



Welcome to
St John the Baptist, Midsomer Norton
The 3rd Sunday of Lent
07.03 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: Station Road, Wellow Brook Court & Wellow Brook Meadow, Valley Walk & Welton Vale.

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:- (W) Olive Brooks, Alex Ruddock, Annie Wilcox, Freda Button (Th) Isabella Ford, Dorothy Porter, Ralph Blatchford, Christina Carpenter (F) Iris Hamilton.

The Collect

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, 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 Exodus chapter 20 v 1 – 17

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work? you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

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 John chapter 2 v 13 – 22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' They then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

This is the Gospel of the Lord, **Praise to you, O Christ**

A Reflection from Fr Guy

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

Throughout its history, the human race has built monuments to whatever it held sacred. Some have survived the ravages of war and weather – Stonehenge, Roman temples, the Pyramids. In cities all over the world there are glorious cathedrals, reminding Christians of the presence of God in the bustle of our daily lives. We are reminded of God’s faithfulness when we consider how old the buildings are, and yet, paradoxically, we know that even in these massive cathedrals we have “no abiding city”. We know from bitter experience that these inspirational buildings have no intrinsic permanence, and can be destroyed in times of war or of natural disaster – witness Coventry and Dresden cathedrals, or more recently Christ Church cathedral, New Zealand.

So too, once the Israelites had left their nomadic life, they built their Temple, a truly magnificent place, dedicated to worship, and reminding God’s people of their special relationship with him.

But rules began to take precedence over the Spirit of the place. Flawless animals had to be sacrificed, and Roman coinage wasn’t allowed. So livestock was sold and money changers provided the Temple currency. Business flourished on the back of religion. Yet housed in this same Temple were the commandments, given by God so that his people could rightly order their lives. The contrast between the life envisaged by these commandments, a life of love and respect for God and neighbour, and the life being demonstrated by the guardians of the Temple, shocked Jesus.

He was surely more angry about the abuse of people by the shady dealings of the traders and money changers than he was by the misuse of the Temple. He knew his religion should be life-giving and liberating, not bound up by rules that gave easy opportunities for exploiting people. Jesus knew that true religion was not practised on pagan volcanoes nor in sacred temples, but in one’s heart, through the Spirit of God. The Temple that Jesus cleansed could and would be destroyed, but the temple of God within the human soul will not, and cannot, perish.

People often mistakenly refer to Coventry's two cathedrals, the old and the new, but there is in fact only one cathedral in Coventry, one cathedral that is a witness to hate and pain and is an equally potent witness to love and forgiveness. Prayers of forgiveness are found on its shattered walls, and nails from the burned-out roof have been made into crosses that are in churches all over the world – symbols of reconciliation.

To walk through Coventry's one cathedral, from the bombed part to the new, is to experience death and new life. Likewise, as we walk through our own lives, we experience death and new life. We share the same potential for hate, fear and a lust for power that possessed the people who crucified Jesus – the human characteristics that always try to kill God. But always there is the possibility of putting our dark side behind us and seeing Christ, risen from the cross, beckoning to us.

God is not contained in temples, churches or cathedrals, so he is not destroyed by the death of those buildings. Whatever we try to do to God, he rises again and he lives in human hearts. This is the power of the Easter story, that it tells and retells this truth so dramatically. The crucifixion and all the events of Easter are evidence that people may abuse and kill each other, witness the continuing situation in Syria and other areas of conflict throughout God's world, they may even abuse and try to kill God, but ultimately they and their hateful efforts will fail.

Perhaps that is one of the sobering, and yet at the same time inspiring, lessons of Good Friday and Easter: our lack of real power. We can destroy whole cities with one bomb, including their cathedrals, but we cannot destroy God. We can't destroy the love he pours into the world; we can't destroy hope or a sense of justice and compassion. We are the indestructible temple of God. In the sanctuary of our temple he lives and will never die. We are the living stones of God's Church, housing the commandment to love and taking that love to others.

Prayers of Intercession by Linda Broadhurst

Everlasting God, be with us in this time of prayer and help us to feel your presence. You have taught us to overcome our sins with prayer, fasting and generosity, accept our Lenten disciplines and when we fall by our weakness raise us up by your unfailing mercy.

During this period of Lent, give us an awareness of your unique sacrifice on our behalf and teach us to be humble in acknowledging that all our gifts come from you for the service of people and the spread of your Kingdom. May you live in us so that in all our small acts of sacrifice the light of your resurrection may shine through and give them meaning.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer

Faithful God we pray for the church throughout the world and especially for our Diocese of Bath & Wells. We give thanks to Bishop Peter and Bishop Ruth that they may give guidance to all of the Clergy in our Diocese. We pray for the churches in our Deanery and for all the churches in Midsomer Norton. We give thanks to Fr. Guy our parish priest, for his guidance and leadership.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer

Creator God, we pray for the governments of the world, that they may always seek for peaceful solutions in their dealings with other nations and rule their own countries with compassion and justice. At this time of the worldwide Pandemic we especially pray for the leaders of our country, as they seek to help manage the challenges of the economic impact of the virus, in travel, manufacturing, hospitality, energy and so many other industries.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our families, friends and neighbours and for the people with whom we work or share our daily lives. We pray for those who are lonely, those isolated because of Coronavirus and those who find it difficult to make friends or be accepted. We think of all the students who will be returning to school this coming week after their time of home learning because of the 3rd lock down.

This week we remember in our prayers the residents of: Station Road, Wellow Brook Court & Wellow Brook Meadow, Valley Walk & Welton Vale.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer

Gracious God, we pray for all who are in pain or are suffering at this time. We remember especially those who are facing long or incurable illnesses. In a moment of quietness we pray for them and any we know who are in any kind of need at this time. We pray for Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, that he may be restored to health. We particularly pray 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. 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

Merciful God, we pray for those we love but see no longer. Grant them your peace, let light perpetual shine upon them, May they rest in peace and rise in glory. We pray for the souls of those the anniversaries of whose deaths occurs this week (W) Olive Brooks, Alex Ruddock, Annie Wilcox, Freda Button (Th) Isabella Ford, Dorothy Porter, Ralph Blatchford, Christina Carpenter (F) Iris Hamilton.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer

Faithful God, as we turn from our worship into the week ahead, we thank you for the help you give us to resist the temptations that will assail in the weeks ahead.

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. Amen

Post Communion

Merciful Lord,
grant your people grace to withstand the temptations
of the world, the flesh and the devil,
and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THIS WEEK

TUESDAY 09 March	10am – 12 Noon	Private Prayer
THURSDAY 11 March	7.00pm – 8.30pm 11.15 am	Lent course via zoom Funeral of Jennifer Allen
SUNDAY 14 March	9.30 am	Holy Eucharist Mothering Sunday

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 14 March (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.