

HOLY TRINITY CUCKFIELD

Joyfully serving Jesus



Weekly devotions, prayers and news

Fourth Sunday of Advent

19th December 2021

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb

My dear friends,

I always find the account of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth touching. There is such human emotion displayed. A young girl, pregnant and perhaps fearful, the older woman also unexpectedly expecting a child. A greeting from Mary, and the leap of John the Baptist in his mother's womb. It is all so rooted in our humanity. The wondrous words of Elizabeth honouring her cousin reflect just why she (and we) are drawn to this moment.

In the midst of the rubbish of so much in our lives at present, we are all called to hear the greeting of Mary and then to reflect, as Elizabeth did, that our Faith celebrates the unity of God and humanity through the person of Jesus Christ. Let us, as we approach Christmas, allow Christ to abide in our hearts and enable us through the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the love borne for all by Jesus: true God, true man, true life.

With love,

Michael

Church website www.holytrinitycuckfield.org

Fourth Sunday of Advent (19th December 2021)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

Readers: Ralph Colbran & Margaret Thistlethwaite

9.45 Family Christingle, Carols and Nativity *(in church and online)*

6.00 Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols *(in church and online)*

Services during the week:

Wednesday: 10.30 Holy Communion (C. Worship) *(in church & online)*

Readings: 1 Samuel i: 24-end; Luke 1: 46-56

Thursday: 9.00 Holy Communion (Iona/Celtic) *(in church & online)*

Readings: Malachi 3: 1-4, 4: 5-end; Luke 1: 57-66

Christmas Eve: 2.30 & 4pm Crib Services *(in church & online - see website to book)*

4pm Stable Service *(in The Old School- see website to book)*

11.15pm Midnight Mass *(in church & online- see website to book)*

Christmas Day: 8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

9.45 Family Eucharist *(in church and online - see website to book)*

Next Sunday: Stephen, Deacon and Proto Martyr (26th December 2021)

9.45 Family Eucharist *(in church and online)*

For services live on Zoom: Click the blue link on the front page of the church website

The Collect for Fourth Sunday of Advent

Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this
present age to see, with her,
our great salvation
in 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:

Heavenly Father,
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of the promised saviour:
fill us your servants with your grace,
that in all things we may embrace
your holy will
and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Micah 5: 2-5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the timewhen she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

Hebrews 10: 5-10

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).'

When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Luke 1: 39-45

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

A thought

Luke draws us to know that our faith is relational. God's desire for us is so extraordinary because of its plainness and simplicity, its humbleness and – above all – its RELEVANCE to you and me. The Gospel writer reveals that Mary's 'yes' is directly linked not only to the divine but to each of us here in this building, those online, and indeed for all. That response by Mary is one which she speaks for the whole human race. The history and destiny of humanity has led to this one moment in time and space. Humanity – held in the mind of God since before time began, each one of us held in the mind of God since before time began, has now reached this point a moment when a young girl says 'yes.' The Visitation Luke records might be referred to as a pregnant pause before the radiance of Christ becomes flesh as one of us yet of the Father. God has waited long enough and now is the time which the prophets longed for. A suitable dwelling place for God is found in Mary's womb as He reaches out in time and space to reveal the mystery of his love through the conception of his Son. Mary's wholeheartedness brings about



the transformation of our relationship with God. 'Let it be to me according to your word.' We say 'yes' to God with Mary, not only for ourselves, but for those who live in abject poverty throughout the world, for the abused children and elderly within our own society, for oppressed men, women and children suffering in so many places, for those afflicted by this ghastly Covid pandemic; you can fill in the gaps. We say 'yes' to God for the world. Through Mary's 'yes,' love came down at Christmas – for you and me and for the whole of humanity and through her, the possibility of our 'yes' was also brought about. Elizabeth's unborn child leapt for joy as Mary approached.

We remember the ultimate joy of the knowledge that Jesus Christ was born for each of us - in him is the fullness of life itself.

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, John Bernardi (priest), Maureen Griffiths, Paul Simpson, Tim Burrows, The Parker Family, Eileen knight, David Davidson, Carol Cox, Kevin Sibley

Long Term Need: Young Georgia, Young Joshua, Young Reggie, Anne Greenhill, Ros Ayling, Wendy, Ann Went, Dave Cox, Julie Sadler, Tony Burbidge, Christopher, Janet Card, George Snashall, Mary Todd, Carole Wooldridge, Kate Malby, Wendy Hibling, Yvonne Godsmark, Carla Spear, Pam Sagar,

Those in Care Homes: Alan Prebble, Stephanie Gilpin, Jill Rockey, Jean Simmons, Mary Watts, Ruth Baker, Keith Thompson,

Please remember the recently departed and their families: John Smith, Paul Somers, Wendy Boys

In our Book of Remembrance this week we remember 19th Jack Fleming, 20th George Rowe, Helen Hussey, Irene Sayers, 21st John Handcock, Phyllis Bell, 22nd Maurice Donoghue, 23rd Jim Driver, 24th Amy Barnes, William McKay, Jeremy Tapp, 25th Emily Barnard, Phyllis Taylor