.

He is also writing for people who know only too well that evil is still around, and still powerful. If the kingdom of God arrived with Jesus, how come worship in Jerusalem was under attack, the Temple perhaps already destroyed by the time Mark wrote his Gospel? How come Christians were being victimised? How come illness and death were an ever-present reality?"

"Believe in the good news," Mark has Jesus say. See it, hear it, and also believe in it. Take the step out in faith, walk forwards as if it were true, and you will find you are stepping into the kingdom of God. There is an act of will involved here. Mark's readers have to care enough, to want to follow Jesus enough, to take that step into the unknown and believe that they are in the kingdom of God, even when the evidence of their own eyes suggests otherwise.

Mark's message is no less relevant for us. There is plenty of evidence that God does not rule in our world. If the kingdom of God drew near in Jesus' time, it is tempting to suppose that it has gone far away again now. Sometimes it can feel as though lies and evil and sickness and death are winning. But like Mark's first readers, we know that is not so. We know that although Jesus' ministry was, on the surface, a failure, he won the most important victory of all, the victory over death. In the end, evil cannot win. In the end, we will see God's kingdom for ourselves. Even now, we see signs, in acts of kindness and goodness, in situations where the truth is told, at times when we see wholeness restored. Good News stories, millions of them every day. Jesus said, "Believe in the good news."

Good News! Great News! Let's spread it about a bit!

Prayers of Intercession by Rebecca Daly

Lord God, as we enter Lent and move ever closer to the first anniversary of the initial lockdown, we cannot help but focus on all that we have already given up in the last year. Turn these laments into food for reflection over this period, for appreciating what we have managed to hold on to and to keep a positive future at the forefront of our mind. Surround us with your love so that we can be examples to others and best support those around us.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending down to us your beloved son. May we strive to live our lives as he has taught us. Help us to keep faith even in the hardest times and trust that you are with us as we struggle with our own temptations. Give us the courage to gladly proclaim the good news and to not be shy about what we believe. We pray that you send down your love on those persecuted for their beliefs and help us to encourage learning and acceptance for those different to ourselves, instead of suspicion and hate.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, we thank you for our beautiful planet. May we never forget to be in awe of your creation and to treat it with the respect it deserves. We pray for those affected by the extreme conditions and weather phenomenon around the world. May they see the rainbow in the midst of devastation and know brighter times are ahead. We thank you for the relief work of charities, aid agencies, and governments who risk much to provide the things people need to get by.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, we thank you for each other and the parts we play in looking out for those around us. We thank you for our church community here at St John's, the wider community of Midsomer Norton and all the links we have to others far and wide. This week we focus our prayers on the residents of Chapel Row, Chapel Road & Chapel Court.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who are unwell, for Rachael Macfarlane, Miranda Cooper, Rose Stenner, Paul & Margaret Knott, Irene Leet, Fr Roy Boots, Nicholas Hambleton, Betty Chiplin, Ethan Horwood, John Lewis, Patricia Flagg, Pat Gilham, Bishop Peter Hancock, Vince Marriot, Christopher Watts, Faye McDermott, John Norman, Joan Martindale and those we remember now in the quietness of our own hearts. We ask that they can feel your healing presence. We thank you for those caring for them, whether family and friends at home or staff in hospitals.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the souls of those the anniversaries of whose deaths occurs this week -(M) Norman Edgell, Hilda Heaney, Jack Tucker (T) Gerald Wills, Ruth Greenaway (W) Thomas Keevil, Edward Landry, Wilfred Dowling, Edna Gannaway, David Cox (T) Violet Crocker, Reginald Pratten (F) Dorothy Lea. Comfort those who mourn them, especially at this time and help them to remember the fond memories of their loved ones.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Post Communion

Lord God,
you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him who is the true and living bread,
and enable us to live by every word
that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THIS WEEK

TUESDAY 23 February	10am – 12 Noon	Private Prayer
THURSDAY 25 th February	7.00pm – 8.30pm	Lent course via Zoom
SUNDAY 28 February	9.30 am	Holy Eucharist

LENT COURSE

Our Lent Course this year is being held on Thursday evenings 7.00pm to 8.30pm via Zoom. The Pilgrim Course entitled [The Eucharist](#).

Please let me know if you would like to join us on this journey through Lent. I will require your email address for the zoom link, which you will receive on Thursday afternoon every week. I will also deliver the Course booklet to your home.

I look forward to our Lenten journey,

Guy

vicarmsnstjohns@gmail.com or tel: 412904

Women's World Day of Prayer zoom service is being arranged for Thursday 5th March at 11am. If you would like to join in this time of prayer, which is being coordinated by Kathy Dymond of the Methodist church, please contact me and I will make sure you get the service book and then give your details to Kathy so she can attach them to the zoom meeting.

Beth

Church Family News

Patricia Flagg has had her operation and is now back home on the route to recovery from her hip replacement.

Joan Martindale is at present having convalescence care after her operation but hopes to be home soon.

Because of Covid Restrictions

A reminder to let Carol know by email or phone if you hope to be able to come to our 9.30am service on Sunday 28th February (carolmoore226@yahoo.com or 01761 412226)

For further information please refer to our website www.stjohnschurch.org.uk

Third National COVID 19 Lockdown

In the light of guidance from Her Majesty's Government, the Church of England and the Diocese of Bath and Wells, our Parish Church will be open for public worship, private prayer, and funerals.

The Parish Eucharist will be celebrated on Sundays at 9.30am. This this will be recorded and streamed on our YouTube channel at 11.00am.

The church will be open for private prayer on Tuesdays from 10.00am to 12noon.

During lockdown the population are asked to stay at home. Public worship is permitted so long as the provision can show that it is COVID-safe.

We encourage everyone to follow this guidance:

Persons with any symptoms should not attend church.

Persons shielding (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable) should not be in wider circulation during the third national lockdown (commenced 5th Jan 2021).

We advise that anyone with an underlying health condition such as asthma or heart disease or in the clinically vulnerable group through age (70 years of age and over) should not attend public worship at this time.

Definitions for CEV and CV are available on the [NHS website](#).

Thank you for your cooperation and stay safe.