

News for the Pews

Date: 27th November 2022

Sunday: 1st Sunday of Advent



News and Views

Happy New Year! We are now in a new church year. Our bible readings for the next 12 months focus mainly on the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew was most likely written by the disciple and tax-collector Matthew, around 60-65AD in Antioch, Syria. And it was probably the second of the Gospels to be written as it copies much of the structure and content of Mark's Gospel. Matthew's Gospel is often known as the "Jewish" Gospel, written for the Jews to show them that Jesus was their promised Messiah, fulfilling the prophecies. Matthew interprets the Hebrew bible (our Old Testament) particularly the first five books of it – the Pentateuch - in a new way, around the idea that Jesus is the King of the Jews. He is the son called out of Egypt (the Exodus) to be the new Israel. The opening genealogy, echoing the story of Israel, identifies Jesus not just as the son of David but as the one who brings the story to completion – bringing light to the nations. He also becomes a new Moses as he reworks the blessing/curse language that Moses uses at the end of Deuteronomy. Matthew is the only Gospel writer to use the term "church" – identifying Jesus as its founder. Matthew also puts more emphasis than the others on worshipping Jesus because he is "God with us". We continue to use a lot of his material in our liturgy today. There are five distinct parts to Matthew's Gospel: Jesus' teachings about discipleship, mission, the Kingdom, the Community of believers and the End-times. Why not take some time to read it through as a whole, to get a better flavour of it.

Events for the week

Sunday 27th December – Bereavement service at 4pm in St. Lawrence's Church, Napton

Monday 28th December – Group Council meeting at 7pm in Stockton Church

Thursday 1st December – Deanery Synod meeting at 7.30pm at St. Michael's Church, Bishops Itchington

Thursday 1st December – Southam Branch WI Carol Service at 7.30pm in St. Lawrence's Church, Napton

Friday 2nd December – Memorial service for Bet Bissell at 1pm in St. Lawrence's Church, Napton

Sat & Sun 3rd & 4th December – Christmas Tree Festival from 10am to 5pm in Stockton Church

Sunday 4th December – Burial of ashes of Rita Cook at 12noon in St. Mary's Churchyard, Priors Hardwick

Sunday 4th December – Napton Christmas Cheer, with carol singing, from 4pm outside the Victory Club

Looking ahead – for details of all our Christmas services and activities, see the attached poster

Services next Sunday 4th December – 2nd Sunday of Advent

9am – Family service "Preparing for Christmas" at St. Mary's, Priors Hardwick

10.30am – CW Holy Communion at St. Lawrence's, Napton

10.30am – Morning Worship at St. Leonard's, Priors Marston

7pm – Traditional candle-lit Carol Service, followed by refreshments, at St. Michael's, Stockton

Bible readings for the week are: Isaiah 11:1-10 and Matthew 3:1-12

And finally

As we start our Advent journey towards Christmas, we look backwards to the roots and foundations of our faith before looking forward to the future hope of our salvation. As we light the candles on our Advent wreaths, there is a vulnerability for us as we struggle to embody the light that shines in the darkness - the light that has not been overcome. (John 1:5). Let us pray: "Our God who is past, present and future, Light of the world, in whom there is no darkness at all, as we begin this Advent journey, help us to see the glimmers of your glorious light, in the stories of the patriarchs, and in our own lives as we seek to shine your light of love and hope into dark situations. Amen."

God bless,
Gillian

(For more details of events and diary dates, see our website: www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk or the parish magazines)