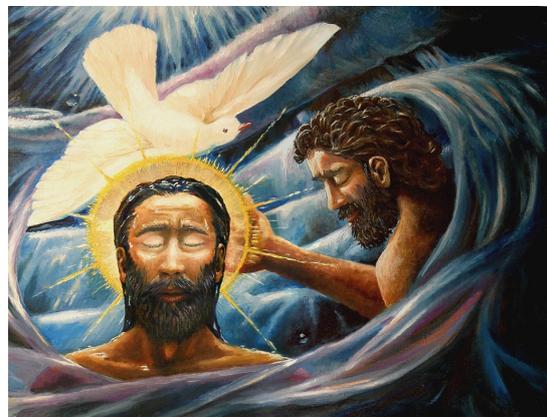


HOLY TRINITY CUCKFIELD

Joyfully serving Jesus



Weekly devotions, prayers and news
The First Sunday of Lent
21 February 2021

'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Dear Friends,

Much is made by different groups and people about difference. I recently undertook unconscious bias training at the behest of the diocese. Yet, whilst we all undoubtedly bear marks of difference, a little nagging voice at the back of my head kept recalling the words of Paul, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' This is from Galatians (3: 28), an Epistle which I find particularly helpful on my journey.

Ultimately, as brothers and sister who are baptised in Christ, we are called to acknowledge that it doesn't matter who or what you are. We are called to see Christ in each other. I don't believe that defining yourself by one aspect of your persona gives the world the richness of your whole being. Modern theologians propose new pairings: 'neither gay nor straight, neither healthy nor disabled, neither black nor white,' which certainly gives us some sense of societal concerns. Yet ultimately, the most important part of the passage is, 'you are all one in Christ.' In other word, difference talks of the facets of life, but for wholeness - the bigger picture - God loves us whoever or whatever. The divine longing is for us to always journey in deepening that knowledge of just how much we are loved, revealed in following Jesus Christ and then spreading the news to others. We are cherished.

With blessings,

Michael

Please check the church website for more details:
www.holytrinitycuckfield.org

First Sunday of Lent (21 February 2021)

9.45 The Parish Eucharist (online only)

Readers: Robyn Brotherton & Valerie Poxon; Intercessor: Isobel Simmonds

4.30pm Ignite—our new service for the young and young at heart

Services during the week:

Wednesday: 10.30 Holy Communion (Common Worship) Readings: Jonah Chap 3; Luke 11: 29-32
8.00pm Lent Course (Zoom)

Thursday: 9.00am Holy Communion (Iona/Celtic) Readings: Esther 14: 1-5, 12-14; Matthew 7: 7-12

Friday: 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) Readings: First Sunday of Lent
3.00pm Lent Course (Zoom)

Next Sunday: Second Sunday of Lent (28 February 2021)

9.45 Parish Eucharist (online only)

All services (other than the 8.30) live on Zoom: Click the blue link on the front page of the church website before services, entering a waiting 'area' before joining everyone.

The Collect First Sunday of Lent

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.
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

The Post Communion Prayer:

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

Genesis 9: 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.'

1 Peter 3: 18-end

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Mark 1: 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 for 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.'

A thought

On this first Sunday of Lent, the third part of our Gospel reading is a call from Jesus to each one of us together with the full purpose of Jesus' ministry to the whole of humanity:

The Time has come: A call about here and now, not something to deal with tomorrow. Jesus calls you now!

The Kingdom of God is near: The Kingdom is not a place or even heaven, but the loving grace of God seen in the face of Jesus Christ and working within us to bring about our transformation; to know the overflowing grace of God revealed though journeying with Jesus – a grace started with our baptismal journey. We are called to be signs of the Kingdom.

Repent: This is not some airy-fairy concept dreamt up by the Church to create a self-loathing within. This is the call from Jesus to a lifelong journey of transformation - liberation from the destructive forces within our own lives. Jesus is not asking us to do or not to do something to shape our future in Heaven; he is concerned with the here and now. We are constantly called to turn to God through the example of Jesus – to approach the world through self-giving Love.

Believe in the Gospel: We are called to know that the Gospel – the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God – as Mark proclaims in verse one of his Gospel – is indeed transformation for Christians started though the waters of Baptism, together with the call to share with others the Good News of true life to be found through him.

Here is the Lenten call to us all: **now** is the time to deepen our knowledge of the love God bears for each of us through his Son; **now** is the time to allow ourselves the time to journey with him; **now** the time to know that through our transformation in the knowledge of the Good News he imparts that we also help to transform the world. As we journey with Jesus, may our **Faith** be nourished, our **Hope** increased, and our **Love** strengthened.

A prayer for this time of anxiety:

God of all compassion, your love never fails. Help us to listen to the tranquillity of your presence within our lives, so that we may grow in the knowledge that your Son, Jesus Christ, walks beside us, and your Holy Spirit comforts us at the heart of our being; for you are One God, world without end. Amen

Please remember those for whom we pray:

Immediate need: Barbara Booth, Wendy Boys, Carla Spear, Wendy Hibling, Nicholas Frayling, Ben Brindley Codd, Ken Sagar, Justine, Hannah Peattie, Sheila Mitchell

Long Term Need: Young Georgia, Young Joshua, Julia Settle, Young Reggie, Ros Ayling, Wendy, Ann Went, Dave Cox, Jenny, Julie Sadler, Becky & Mark Parker, Tony Burbidge, Christopher, Jenny, Marjorie Chilton, Janet Card, Yvonne Godsmark, George Snashall, Eileen Knight, Mary Todd, Gracie & Lucy Neiff, Reg Ruddock, Heather Hollis, **Those in Care Homes:** Anne Norris, Alan Prebble, Stephanie Gilpin, Jill Rockey, Jean Simmons, Mary Watts, Diana Hoile, Ruth Baker

Please remember the recently departed and their families: Geoffrey Boore

In our Book of Remembrance this week we remember: 22nd Leigh McKay, 24th Heidi Simpson, 25th Eric McMillar, Mogens Keir, Auguste Thompson, Sheena Berkeley, 26th Cyril Barton, Michael Ditt, 27th Trevor Robbins