

HOLY TRINITY CUCKFIELD

Joyfully serving Jesus



Weekly devotions, prayers and news

The Baptism of Christ 9th January 2022

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

My dear friends,

One of the most joyful aspects of my ministry (there are many!) has been baptising people - babies, children and adults. As I always remind those present at the many services I have conducted, the gift of baptism is the start of a life-long journey of growing in faith as part of the Body of Christ - the Church. It is a gift which always continues giving if you are prepared to explore and rejoice in it. Baptism marks the start of the knowledge in a person's life of just how greatly they are loved by God through his Son. This is affirmed by the power of the Holy Spirit, active and present within our lives every step of the way. What could be better?

Rejoice that you are loved beyond measure; rejoice that through baptism you are linked to your brothers and sisters in Christ; rejoice that God calls you to make his Son known through your own ministry. **May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.** (Romans 15:13)

With love,

Michael

Church website www.holytrinitycuckfield.org

The Baptism of Christ (9th January 2022)

8.00 Holy Communion (in church)

Reader: Charles Solomon

9.45 Family Eucharist (in church and online)

Readers: Eileen & Jim Knight; Intercessor: Fr. Stephen Caple

11.15am Family Informal Worship (in church)

6.00 Choral Evensong for Epiphany (in church and online)

Services during the week:

Wednesday: 10.30 Holy Communion (C. Worship) (in church & online) **Aelred of Hexham, Abbot of Rievaulx**

Readings: Philippians 3: 7-14; Luke 12: 32-37

Thursday: 9.00 Holy Communion (Iona/Celtic) (in church & online) **Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, Teacher**

Readings: 1 John 2: 18-25; John 8: 25-32

Friday: 11.00 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) Readings: Epiphany I (in church)

Next Sunday: Second Sunday of Epiphany (16th January 2022)

8.00 Holy Communion (in church)

9.45 Family Eucharist (in church and online)

The Collect for The Baptism of Christ

Heavenly Father,
at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:
may we recognize him as our Lord
and know ourselves to be your beloved children;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
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 of all time and eternity,
you opened the heavens
and revealed yourself as Father
in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:
by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Isaiah 43: 1-7

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, 'Give them up', and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth— everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.'

Acts 8: 14-17

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

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.'

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

A thought

Luke wants us to consider the difference between John's baptism and that which will be accomplished in Jesus' name. John himself compares the water of the baptism he offers to that of the one who comes whose baptism is that of the Holy Spirit and fire. We are also reminded by John that with this grace comes Divine Judgement – a judgement founded in inexpressible love, yet judgement nevertheless.

However, for the Gospel writer the availability of this wondrous mystery to humanity – the opportunity to share in God's love directly - is achieved at Pentecost. John's words here serve as a literary prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit recounted by Luke at the opening of the book of The Acts of the Apostles. Indeed, for Luke, Christ's baptism is represented in very little detail indeed. For him, it is more importantly the revelation of the Divine Confirmation of God's love for his Son to the world.

Luke desires us to know that this baptism is the opportunity for showing the fullness of God's love to humanity through Jesus. The sinless one needs no forgiveness, but rather shares with the baptised the fullness of his true self as a person of the Blessed Trinity. We are drawn to contemplate this as Jesus prays, the Spirit descends upon Jesus in bodily form and God the Father himself identifies his Son to the world. In baptism, we are linked to our Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world. The gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed on us at baptism is one to treasure and develop in our lives as the followers of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Pope John Paul II, described the Baptism of the Lord as a luminous mystery. I appreciate this description as I think that it helps us to understand the nature of the gift of the sacrament of Baptism to us all. That luminosity, that light of the Holy Spirit, is shared by all who are baptised in his name – a precious gift which, if we allow it to grow within us by ever seeking to know Jesus more deeply, sheds God's light not just in those dark places of our own lives, but also of those whose lives we touch.

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,**

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: Paul Somers, Diane Giles

In our Book of Remembrance this week we remember 9th Francis Gill, Margaret Blake, Diana Cahill, Norman Roberts, Audrey Blackburn, 10th Neil Caplan, Ivar Hodges, Kathleen Taylor, Mary Jenner, 11th Walter Armstrong, Revd. Duane Alvord, Richard Halsey, 12th Judith Seabrook, 13th Robert Jameson, John Rhodes, Tom Pritchard, Samuel McCullough, Elspeth Marshall, Mary Parry, Katherine Leask, Phyllis Chatfield, 14th Richard Janvrin, Leonard Starbuck, Dorothy Tuffin, 15th Joan Woodhams, Roger Broome