

5th February 2023 - 3rd Sunday Before Lent

SALT AND LIGHT

The gospel reading today, holds two very powerful images –‘salt and light’- both necessary requirements in daily life.

Jesus told His disciples that they were ‘the salt of the earth’, [Matthew 5 v.13] which was a great compliment, as salt was essential to life in the ancient world. It was used not only to preserve food, but was a requirement for sacrifices by being mixed with incense for the temple, and used as a sign of covenant. It was a very precious commodity and not easily attainable, as it had to be mined and transported with considerable labour and expense. So what does it mean to be ‘the salt of the earth’? In our lives, we need to be ‘salty Christians’, and have a spiritual thirst to learn more about God, and share what we have learned with others.

Jesus also told His disciples that they were ‘the light of the world’ [Matthew 5 v.14]. Again this is a great compliment, as light has the power to abolish darkness. We often forget how essential light is to us until we find ourselves in the dark during a power cut, hunting for a torch or a candle. But, light must be shared, and we as Christians must shine out in our community not only through personal conversion with Christ, but by our actions in the world.

Jesus also calls us, his followers, to be ‘salt and light’. As ‘salt’, God can use us to give help and hope to those who are in need, by bringing attention to the presence of God within us. As ‘light’, Jesus calls us to light up a world in desperate need of light. In so many ways these are dark days, but we as the people of God, have experienced the grace of God’s light. We are called to share that light with others.

May the Lord who sent us the light of the world to enlighten our lives, help us to shine brightly in a troubled world this week.

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

Mary Melbourne LLW

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. God Bless!

Readings for this Week:
5th February 2023
The 3rd Sunday Before Lent

COLLECT:

Eternal God,
your Son went among the crowds
and brought healing with his touch:
help us to show his love,
in your church as we gather together,
and by our lives as they are transformed
into the image of Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

PSALM 112:1-9

1. Alleluia. Blessed are those who fear the Lord
and have great delight in his commandments.
2. Their descendants will be mighty in the land,
a generation of the faithful that will be blest.
3. Wealth and riches will be in their house,
and their righteousness endures for ever.
4. Light shines in the darkness for the upright;
gracious and full of compassion are the righteous.
5. It goes well with those who are generous in lending
and order their affairs with justice,
6. For they will never be shaken;
the righteous will be held in everlasting remembrance.
7. They will not be afraid of any evil tidings;
their heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.
8. Their heart is sustained and will not fear,
until they see the downfall of their foes.
9. They have given freely to the poor;
their righteousness stands fast for ever;
their head will be exalted with honour.

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

Paul writes of God's gift of wisdom, which is not displayed in clever words, but by the Spirit helping us to understand God's will.

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁶Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. ⁷But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'—

¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

c) New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible

At the end, the Reader says:

This is 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 Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

(Glory be to thee, O Lord.)

Jesus commands his followers to live lives of such quality that others will be drawn to give glory to God through their example.

¹³ ‘You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴ ‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷ ‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

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.)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Merciful Father,
you gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life,
that those who come to him should never hunger:
draw us to the Lord in faith and love,
that we may eat and drink with him
at his table in the kingdom,
where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

AMEN

Save the date! Bishop Debbie, Bishop of Southampton and Acting Bishop of Winchester, will preside and preach at a 10am whole-benefice service at St Mary's, Fordingbridge, on **Sunday 19 February**. (8.15am and 6pm services will continue.) It is kind of Bishop Debbie to fit us into her Diary - please do come and welcome her to our parish. Revd Tom Burden

Sunday 5th February at St Mary's Church, Hale 10am – Snowdrop Service – come and see the wonderful snowdrops in Hale Park. We will start outside amongst the snowdrops, moving into Church with a hot drink and cake, to continue our Service – All welcome.

SP6 Friendship Group: The friendship group is for anyone who is bereaved, lonely or anyone who just likes to chat. Newcomers are always welcome. We will be gathering at the Ship Inn, Fordingbridge High Street on Tuesday 7th February and Tuesday 21st February from 10.00am – 12.00pm for our coffee (or tea) and scrummy biscuits. Please use the side entrance. Please let me know if you would like a lift by phoning 07770944054. Looking forward to catching up with as many of you who can make it. Rev Kate Wilson.

On Shrove Tuesday 21st February, we are holding a Pancake Party in Woodgreen Village Hall from 2.45pm to 4.15pm. A pound a pancake, drinks will be served too! The more the merrier...

Evensong in Fordingbridge – We have experimented moving the location of evensong from the nave to the chancel during January. We now need feedback please from those who attended either as congregation or choir telling us if you prefer it there, or not and your main reason. Please email: office@avonvalleychurches.org.uk or you can call Mark Ward on 01425 656120 where there is an answering machine if he is out. In February we will move back to the nave whilst the feedback is considered.

A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Jordan – *Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus*. 10 June to 24 June 2024, led by Canon Gary Philbrick, Assistant Archdeacon of Winchester and Chaplain of Winchester Cathedral, and the Revd Craig Philbrick, Vicar of St Paul's, Weston-super-Mare. We invite you to join us in pilgrimage, and to experience the Lands that formed Jesus and his Disciples, so that we can bring the Bible to life, as we continue our own journeys of faith. Details of the tour at: <http://www.maranatha.co.uk/PilgrimageJordan-HolyLand2024/> or Contact Canon Gary at Gary.Philbrick@Winchester.Anglican.org or on 07884 268968.

Bishop's Commission for Mission (BCM): The BCM Course is for lay people across the Diocese of Winchester who want to develop their skills in a particular area of ministry, and comprises six evening sessions on Zoom, with a Saturday in person at each end. Hundreds of people have taken part over the past five years and

have benefitted enormously from them. This summer, courses are being offered on Pastoral Care, Growing Faith, and Working with Children and Youth. Might you be interested in exploring the idea?

There is a Taster Evening on Wednesday 29 March, 7 p.m. - 8 p.m., on Zoom. Talk to Canon Gary (or any of the Clergy) if you would like to know more or would like to discuss this further. Full details on the Diocese of Winchester website – search for BCM.

Jigsaw Festival 2023 – St Mary's Fordingbridge. Advance warning to keep doing your jigsaws over the winter months! The next festival is being planned for October, exact days TBC. We won't be ready to receive any puzzles, either on board or in boxes, for some while yet so please keep them safe at home. Watch out for more details in the next month or so. Many thanks Judith Dowsett, Viv Finch, Jean Groves and The Jigsaw Team.

Online Monthly Bible Study at 11:00 on Thursday 9 February. You are welcome to join us as we continue to read through Genesis. This time: Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-18). Interesting! Meeting ID: 856 7098 2068 Passcode: scripture!

CHURCH DIARY: just to let everyone know that the Church Diary, which covers all churches in the Parish, is available for anyone to view from the AVC website at <https://www.avonvalleychurches.org.uk/group-calendar> . If you are thinking of popping in to clean, do flowers etc or want to know if there is a funeral or wedding that you might like to attend, then please check it regularly. The diary gets updated as different events or services are added.

ITEMS FOR PARTNERS need to be sent to the Church Office (e-mail address below) by 5.00p.m. on **Wednesdays**. Please put 'Partners' in the e-mail subject line. Thank you, Zoe.

'Prisoners, pirates and volcanoes'. Come along and join Fordingbridge History Society (FHS) on Monday 13 February at 2.30pm in the Church Hall to hear all about how the world changed after 1815 and what the life was like after the Battle of Waterloo. There will also be a sneak peek at FHS's Summer visits programme. Visitors and guests are most welcome at all our events. Further info from Helen Coote on 01425 654995.

EMERGENCY PRAYER CHAIN Please send all requests for prayer to prayer@avonvalleychurches.org.uk. If you feel able to commit to regular prayer for those on the list and wish to become a prayer partner, please email the above address.

Food Trolley Update: In the current climate the Foodbank would be very grateful if we were once again able to ramp up our donations in the trolley at St. Mary's Fordingbridge. We regularly take these donations to the warehouse at Ringwood, but any goods purchased at our Co-Op can also be placed in their box as it all goes to the same destination. If you want to know what is needed, go to Ringwood.Foodbank.org.uk / give help / donate food. Our local Foodbank in the URC church could also do with a couple more volunteers!

Church Wardens' News

Last Sunday was Candlemas, when we remember Christ being presented in the temple for circumcision. I read the Gospel at Hyde (Luke 2: 22-40). I read from the New Revised Standard version that was in Partners. As much as I like this translation, I agree with Canon Nigel, on the beauty of the poetry of the King James version for the "Nunc Dimitis" section. My preference for the words; "Lord Now Lettest Now Thy Servant Depart in Peace....." probably has a lot to do with my upbringing, frequently singing this at Evensong. Nevertheless, it just goes to show that some words can really "hit the spot". When I discussed this with Canon Michael before our service, he suggested that I read the King James version of the Nunc Dimitis after the NRS version of the complete passage – nobody complained!

I never cease to be amazed by the way the Bible can awaken such strong emotions, and how it is very beneficial to study passages in different translations to try to understand the intended message. I certainly will be keeping my different versions.

Martin Ings

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED TO VISITORS EXCEPT BY APPOINTMENT

Contact via Email : Office@AvonValleyChurches.org.uk or call 01425 653163 between 10.30 am and 12.00 or leave a message Website : www.AvonValleyChurches.org.uk

The 3rd Sunday Before Lent

5th February 2023

Online services available via Facebook or Website
at 'Avon Valley Churches'

Sunday	8.15am	Fordingbridge	Holy Communion (BCP)
5th Feb	10.00am	Breamore	Morning Prayer (BCP)
	10.00am	Fordingbridge	Allsorts
	10.00am	Hyde	Holy Communion
	10.00am	Hale	Snowdrop Service and Holy Communion
	10.45am	Sandleheath	Morning Service
	6.00pm	Fordingbridge	Six O'Clock Service
Monday Wednesday, Friday	9.00am	Online (Zoom)	Morning prayer (<i>Meeting ID: 846 5168 7529, Password: 764200</i>)
Monday-Friday	10.00am	Online	Thought for the Day
Thurs 9 th	10.00am	Online	Bible study Meeting ID: 781 516 2690 Passcode: avcbible
Sat 11 th	10.00am	Online	The Saturday Conversation
Sunday	8.15am	Hyde	Holy Communion (BCP)
12th Feb	10.00am	Breamore	Mattins
	10.00am	Fordingbridge	Sung Communion
	10.00am	Woodgreen	Morning Service
	10.45am	Sandleheath	Morning Service
	4.00pm	Hyde	Four O'Clock
	6.00pm	Fordingbridge	Evensong