

PARTNERS

weekly newsletter



10th December 2023 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

Today we recall the prophets and especially Isaiah and John, called The Baptist. John called out to those in the desert areas make a straight road for the Lord! I think that is what we are called to do in Advent, to have a bit of a tidy up, a clear out, a reckoning with those things which maybe aren't right in our lives – to straighten ourselves up and remove the twists and the turns, to pull down the mountains that we have built up either between God and ourselves or ourselves and others. If we can do that we will then have the Glory of the Lord revealed to us when he comes.

It isn't always easy to stop in Advent with all the planning for Christmas just ahead of us, but I think we would all do well to find a bit of "being" time rather than "doing time" between now and Christmas Day so that we are ready. "Prepare the Way of the Lord"



Mark Ward

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 IPT

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: 10th December 2023

2nd Sunday of Advent

COLLECT:

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as
judge and Saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God.

AMEN.

PSALM 85:1-2 8-13

1. Lord, you were gracious to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
2. You forgave the offence of your people
and covered all their sins.
8. I will listen to what the Lord God will say,
For he shall speak peace to his people that they turn not again to folly.
9. Truly, his salvation is near to those who fear him,
That his glory may dwell in our land.
10. Mercy and truth are met together,
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other;
11. Truth shall spring up from the earth
And righteousness look down from heaven.
12. The Lord will indeed give all that is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
13. Righteousness shall go before him
And direct his steps in the way.

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 40:1-11

As the Exile comes to an end, Isaiah speaks of God coming to save his people.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' ⁶ A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. ⁹ Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!' ¹⁰ See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

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 Mark

Glory to you, O Lord.

(Glory be to thee, O Lord.)

John the Baptist prepares the way for the coming of Christ.

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ² As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³ the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,"' ⁴John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

c) *New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible*

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:

Father in heaven,
you sent your Son to redeem the world
and will send him again to be our judge:
give us grace so to imitate him
in the humility and purity of his first coming
that, when he comes again,
we may be ready to greet him
with joyful love and firm faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN.

Sandleheath Village Carol Service will take place this **Sunday 10th December** at the Methodist Chapel, Alderholt Road, at **6 p.m.** We will be accompanied by the ladies of Penswood Brass and refreshments will be served afterwards. All are welcome.

Please note the **church office** will be **closed** on **Monday 11th and 18th** of December.

From clay pits to kilns: Bursledon Brickworks revealed. Bursledon is an industrial heritage site near Southampton which invokes the sights, sounds and smells of Victorian life. Come along and hear its story with Fordingbridge History Society on **Monday 11 December from 2.30pm in the Church Hall.** Visitors are most welcome. Further info from Helen Coote on 01425 654995

SP6 Friendship Group – Our friendship group will be held on **Tuesday 19th December** from 10.00am – 12.00md at the Ship Inn, Fordingbridge High Street. There will also be a **Christmas lunch on December 12th at 12.00noon.** This group is for anyone who is bereaved or lonely and would like a cuppa and a friendly chat. We also organize outings, theatre trips and garden visits. If anyone would like to join us do come.

The next **Hyde Mothers' Union** will be on **December 12th at 2.30pm** in Hyde Church Centre. We will have the enrolment of a new member followed by Christmas Readings and Carols, a Quiz and Christmas refreshments. Sheilah Collis 01425 470343

Last call for orders for the wreaths - Janet, Helen & the team will be offering **Christmas wreaths & table decorations** in aid of church funds. Wreaths will be £25 and table decorations £12. A traditional wreath with poinsettias or a natural country wreath is the choice. **Collection** will be on **Wednesday 13th December at 10.00 am** from Newman's Central Stores in Shaftesbury Street. We will notify the date of the table decorations later.

Please email Helen at thetagues@fordingbridge.com or telephone 01425 655462 or telephone Janet on 01425 653269

Carols in Fordingbridge with **Fordingbridge Choral Society** and **Redlynch Players** - **Wednesday 13th December** at **7 30pm** in the **United Reformed Church, SP6 1AB.** Please come and join us to sing and celebrate Christmas. All welcome. Retiring collection.

TOFSS (Too Old For Sunday School) usually meet monthly at 15 Provost Street at 10.30am on a Thursday. On **14 December** our meeting at No 15 will be followed by our Annual TOFSS Lunch at The Ship. We will meet again in the New Year on **11 January and 8 February.** We will be watching a DVD ("The Chosen") portraying parts of the New Testament in an authentic and inspiring way. Come and join us! All welcome. More information from Pat Bloomfield 01425 837735.

Sunday 17th December 10am service - Fordingbridge: If you are attending the above service can I invite you to wear something pink/rose or bring something with you which is that colour. Thanks Mark Ward

Avon Valley Community Matters - Families Together Upcoming dates:
Wednesday 20th December - Family Christmas Dinner and Nativity, 11am-2pm at St Mary's Church Hall You can find information about our events by going to <https://AvonValleyCommunityMatters.eventbrite.com> or emailing familybefriender@yahoo.com

Shortest Day Christmas Service at St Giles, Godshill - The Shortest Day Christmas Service is one with a difference! Like last year, it will be a more reflective half-hour service open to everyone, including those people who might recoil from a full-blown Carol Service, but may find welcome solace and sanctuary in a troubled world through this time together. There will be readings and carols and prayers, followed by mince pies and mulled wine. **The Date: Thursday 21st December, 11am at St Giles, Godshill.** All are Welcome!

Just Carols (and readings, poems and songs, too!) Date for your diary: **Thursday, December 21st @ 7 o'clock** in St Mary's Fordingbridge (lasts just over an hour.) Our esteemed Men's Group will lead the Carol-singing and we want to invite everyone to a festive evening of Christmas music. This is not a formal Church service, but rather a wonderful, informal singalong for all the family - please wear silly Christmas jumpers and tinsel and bring tambourines, drums, claves and maracas to make a noise!

Admission is absolutely free. See you there! Barry the piano- player.

Save the date : Sunday, 21st January Epiphany concert to be held at St. Mary's Church, Hale, from 4pm. It will have all the tradition of our Advent concert but with a slightly different feel to it. Do come and support us. Raising funds for Trussell Trust and the roof fund. Thank you.

Open Gardens 2024 – Fordingbridge/Godshill/Sandleheath

We now have a small list of gardens that will be open over the late May Bank Holiday to help us raise funds, but we need a few more. Your garden doesn't have to be either large or spectacular, we aren't trying to do Chelsea! It would be great if you could also host your guests with refreshments (or perhaps have a few plants to sell) but if you don't bake we can find you a partner. Or do you have a non-churchgoing friend with a garden they would be prepared to open? We need to begin to plan after Christmas so please let me know if you are willing to help. Mark Ward: mark@fordingbridge.com or 01425 656120

Fundraising for St Mary's Hale roof repairs. We have been donated some beautifully knitted childrens cardigans. Many with knitted in rabbits etc on the front. Pastel colours, age 2 - 4 approx. To buy, (they are £5 and at the back of St Boniface) please put your money in an envelope marked Cardigan and post it in the wall safe on the left of the toilet door.

Ever wondered **WHY?** Or been asked a difficult question from someone that starts 'Why...?'

Well maybe you would like to come to **the 6 o'clock service**. We are starting a new series in January to explore some questions that are fundamental to the Christian faith and the January question is... **'Why was Jesus born?'** So maybe you know someone who has asked you about Jesus recently or maybe you have asked yourself 'why did Jesus have to come to earth?' If so, please do come on the 7th January at 6 o'clock. For those of you who don't know about this service, it is an informal service that happens once a month at St Mary's in Fordingbridge (1st Sunday of every month) and is primarily aimed at people who wish to explore faith. But we would love to see more of our regular church goers to help us to support those who are exploring. We also serve tea and coffee at the beginning and a hot meal at the end for those who fancy eating with us. So it's a lovely way to end the weekend!

Any questions, please do contact Alex Sains 07816225030

Reflection

In 1863 five men from Geneva in Switzerland set up an international committee for relief to the wounded, later to be known as The Red Cross. This all came about by a young man named Henry Dunant when he witnessed a bloody battle in Solferino in Italy. On the battlefield 40,000 men lay dying or wounded desperate for medical attention. There was none. Dunant was appalled, he quickly set about helping the wounded, directing local volunteers to dress their wounds and comfort them. After this initial encounter Dunant then turned his attention to creating 'Relief Societies' whose object it was in time of war and conflict, was to have the wounded cared for by devoted volunteers, fully qualified for the task.

By 1863 Henry Dunant had achieved his objectives with the emblem of a red cross against a white back ground and within a year twelve countries had adopted the Geneva Convention which was a giant step forward. People administering care were regarded as neutral on the battlefield, and were not to be targeted by the opposing forces.

The charity has become indispensable in times of conflict and provided humanitarian aid to many parts of the world. Ever careful not to take sides The Red Cross has built a non partisan reputation which allows entry into countries, prisons, and camps denied by other organisations.

Michael Ireland

CHURCH OFFICE IS OPEN TO VISITORS between 10.00 am and 12.00
Contact via Email : Office@AvonValleyChurches.org.uk or call 01425 653163 between 10.00 am and 12.00 or
leave a message Website : www.AvonValleyChurches.org.uk

2nd Sunday of Advent 10th December

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

Sunday	8.15 am	Hyde	Holy Communion
10th Dec	10.00 am	Breamore	Holy Communion
	10.00 am	Fordingbridge	Sung Eucharist
	10.00 am	Woodgreen	Carol Service
	10.45 am	Sandleheath	Morning Service
	5.30 pm	Hyde	Carol Service
	6.00 pm	Sandleheath	Carols
Monday Wednesday Friday	10.00 am	Online	Morning prayer (<i>Meeting ID: 846 5168 7529, Password: 764200</i>)
Wed 13 th	10.00 am	Heather Cottage	Advent celebration and prayer
	2.15 pm	Hyde	Christingle Service
Thurs 14 th	4.15 pm	Fordingbridge	Breamore and Hyde schools' Carol Service
Sunday	8.15 am	Fordingbridge	Holy Communion
17th Dec	10.00 am	Fordingbridge	Morning Service
	10.00 am	Hale	Carols and Readings
	10.00 am	Hyde	Informal prayer time
	10.45 am	Sandleheath	Morning Service
	3.00 pm	Hyde	Carols on the Common
	6.00 pm	Breamore	Carol Service
	6.00 pm	Fordingbridge	Carols by Candlelight