

Bridges Group News

Date: 17th December 2023

Sunday: Advent 3



Weekly reflection from Rev Andy

I came across this old seasonal joke recently - Why is the UK Parliament like 1st century Bethlehem? Because it takes a miracle to find three wise men there. That seems particularly appropriate at the moment after the furore surrounding the Rwanda bill, the resignation of the immigration minister, and the revelations coming out of the COVID enquiry revealing a government in chaos and at odds with each other. The third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday reflecting the words from Philippians 4 – 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice', the Latin version of which reads 'Gaudete in Domino semper: iterum dico, gaudete'. Perhaps there are many people who don't feel much like rejoicing at the moment, there is so much uncertainty, fear and worry about so much that is happening in the world around us. But the joy we hear in our passage from Isaiah today is based on a solid promise that things are going to change. People are going to be freed from captivity, people are going to be healed, people are going to be blessed. There **is** good news. We live in a damaged and dark world but we know it's not going to be like that forever. Joy is a normal part of the Christian life, not something we have to muster up ourselves, but a gift of the Holy Spirit – something that bubbles up inside us, often unexpectedly and unbidden. So we don't have to wait for Christmas to rejoice, Joy is integral to simply being a Christian – May we all discover that anew this advent and this Christmas.

Prayer

Our God is a loving God, Much joy can be shared in the knowledge that he will always be with us. He will not leave us in darkness. Give thanks to the Shepherd, who never forsakes, who always abides, In our hearts and in our minds.

Looking ahead

- Napton PCC 18th December
- Tea and Mince Pies, Saturday 23rd December at Lower Shuckburgh
- The Gathering, 31st December, at Lower Shuckburgh. Holy Communion let by Rev Marting Saxby from Rugby

Services this Sunday: 17th December, Advent 3	Services next Sunday: 24th December, Advent 4/Christmas Eve
<p>9.00am BCP Holy Communion at Priors Hardwick 4.00pm Carol Service at Napton 4.00pm Carol Service at Stockton 6.00pm Carol Service at Priors Marston</p> <p>Bible readings for the week are: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-end, John 1:6-8, 19-28</p>	<p>4.00 pm Crib Service at Stockton 4.00pm Carol Service at Lower Shuckburgh 6.00pm Carol Service at Priors Hardwick 11.00pm Midnight Communion at Napton 11.15pm Midnight Communion in the Methodist Tradition at Stockton</p> <p>Bible readings for the week are: 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16, Luke 1:26-38</p>

Services on CHRISTMAS DAY

9.00am Family Service at Wormleighton
10.30am Morning Worship at Priors Marston
10.30am Family Communion at Napton

Bible readings for Christmas Day are: Isaiah 9:2-7, Luke 2:1-14

OTHER SERVICES etc



TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER 5.30PM CAROLS AT THE LYCHGATE AT
PRIORS HARDWICK

WEDNESDAY 20TH DECEMBER YOUNG FARMERS' CAROL SERVICE
WORMLEIGHTON AT 7.30PM

FRIDAY 22ND DECEMBER – 7.00PM FOREST CHURCH IN NAPTON CHURCHYARD

SATURDAY 23RD DECEMBER – TEA AND MINCE PIES IN THE CHURCH AT LOWER SHUCKBURGH

SUNDAY 31ST DECEMBER THE GATHERING AT LOWER SHUCKBURGH

HOLY COMMUNION LED BY REV MARTIN SAXBY FROM RUGBY

SUNDAY 7TH JANUARY 2024 – 9.00AM AT PRIORS HARDWICK - THE EPIPHANY
A SERVICE FOR EVERYONE – ESPECIALLY FAMILIES
FEATURING THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

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

Next Week's Bridges Group News will be hosted by Priors Hardwick.