

HOLY TRINITY CUCKFIELD

Joyfully serving Jesus



Weekly devotions, prayers and news

Third Sunday of Advent

12th December 2021

He proclaimed the good news to the people

My dear friends,

Nothing will make us sadder than the terrible suffering and heart-breaking death of little Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. Yet the news is full of other unfathomable deeds; the two policemen jailed for sending out joking messages using the pictures of the bodies of Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry, the stabbing to death of 12 year old Ava White in what seems to be a random attack by a teenager in Liverpool. Merely three cases in a sea of such things, yet each leaves heartbreak and grief for the families involved. The Church seems reluctant to talk about evil in this day and age, yet what else can explain the moral vacuity which stalks some dark areas of our society.

Into this darkness, the words of John the Baptist form a clarion call. He talks in harsh terms about the need to repent. He calls us to 'bear fruits worthy of repentance.' We are to bring Christ into every situation; charged to proclaim that following him is the answer to the fulness of life. Western society needs more faith - not less, and we are baptised through the power of the Holy Spirit to do none other than transform the lives of those we come into contact with through the power of Christ's love. Prayer, action, deeds - all matter and whatever you are able to do will bring light to the darkness.

With love,

Michael

Church website www.holytrinitycuckfield.org

Third Sunday of Advent (12th December 2021)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

Reader: Charles Solomon

9.45 Family Eucharist *(in church and online)*

Readers: Peter & Liz Graydon; Intercessor: David Jamieson

Services during the week:

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

Readings: Isaiah 45: 6b-8,18, 21b-end; Luke 7: 18b-23

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

Readings: Isaiah 54: 1-10; Luke 7: 24-30

Friday: 10.00 & 11.00 Holy Trinity School Christingle Services *(Please note - no Communion Service)*

Next Sunday: Fourth Sunday of Advent (19th December 2021)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

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

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

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

The Collect for Third Sunday of Advent

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,
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:

We give you thanks, O Lord,
for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.
Amen

Zephaniah 3: 14-end

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Philippians 4: 4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Luke 3: 7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

A thought

Do you experience a great weariness at this time of the year as we approach Christmas? Do you feel slightly jaded if you hear Barbra Streisand belting out Jingle Bells over the speakers in the Orchards Centre in Haywards Heath, or tire over the tinsel or flashing lights which surround us. Is it 'bah, humbug' to the whole lot of it – or are you the child at heart, who can't wait for the reindeers pattering across your roof, and the prospect of picking at the turkey on Christmas evening and settling down to watch a Christmas special on the television?

There is inevitably something in these two visions of Christmas which reveals to us the tensions between the secular and the sacred- between the humbug and the lasting glow. There is the enormous pressure for many within Western society for that vision of the 'modern' Christmas – that is, one seemingly focussed and encouraged by the commercial success which shops hope for and encourage. Parents rushing to buy presents which they can't afford, taking out loans to 'spend, spend, spend,' in the words of the late Viv Nicholson, who herself found out that money can sometimes make one very unhappy. Can mere materialism make people happy? Please do not think that I am *anti* the thought of people spending money. However, the great benefit of this season of Advent is to teach us something of the expectancy of looking forward to the coming of the true hope for humanity, Jesus Christ. The wondrous nature of this hope and indeed, **radical fulfilment** for us, is that we don't have to expend anything other than our faith, hope and love in the one who was, who is and is to come. That language of John shakes us up. A

brood of Vipers....not exactly the way to win friends! Yet we need these reminders to shake us from complacency. We should always keep examining how we express our faith to others. Our faith is lived out and revealed by who we are. What John calls us to do is to live lives which are always full of expectancy, lives which reveal to others the joy of knowing the love of that baby who was born for each of us and who loves each one of us with a personal love. As we prepare to celebrate his birth, let's remember that we are called to rejoice in the Lord always. We are to sing aloud, and to reveal his love which (in us and through us) transforms the world.

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, Eileen Knight, Mary Todd, Carole Wooldridge, Kate Malby, Wendy Hibling, Yvonne Godsmark, Carla Spear, Pam Sagar, Wendy Boys

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 Wilcock, Paul Somers

In our Book of Remembrance this week we remember 12th Edith Read, Brian Shrod, 13th Dora Horn, Joan Sowter, 14th Nicholas Martin, Patrick Anscombe, 15th Bill Ridley, 16th Alison Quick, Jack Moulding, Lauren Silverlock, Christopher Bartlett, 17th Michelle Frenzell, Diana Allison, 18th Dorothy Beard, Daisy Kent