

PARTNERS

weekly newsletter



17th January 2021 - Epiphany 2

“Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit” (John 15: 1-17)

Who attracts you and why? Pretty? Handsome? Sexy? Mysterious? Charismatic? Desirable? Intelligent? Honest?

John's recorded words of Jesus take us to the heart of intimacy. Intimacy begins with attraction. The gaze of the one needs to be received equally by a gaze in response. Such human mirroring moments put us in touch with something touching divine. This is the nature of love.

What a timely message this is at the beginning of this week of Prayer for Christian Unity provided for us by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp, Switzerland- a time in a disunited world, and an endless desire to be the greatest! “Abide in my love...”

Today's gospel story relates how Philip is attracted to Jesus and draws in Nathaniel to this dance of intimacy- “follow me”. God in Christ continues to gaze lovingly upon all and invites us to the dance! We could say that as Church members we have been attracted and endeavour to ‘follow him’. But, collectively, we have made a mess of it! All Jesus asks of us is to “Abide in my love” as the precursor to bearing much fruit! We must be careful as the Body of Christ not to judge those who find themselves out of love, separated, and estranged when we continue to hide behind our doctrinal walls, exclusively foster our hard fought for traditions, and make it hard for people to believe and belong.

Know again, that the Divine Lover who attracts us, does so knowing ‘we don't have the perfect body of an eighteen year old, but goes on loving us anyway, outdoing us in generosity and receptivity’ (Rhor).

John Towler

St Mary's
Fordingbridge
SP6 1BB

St Mary's
Breamore
SP6 2DF

Holy Ascension
Hyde
SP6 2QJ

St Giles
Godshill
SP6 2JJ

St Boniface
Woodgreen
SP6 2AJ

St Mary's
Hale
SP6 2RF

Sandleheath
Uniting Church
SP6 1PT

We welcome all, especially visitors and those attending for the first time. If you need gluten free wafers at Communion, please speak to someone at the door before the service.

Please take this newsletter home with you for the week ahead. Please stay after the morning service for tea and coffee, to meet folk and ask any questions. **God Bless**

Readings for this week

17th January 2021

Epiphany 2

COLLECT:

Eternal Lord,
our beginning and our end:
bring us with the whole creation
to your glory, hidden through past ages
and made known
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

PSALM 139:1-11 *(For Morning Prayer)*

1. O Lord, you have searched me out and known me;
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
2. You mark out my journeys and my resting place
and are acquainted with all my ways.
3. For there is not a word on my tongue,
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.
4. You encompass me behind and before
and lay your hand upon me.
5. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
so high that I cannot attain it.
6. Where can I go then from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
7. If I climb up to heaven, you are there;
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.
8. If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

9. Even there your hand shall lead me,
your right hand hold me fast.
10. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will cover me
and the light around me turn to night,'
11. Even darkness is no darkness with you;
the night is as clear as the day;
darkness and light to you are both alike.

A Reading from the Book of Revelation

Revelation 5:1-10

Part of John's vision of heaven, as the Lamb of God proclaims God's power and glory.

¹I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; ²and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?' ³And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁴And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.' ⁶Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. ⁸When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; ¹⁰you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.'

At the end, the Reader says:

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE GOSPEL READING

Please stand and turn to face the Gospel Reader

When the Gospel is announced, the Reader says:

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *John*.

Glory to you, O Lord.

(Glory be to thee, O Lord.)

John 1:43-51

Jesus refers back to the story of Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:10-17) to describe his work.

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' ⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' ⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' ⁵⁰ Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' ⁵¹ And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

At the end, the Reader says:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

(At the end, the Reader says:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to thee, O Christ.)

(c) New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

God of glory,

you nourish us with your Word

who is the bread of life:

fill us with your Holy Spirit

that through us the light of your glory

may shine in all the world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.



IN & ABOUT: Thankfully, Gary's diary this week looks not quite as full as the past few weeks – so there should be time to catch up on various bits of planning for Lent and Easter, PCCs, On-line streaming, Deanery business, and other items on the 'To Do' List.

Monday evening, the first meeting of the 'Shadow PCC' – we're imagining what it will look like when the Simplification Process reaches its next stage and we become one PCC for the AVC. **Wednesday**, the Benefice of the Future Lunch, for a catch-up with how we are doing. **Thursday**, Staff Communion and Meeting in the Morning, followed by a planning and review meetings with staff members, a Pastoral Tutor Meeting with a Curate, the on-line School Assembly for children in schools and at home (the first time we did this a week or so ago, we had over 60 screens), and Staff meeting in the evening.

CHURCHES OPEN/CLOSED : Following the joint PCC meeting on Monday, the following has been agreed during this lockdown :

- Public worship ceases in all of our Churches until February 21st, at which point the situation will be reviewed;
- Worship will continue to be streamed from our Churches or from homes as is most appropriate for each occasion;
- Pastoral Care of congregations and communities will continue to be developed and
- Our online community will continue to be developed.

The following has been decided for each church :

Fordingbridge	will be open for prayer from 10-4
Sandleheath	will be closed
Godshill	will be closed
Hale and Woodgreen	will remain open for prayer each day
Hyde	will be closed until 21st February
Breamore	will be closed until 21st February

During the Lockdown: There will be **Services** on-line each Sunday at 10.00, and some 8.15s and 6.00 Sanctus/Evening Prayers as well. **Thought for the Day** every weekday and the **Saturday Conversation** at 10.00.

ACCESS TO ON-LINE WORSHIP : Whilst our services will continue to be streamed live on-line either via Facebook, Zoom, our website (and available afterwards on YouTube); all of the services are also available on our **telephone line**, 01425 543305, charged at your normal local rate. If you want to listen to live or recorded worship (and to hear Gary's cheerful greeting!), it's usually easier to put your phone onto speakerphone, so you can sit back and enjoy.

UNITY WEEK SERVICE : Sunday 24th January at 10.30am — Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The theme for 2021 is Abiding in Christ (cf. John 15:1-17). It is usually held between 18th-25th January each year – we celebrate it in 2021 on Sunday, January 24th. *The United Service* is the main focus of our Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and is a Celebration Service where everyone is invited, as we come together as the Church in this area. This year the service is on-line on Zoom or Facebook.

Join the Zoom Meeting (open from 10am)

Meeting ID: 869 7530 6276 and Passcode: 198774

Join by Telephone

Dial 01314601196 and use the Meeting ID and Passcode above.

Join via Facebook

Go to the Avon Valley Churches Facebook page, and we will be streaming from 10.25.

More information about 'Christian Unity' is on the website <http://www.ctbi.org.uk>

COFFEE AFTER SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE : We will be having on-line coffee after Church each week. Everyone is welcome to join us. *Meeting ID 646 331 066 Password 123654.* The direct link which will also let you in, will be in the Partner's email.

MORNING PRAYER : On Mondays and Wednesdays at 9am, Morning Prayer is said together on Zoom, and anyone is welcome to join in. Log-in details are Meeting ID: 157 284 292 and Password: 764200

PASTORAL CARE : Please let us know if you know of people who might be in particular need of pastoral care, or a friendly phone call; or if there are people who have iPads, tablet or computers, and are having difficulty getting into Facebook or YouTube to access our on-line Services, then, again, please let us know.

COVID VACCINATION SCAM ALERT : There have been reports of a new scam where a person receives a text saying they need to book a vaccination appointment and it takes them to a fake NHS form which then asks for their bank details to prove their identity. **The NHS will never ask for a person's banking information so please do not provide as it will be a scam.** There is a texting scam leaflet you can download here: https://cfa.nhs.uk/resources/downloads/fraud-awareness/covid-19/COVID-19_SMS_and_Text_Message_Scams.pdf

Also, if you get a strange e-mail from any of the Staff Team asking for financial help – it's likely to be a scam; someone has set up a fake e-mail in Gary's name – which has been reported.

SANCTUS : We will be meeting on Sunday 17th January at 6pm on Zoom to plan the February Sanctus service, which will be an on-line (recorded) service. The theme is “A tale of two cities”. If anyone would like to share in the planning and/or leading, do let us know. The Zoom details are Meeting ID: 879 9341 8116 and Passcode: 095412. Kimberley Swift and Julian Sims

ON-LINE SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES – If you know of any families who might like to join in the Thursday on-line Zoom Assembly, please be in touch with Gary, who can let you have the details.

LENT LUNCHES : It is with great regret that we cannot hold our Lent Lunches this year which would have run for seven weeks from Ash Wednesday, 17th February. Covid-19 and the current Lockdown 3 render the organisation, location and attendance impossible and unsafe, which situation seems unlikely to be resolved before vaccination is completed, and the protection of all involved is paramount. Donations in lieu of your lunches, sent direct to the Children's Society, will of course be gratefully received. If anyone can use up several 2-litre boxes of various frozen home-made soups please contact us. Martin and Jane Calver. 01425 656189 or janecalver@btinternet.com.

HALE and WOODGREEN COMMUNITY COOKBOOK : The new cookbook is arriving soon, ten years on from the first edition. This one contains over 80 new recipes, the majority of which have been sent in by people in and around our parish and has been put together during lockdown. Launch date 1st March 2021 in time for perfect Mother's Day present. To pre-order and get a special signed copy call 07799 542707 or email Lynda.warne@hotmail.co.uk.

REFLECTION : Sometimes I become aware of a tune in my head which I can usually identify. Today it was the hymn “Brightest and best are the sons of the morning, dawn in our darkness, and lend us thine aid; star of the East the horizon adorning, Guide where our infant redeemer is laid.” It reminded me of my mother who during the dark times of the last War always ended her worries with ‘Ah well, there is always a light at the end of the tunnel’

At present we are in a very dark place with a second virus and inability to curb it. However as Epiphany and our hymn reminds us, we give thanks to Mary and Joseph; also for the tenacity of Shepherds and the Magi to follow the Star; for disciples and followers of Jesus who have led us and shown us the way to an all loving God. So we too must follow on.

We remember however that we have ‘messed up’ our present world. We pray that our ever loving God will show us the way to a different world.

Daphne Himmel

