



*Welcome to*  
St John the Baptist, Midsomer Norton  
28<sup>nd</sup> 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](#).

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***Please pray for:-***

**The Residents of:** Fosse Green, Springfield Heights, Springfield Place and Chapel Lawns.

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

**Years Mind:-** (S) Harold Cox, Dorothy Sugden, Dorothy Pugh, Sarah Dentus (M) Elizabeth Proctor, Michael Glenville (T) Minnie Nason, Maud Comer (W) Leonard Carter, Brian Fear, Alfred Wilton, Vinka Hill.

## **The Collect**

Almighty God,  
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,  
that they may return to the way of righteousness:  
grant to all those who are admitted  
into the fellowship of Christ's religion,  
that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession,  
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;  
through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

## **A Reading from the book of Genesis chapter 17 verses 1-2 & 15 & 16.**

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you and will make you exceedingly numerous.' Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.'

God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.’

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 8 verses 31 – 38**

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, O Christ**

## A Reflection from Fr Guy

*“For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?”*

Last week, in our Gospel reading, Jesus was baptised by John and a voice from heaven, the voice of God, declared that Jesus was “my Son, the Beloved”. After this act of commitment and affirmation Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to work out the implications of his revealed identity and how to live out that identity in accordance with God’s will.

Mark doesn’t go into details of the temptations Jesus faces, but from Matthew and Luke we get an idea of what they were: the temptation to be a Messiah of miracles and dramatic signs; to perform superhuman feats to prove that God will protect him and to take for himself kingship and power over all the known world.

Jesus deals with each of these temptations in turn and holds steadfastly to his commitment to do things God’s way and not his own.

This week we see a similar pattern of events, this time involving the disciples of Jesus, especially Peter.

Peter has just made his memorable declaration that Jesus is the Messiah. His voice echoes the voice of God claiming Jesus as his Son, the Beloved.

Jesus now tries to teach the disciples what he understands the role of the Messiah to be: a painful understanding reached through hardship in the wilderness and a great personal struggle with temptation.

Peter has not gone through this process as Jesus has. For him, and the others, it is still quite inconceivable that God’s Anointed One should suffer and die; it

goes against everything they have always believed about the Messiah. Even after all these centuries, it is no easier for us to understand the strange form that God's victory takes.

Now Peter's voice echoes the voice of the tempter in the wilderness. Jesus hears that voice disguised in the voice of a friend which is perhaps much more difficult to resist.

Once again, Jesus turns on the one he calls Satan, who is using Peter to undermine his integrity and strength of purpose. Once again, Jesus insists that it is the things of God, the divine things, that must come first, not self-interest and worldly concerns.

Then Jesus has to explain to his disciples, and to us, what it will cost to follow him and to try to live like him.

Jesus says, "If any want to become my followers let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me."

Especially in Lent we perhaps tend to think that "denying ourselves" is something to do with giving up things we enjoy, be it wine, chocolates, music, dancing or television. Or we might even think of it as some kind of punishment for our sins.

But perhaps there's a different way of understanding it.

We don't know what form "Satan" took when Jesus was in the wilderness, but it clearly was something Jesus recognised as being in opposition to God. In our Gospel reading it's the voice of Peter that tries to pull Jesus away from his intended path.

Now Jesus is saying to those around him, and to us, that if we're serious about following him we are going to have to resist our own inner voice which tries to distract us. And that won't be easy. Our own inner demons know only too well where our particular weaknesses lie and they may have nothing to do with chocolate, wine or time-wasting.

Perhaps our weaknesses lie in enjoying gossip, hearing and passing on rumours; making judgements without knowing the whole story; reacting with impatience when we're annoyed in some way or breaking rules for our own advantage.

We each have our very own temptations and failings, and these are what we need to deny ourselves; the things we need to recognise and bring to God asking for forgiveness, healing and the grace to begin again.

Jesus' message is that having everything we want and having everything going our own way is worthless if in achieving that we have sacrificed our integrity, our honesty and our identity as God's beloved child in whom he is well pleased.

Jesus' message is that even if our lives in worldly terms seem lacking in achievement, possessions, or status, but we still have our integrity, that we are true to ourselves, and follow what we believe to be God's will for us, then we have a life caught up in divinity and in the eternal kingdom of God.

## Prayers of Intercession by Tony Daniels

God of all creation, fill our souls with Your love and light. Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world. Help us to set our minds not on earthly things but on divine things. Let us never shrink back from who we are in You or hide our light inside ourselves or be ashamed of our faith and of Christ's words. Renew in us a sense of joy, remove the dark shadows around us with Your light, Your love and Your salvation.

Lord in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

God of power and might, Your broken world cries out from the depths, a world dominated by the darkness of the pandemic, by war, terror, pain and suffering. We pray for the people of Myanmar and the Uighur people of China; we pray for individuals wrongly imprisoned; and we pray for the work of the United Nations as they search for solutions, for unity and for peace. We share the pain and anguish of those who have had to flee from their homes, countries and livelihoods, who risk their lives, desperate for a new start from fear and war. May they feel Your light, feel Your strength and power and know the truth of Your promise that we shall not be overcome by the dark shadows of life or the darkness of human nature.

Lord in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

We pray for the church international and national, we pray for Justin, our Archbishop, for Bishops Peter and Ruth, and for the clergy in our diocese. May they continue to provide leadership and wisdom to their congregations, and strength and comfort to those in need. And we pray for our political leaders as they plot their way through the uncertain road of the pandemic. Let their words be translated into actions, let the strong arms of those in government enclose all who are in need, whether the need is one of health, job security, or loneliness and homelessness.

Lord in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, give Your healing presence to all who weep; to the sick and lonely; the aged and dying. Gracious God give skill, sympathy and compassion to all who are caring for the sick and your wisdom to those searching for a cure. We give thanks for the extraordinary advances made by scientists, researchers and volunteers in finding answers to Covid-19. Strengthen them with Your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health. Give the song of joy to all who are on the road to recovery and recuperation and the song of thanks to all who helped them on that road. We pray for Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, that he may be restored to health. And we pray especially for those on our prayer list: Miranda Cooper, Rose Stenner, Paul & Margaret Knott, Irene Leet, Fr Roy Boots, Nicholas Hambleton, Betty Chiplin, Ethan Horwood, Patricia Flagg, Pat Gilham, Bishop Peter Hancock, Vince Marriot, Christopher Watts, Faye McDermott, John Norman, Joan Martindale, Daphne Spooner. And for those we name quietly in our hearts.

Lord in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Dear Father, we thank You for the joy of human love and for the friendship of all those among whom we live and work. We pray particularly for our community here in Midsomer Norton, we give thanks to the generosity of our neighbours and to the many volunteers who continue to help those in need. This week we pray especially for the residents of Fosse Green, Springfield Heights, Springfield Place and Chapel Lawns.

Lord in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

We give thanks and gratitude for the life and example of Captain Sir Tom Moore who has recently died. And in our year's mind we pray for (S) Harold Cox, Dorothy Sugden, Dorothy Pugh, Sarah Dentus (M) Elizabeth Proctor, Michael Glenville (T) Minnie Nason, Maud Comer (W) Leonard Carter, Brian Fear, Alfred Wilton, Vinka Hill. Their life's work over may they rest in peace in Your nearer presence.

Lord in Your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

And so, rejoicing in the fellowship of Mary, John and all the Saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to Your unfailing love.

Merciful Father, *accept these prayers for the sake of Your son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

## **Post Communion**

Almighty God,

you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:

keep us both outwardly in our bodies,

and inwardly in our souls;

that we may be defended from all adversities

which may happen to the body,

and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **THIS WEEK**

<b>TUESDAY</b> 02 March	10am – 12 Noon 2.00 pm	Private Prayer Funeral of Betty Emery
<b>THURSDAY</b> 04 March	7.00pm – 8.30pm	Lent course via zoom
<b>FRIDAY</b> 05 March	11.00am	Women's World Day of Prayer via Zoom
<b>SUNDAY</b> 07 March	9.30 am	Holy Eucharist

**Women's World Day of Prayer** zoom service is being arranged for Friday 5th March at 11am. If you would like to join in this time of devotion, 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**

John Norman is now off a ventilator and is slowly improving in hospital with the help of physiotherapy.

### **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 07 March ([carolmoore226@yahoo.com](mailto:carolmoore226@yahoo.com) or 01761 412226

*For further information please refer to our website [www.stjohnschurch.org.uk](http://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 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.