

Bexley Team News

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood

St James, North Cray

St John the Evangelist, Bexley

St Mary the Virgin, Bexley



Sunday 13 December 2020 Issue 39

The Third Sunday of Advent

Team Services this Sunday-

There will be a **Team Zoom Service** at 10.00 am. Log-in details have been sent to regular members of our congregations on email. Do contact a member of clergy if you have not received this.

St. James, North Cray 9.30 am Toy Service, supporting Bexley Women's Aid with donations of smaller toys, gift cards, stocking fillers and sweets or chocolates. (new and unwrapped please)

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood - No service in church

St. John's, Bexley 8.00 am Holy Communion 10.00 am Holy Communion

St Mary's, Bexley 10.00 am Family Advent Service 3.30 pm Holy Communion

Wednesday 16 December 10.00 am Team Holy Communion at St John's

Hygiene measures advised by the Church of England are being observed in our churches, which includes disinfecting door handles etc, and having hand sanitiser available, and observing the two-metre proximity rule. Face coverings must be worn. If you feel you are in the at-risk group you might prefer to pray at home and use the many prayer resources available online.

The Collect: O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight: for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

The Additional Collect: God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bible readings Isaiah 61, 1-4, 8- 11, 1 Thessalonians 5, 16-24, John 1, 6-8, 19-28

Reflection

Just recently I have been feeling quite frustrated and cross with life. It all seems to be getting too much. Nice to have a week's break but annoying not to be allowed to go away. Just as Covid good news appears in the form of viable vaccines the Brexit end game brinkmanship begins to play out. Which Tier will we be in after the 16th? ...and what can we and can't we do over Christmas? ... and so on. I'm surely not the only one who is more than a tad overwhelmed with all that is happening at the moment. Hold on to those thoughts and frustrations, we will come back to them.

This Third Sunday of Advent we remember John the Baptist, that austere character who prepared people for the coming of Jesus by calling them to repentance and baptism. No doubt that John had a tough life. He gained a lot of disciples himself but then he had to take a step back and point those disciples towards Jesus. A fearless speaker of the truth John was put in prison by Herod and was subsequently beheaded. Then there were the itchy clothes. Jesus called John the greatest man who had ever lived (Matthew 11 v11) but his life was far from easy.

Both the letter of James and Paul's letter to the Romans encourage us to take a positive attitude towards hardship and suffering, seeing those impostors as a means towards growth in faith, when handled correctly.

James tells us to be joyful (!) in the face of many trials because testing develops perseverance 'and perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything' (James 1 v4). Paul in Romans also sees a progression which can be summarised thus - we rejoice in our sufferings-> because suffering produces perseverance -> perseverance produces character -> character produces hope -> this hope is real and certain because-> it is grounded in God's love shown forth in Christ's death and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5 v3-6).

We might be feeling sorry for ourselves or wishing that the problems were over (ie wishing our lives away?). And I'm sorry if that is just projecting my stuff on to you! But as I said I don't think my feelings are unique by any means. We can find inspiration in the scriptures which encourage us to 'keep on keeping on'. If we are in that self pitying kind of place we can find inspiration in John the Baptizer who strode through it all and pointed to Jesus, 'the author and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12 v2). Rev'd Clive

Team Zoom services

Rev'd Ren writes- It has been really lovely to see so many people joining us for our Team Zoom services and we have been thinking how we might go forward with this. We're mindful that Zoom does not necessarily reach all those who are unable to attend services in our church buildings, and also aware that there is a limit to how far the ministry team can stretch on a Sunday morning!

Our solution is this: -

There will be a Zoom Service on Sunday 13 December at 10.00 am and on Sunday 20 December at 10.00 am

There will be a short Team Zoom Prayers for Christmas Morning at 8.30am.

There will be no Zoom Service on Sunday 27 December.

On Saturday 2 January, as 2021 begins, we will trial a new pattern, which will continue for the winter months, and which we will keep under review. We will be offering a short Zoom Service on **Saturday evenings at 5.30pm**. In Jewish understanding, the Sabbath begins as night falls on the Eve of the Sabbath, and for Christians it is an opportunity to put aside the cares and concerns of the Monday to Saturday week of tasks and activity and to prepare ourselves to keep Sunday as 'a Day of Holy Rest'. This service will include material to help us to reflect on the week that has past and will be suitable for all ages.

Christmas Hampers Update

Rev'd Sue writes- I am pleased to be able to tell you that all the 150 hampers have now arrived in the five schools and are being distributed by the staff to the families. I would like to thank everybody who has made this project possible. I will update you if I get any information from the schools or the families.



Bexley Team Christmas Trail

We are setting up four outdoor activity trails in the grounds of the churches. Each one will be different and will help us tell a part of the Christmas story. From Saturday 19th December – Sunday 3rd January you can visit each one of the churchyards and take part in 'The Christmas Trail'. The trails are designed to be fully outdoors, family friendly and completely free. Do talk to any families you know who might be interested, and if you'd like to, come and have a look for yourself!

'A Special Message!' is at St. Mary's Church

'Look to the Skies' is at St. John's Church

'Follow the Star' is at St. Barnabas Church,

'Any Room in the Inn?' is at St. James's Church,

Deanery Confirmations

Will be on Sunday 18th April 2021 at 6.30pm at Holy Redeemer, Lamorbey with Bishop James. Please speak with any of the Team clergy if you are interested in being confirmed.

Foster Care

There is a pressing need for foster carers across the London Borough of Bexley, and Bexley Council is looking to Churches to find new such carers. The London Borough of Bexley is working alongside Christian charity Home for Good to find new foster carers from within Bexley churches and work with them at providing the

best care possible across the Borough. In a recent church leaders call, their fostering team meeting said that “there are currently no beds in Bexley” meaning children coming into care have to move miles from the Borough. Could you open your home to a vulnerable child or children? For more info about the partnership between Home for Good and Bexley visit homeforgood.org.uk/bexley

St James North Cray

Sunday 20 December 9.30 am Holy Communion 3.00 -5.00 pm Christmas Reflection. The church is decorated for Christmas and will be open for Christmas Reflection with music and readings.

Christmas Eve 11.15 pm JOINT Midnight Communion at St Barnabas

Christmas Day 10.00 am JOINT Christmas Communion at St James North Cray

Sunday 27 December 9.30 am Reflective Communion for the last Sunday of 2020

St Barnabas

St Barnabas is linking with the Christmas Trail and inviting the local community and beyond to join with our **STAR IN THE WINDOW PROJECT**. We are encouraging people to decorate a star and put it in their window over the Christmas period.



The following subject to review-

Saturday 19 December 3-5pm The church will be decorated for Christmas and will be open for Christmas Reflection with music and readings. Come and go as you please within that time.

Sunday 20 December 10.45 am Holy Communion

Christmas Eve 11.15pm JOINT Midnight Communion at St Barnabas

Christmas Day 10.00 am JOINT Christmas Communion at St James North Cray

Sunday 27 December 10.45 am Reflective Communion for the last Sunday of 2020

St. Mary's

Sunday 20th December – 10.00 am Holy Communion 6.00 pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols Admission by ticket only. To book contact Andrew Hill on chaplain.glescouts1@ntlworld.com 07306 330356.

Christmas Eve 11.30 pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 10.30 am Holy Communion

Christmas cards- If you would like to leave Christmas cards for members of St. Mary's in the box in the Churchwarden's pew on your right as you enter the church, Mary will sort them and leave them in the cross-aisle in alphabetical order of surnames. Please be sure that you have written the surnames on the envelopes. Cards not showing a surname will be left in the box. For CV19 reasons, do not search in the box for cards which might be addressed to you.

Friends of St. Mary's- normally you would expect to receive a letter or e-mail at this time of year setting out our programme for the months ahead. You will understand why this has not been possible. Depending on the Covid situation, the Committee of the Friends is hoping to meet in March to draw up plans for the remainder of the year. We will be in touch with you as soon as possible thereafter. In the meantime we hope you are and will continue to be keeping well at this very difficult time. With all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year from Clive, Mary, Sheila, Barbara, Christine, Janet and Jenny (Friend's Committee)

Calendars and Diaries- there is a box at the back of the church, choir vestry side, for any 2021 calendars and/or diaries which are surplus to your requirements. After Christmas, we plan to sell them for church funds.

Clive will be leading a holiday to Austria and Oberammergau including the Passion Play 22-29 June 2022. Brochures and booking forms are at the back of Team churches.

St John's

Giving to St John's: You can give financially to the continuing upkeep and ministry of St John's via our Just Giving page: www.justgiving.com/stjohntheevangelist-bexley

Sermons are posted each Sunday at fatheredwardbarlow.wordpress.com

Social Media - engage with us via Facebook (/stjohnsbexley), Twitter (@stjohnsbexley) and Instagram (@stjohnsbexley)

THE BEXLEY TEAM CLERGY

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