

St Nicholas, Chislehurst

Weekly News



8th January 2021

CHURCH DIARY (All services Livestreamed on our Facebook page)

Sun 10th Jan 0930 Parish Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer) Celebrant: Rev'd Harriet Johnson. Preacher: Mrs Lynton Golds. Lynton's sermon is at the end of this Newsletter.

Sun 17th Jan 0930 Parish Eucharist (Common Worship) Celebrant: Rev'd Harriet Johnson.

Tue 19th Jan 1930 Collation, Induction and Installation of Rev'd Dr Jonathan Bauer as 53rd Rector of St Nicholas by the Bishop of Rochester, Rt Rev'd James Langstaff and the Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley, The Ven. Dr Paul Wright

OUR BROADCASTS These will be on our Facebook video page:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/stnicholaschislehurst/videos/?ref=page_internal

You do not have to have a Facebook account to take part in or watch our services. However, you might see a message asking you to sign in or create an account, where you will also see an option "not now" which you should click, and the message will disappear. If you still can't access the service, please try deleting your cookies/caches.

If you do not manage to see them live, they remain on the page to view later.

Organ music for January 10th – The Baptism of Christ

Before Service:

The Holy Boy – John Ireland

At the Preparation of the Altar

Chorale: *How brightly shines the Morning Star* – Philipp Nicolai

Hymn: *Lord, for the years*

Concluding Voluntary:

Epiphany Recessional – David Blackwell

REV'D JONATHAN'S ARRIVAL

Rev'd Jonathan is now in residence at the Rectory, but doesn't start work until after his service on 19th.

Unfortunately, attendance at the service on 19th is limited to very few people but please do join the service via our Facebook page.

As best we can at the moment, let's give Jonathan and Aftab a proper Chislehurst welcome.

EUCCHARIST It has been a few weeks since Holy Communion was celebrated at St Nicholas church and we will now resume Eucharist services. As the church is closed, Holy Communion will be shared between the Celebrant, preacher and camera operator on behalf of us all. We hope there is comfort in this.

EPIPHANY Wednesday was the feast of the Epiphany, marking the visit of the Three Wise Men to Bethlehem. Rev'd June placed the Kings in our nativity scene and then took a picture so we can all see.

Three Wise men, (also known as Maji or Astrologers) saw an amazing star and set out on a long and difficult journey to discover its' significance. They believed it marked the birth of a king, so they brought special gifts with them, gold for kingship, frankincense for priesthood and myrrh, a sign of death. But, above all, they brought themselves.

They found the baby Jesus and his mother Mary and Joseph in very humble surroundings, not in a palace as they had expected. They were filled with joy and knelt before him, worshipped him and presented their gifts. Their coming and their worship is the Epiphany, the showing forth of the Christ to the Gentiles, people other than the Jews, revealing Jesus to the whole world and to us. Our reminder through the year of the Epiphany will be the stars, shining brightly in our troubled world. Jesus, the Light of the World came, and is with us now and forever.



NATIVITY TABLEAU What a success! Over 650 people have viewed the Nativity Tableau with over 450 watching the entire film! It's the second best engaged video of 2020 on our Facebook page. We've also had some lovely messages through the page saying how pleased people were that we had put something together as it's a highlight of their Christmas normally.

Our thanks to Karen Jenner and Pam Manfo-Marc who put it together.

If you haven't watched it yet, why not do so now. [Click this link](#)

CHRISTMAS APPEAL The Christmas Appeal is now closed and raised a whopping £6,500 for our four charities. Thank you all so very much.

CHURCHES AND THE LOCKDOWN Following the announcement on Monday of the Lockdown, The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who chairs the Church of England's Covid Recovery Group, said:

"The Prime Minister's words tonight underline the severity of the situation for the country, as the virus continues to spread rapidly. At a time like this, the Church is here to offer comfort and spiritual support to everyone. We have a duty to care for each other, but particularly those who are vulnerable or who may be most at risk.

"The Government has chosen not to suspend public worship in England at this time and we will continue to follow the guidance and ensure that churches remain as safe as possible. The Government guidance on the safe use of places of worship makes clear that those attending a place of worship must not mingle with anyone outside their household or support bubble.

"However, some may feel that it is currently better not to attend in person, and there will be parishes which decide to offer only digital services for the time-being. Clergy who have concerns, and others who are shielding, should take particular care and stay at home.

"I would urge everyone in our churches to pray for those on the front line in our public services - the NHS and those working in social care, for schools and many others on whom we depend; and for parents and carers of children at this anxious and stressful time.

"There is hope. The vaccination programme is underway and, as Christians, we have a deeper hope in God that comforts us beyond fear itself. As we have been remembering this Christmas Season, even in the midst of our darkest fears, that hope brings light."

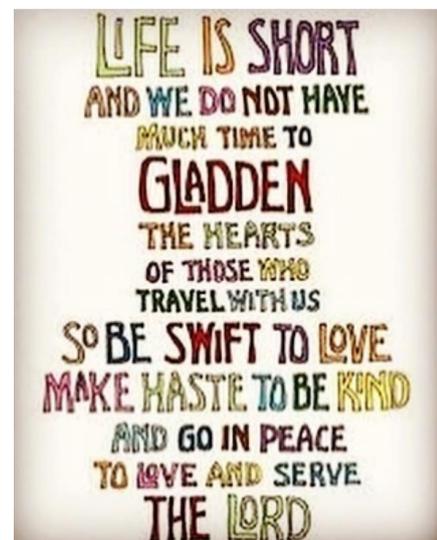
WE INCLUDE IN OUR PRAYERS:

All those in key jobs who are keeping us safe.

And: Alexandra Abels, Angela Anderson, Yvonne Auld, Isabelle Burman, Valerie Burn, Betty Court, Brigitte Davies, Carol Dixon, Eugenia Footman, Michelle Fribbens, Maureen Fricker, Joanna Friel, Gillian Harris, Elizabeth Heath, Max Lardner, Ken Lye, Eric Mountford, The Mouzouri family, Denise Payne, Jeanne Pearce, Judy Peebles, Maria Petrovan, Penny Pinto, Brenda Pocha, Ruth Radley, Peter Rawlins, Rachel Saxby, Lucy Shelford, Tim Shields, Sir Roger Sims, Joe Stashko, Pat Taylor and Anne-Louise Whittaker.

If you know of anyone who should be receiving these emails but isn't getting them, please do let us know – or get them to contact us.

If you have anything for inclusion in our weekly newsletter, please send it to stnickschislehurst@icloud.com



THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST : LUKE 2 V 41-52

As parents, relatives, teachers, guardians and friends of children we are all, and rightfully should be, concerned for their well-being. We are there to protect and teach them, nurture and nourish their lives, ensure their health and safety. But however old we are – from time to time - we all need someone to look out for us.



Growing up means establishing our identity and figuring out our place in this world. It involves creating relationships, setting priorities, making decisions, choosing which values and beliefs will structure our lives. Along the way, we understandably make mistakes, get lost, backtrack, and sometimes just need to start over. Ultimately, growing up means moving out and finding a new home. This may be a geographical move, but it can also involve psychological or spiritual moves.

Time for a short story! Have any of you ever lost sight of your children? I remember my mother taking me and my sister shopping to Lewisham market. My sister got bored and wandered off on her own. The next thing I remember was my mother being scared out of her wits not knowing where she was. My sister assumed our mother would know where she was and come and find her. Of course, my mother panicked as she began looking all over the market. Eventually, my mother turned to the police and immediately, her fear turned into relief when she saw my sister sitting in the police station. But then one second later, her relief turned into anger, and she screamed at my sister saying “Where have you been? Do you know what you put me through? Don’t you ever leave my sight again!”

So, it is no surprise that Mary, like any mother, would be in a panic when she discovers that her son, Jesus is not with their group of travellers. With great anxiety she and Joseph search for him. Three days later the one who was lost has been found and Mary’s first words are not too different from my mother’s! “Child, why have you treated us like this?”

What we are really hearing is, “Where have you been young man? Your father and I did not survive angel visits, giving birth in a manger, and living like refugees in Egypt only to have you get lost in Jerusalem.”

But Jesus isn’t the one who is lost. Jesus knows who he is and where he belongs. Jesus was becoming a man and was developing his relationship with God in God’s house, the Temple in Jerusalem.

So, today’s gospel is a story about growing up but it is not just about Jesus’ growing up. It is about Mary and Joseph’s own growth. It is about us and our growth. This is not about how old we are. It is about moving into a deeper and more authentic

relationship with God, with our world, with each other, and with ourselves which can happen at any age or stage in our lives.

Jesus is the one who helps us grow up. Jesus is the one who helped Mary and Joseph. Children have a way of doing that to their parents. They challenge us to look at our world, our lives, and ourselves in new, different, and sometimes painful ways. That is exactly what Jesus' question to Mary does. "Why were you searching for me?" he asks. "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Jesus is telling Mary she should have known where he was. It is as if he is saying, "Remember, what the angel told you that I would be the Son of God. Remember that night in Bethlehem. Angels praising God, shepherds glorifying God. Remember the three men from the East, their gifts, and adoration.

Remember Joseph's dreams that guided us to Egypt and back. Where else could I be but here?" Jesus has put God the Father at the centre of his world and asks Mary, Joseph and us to do the same, he is inviting us all to move to the Father's home.

Real growth also involves letting go. Mary's step towards growing up, meant her realising that she would have to let go of her "boy Jesus" and the image she had of him. Jesus was born of Mary but he was the Father's Son. Jesus is with Mary but he does not belong to her. Mary has to accept that Jesus is now about his Father's business. Ultimately, Mary must strive to be like Him and not make Him like her.

This is not Jesus rejecting his earthly parents but a re-prioritising and growing of the relationship between them. It is what Jesus would later ask of Simon and Andrew, James and John. "Follow me" would be the invitation for them to leave their homes, their nets, their families and move to a different place, live a different life, see with different eyes. Today, in our gospel reading, this is what Jesus is asking of us.

Growing spiritually may involve leaving our comfort zone, letting go of what is safe and familiar, and moving to God's better place. This letting go may be necessary if we are to grow in the love and likeness of Christ.

If we think about this for a moment, we all live in many different homes. Homes of fear, anger, and prejudice. Homes of grief and sorrow. Homes in which we have been told or convinced that we don't matter, that we are not enough, that we are unacceptable, or unloved. Homes in which we have been or continue to be hurt or wounded. Homes in which we have hurt or wounded others. Homes of indifference and apathy. Homes of sin and guilt. Homes of gossip, envy, pride. The list is endless.

Every one of us could name different homes in which we live, that keep our lives small, our visions narrow, and our world empty. All too often, we become too comfortable or reluctant to leave these homes. But they do not have to be our true homes. They are not the only homes that God offers us. Jesus invites us into his Father's home where we can know ourselves and each other as his beloved children, created in his image and called to be like him. It is a home in which we can live in rooms of mercy, forgiveness, joy, love, beauty, generosity and compassion.

Growing and possibly leaving our earthly homes means examining and re-prioritising the values, beliefs, and relationships that establish our identity and give our life meaning and significance.

It means letting go of an identity that is limited to our biological family, job, community reputation, ethnic group, or political party and trusting that who we are is who we are in God. It means that we stop relating to one another by comparison, competition, and judgement and begin relating through love, self-surrender, and vulnerability. It means that we let go of fear about the future and discover that God is here in the present and that all will be well. We stop dwelling on past guilt, regrets, and sins and grow to accept the mercy and forgiveness of God and each other. We see our life not in opposition to others but as related to and dependent upon others.

So, I wonder what might we have to leave behind in order to grow up and move to a better place? These can be hard and painful questions.

But Mary's question to Jesus: "Child, why have you treated us like this? Prompts us to remember Jesus' teaching: "Because I love you. I love you enough to grow you up, to find you when you are lost, and to bring you with me into the Father's home."

Finally, Mary and Joseph thought Jesus was lost, but he wasn't. He was right where he was supposed to be. They were the ones who needed to turn around. They were the ones who needed to re-direct their journey. They were the ones who needed to search for Jesus—not because he was lost, but because they were lost without him. All of us would be lost without Jesus. Becoming a Disciple of Christ is our most important journey on earth because it is a journey towards God.

This morning and at the start of a new year, I ask us to consider where we are on that journey. Maybe we're just starting out. Maybe we haven't even started. Maybe we've been journeying with Jesus for years, but somehow our relationship with God has grown stale.

But remember, the Good News is that Jesus is right where he's supposed to be: in our lives - waiting for us to find him. Whatever, 2021 might throw at us, remember God is in our lives and wants us to find him.

Amen

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