

ST. NICHOLAS, NEWPORT, LINCOLN, LN1 3DP
Registered Charity Number: 1133977
www.stnicholaslincoln.org.uk
3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
13th December 2020

TODAY

9:00 am Said Eucharist
10:30 am Said Eucharist

THIS WEEK

MONDAY

8:45 am Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary
10:00 am Church Open for Individual Prayer

TUESDAY

8:45 am Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary
10:00 am Church Open for Individual Prayer

WEDNESDAY

8:45 am Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary
9:30 am Said Eucharist
10:00 am Church Open for Individual Prayer
7:00 pm Advent Course on Zoom

THURSDAY

8:45 am Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary
10:00 am Church Open for Individual Prayer

FRIDAY

10:00 am Church Open for Individual Prayer

SATURDAY

10:00 am Church Open for Individual Prayer
Weekend e-Church available from Noon

NEXT SUNDAY – 4th OF ADVENT

9:00 am Said Eucharist
10:30 am Said Eucharist

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK

<u>SUNDAY 20th DECEMBER</u>		<u>WEDNESDAY 23rd DECEMBER</u>
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16		Malachi 3:1-4, 4:5-end
Magnificat		Psalms 25:3-9
Romans 16:25-end		Luke 1:57-66
Luke 1:26-38		

FROM THE VICAR

I've always had an affection for St John the Baptist. He seems to me to be precisely the sort of earnest but sour person we need to set against the prevailing culture of impulsive, consumerist religion that we find in the world around us.

My tongue is in my cheek! But the point is not entirely frivolous. St John the Baptist is not a prophet for those who want their religion wrapped in a soft velvet presentation box and tied up with a silk ribbon. His is a stark faith, an austere life, and one that ends by any normal standards rather badly.

He was a man who excelled at annoying people. He even annoyed Jesus. While at one level he was extremely popular, probably in his lifetime much more of a Superstar than Jesus himself, John also

provoked and irritated people in power and in the end paid for it with his life.

This is the figure we celebrate on this 3rd Sunday of Advent. The prophet of preparation, the voice crying in the wilderness, the man who eats locusts and wild honey and baptises people in the river Jordan. How many of us would invite such a person to a dinner party? And what does our celebration of John teach us as 21st century Christians in a time of pandemic?

One thing, it seems to me, is that some of us are called to a ministry of provocation. I said as much at Peter's licensing service last weekend. Of course, that is not a permission to be as annoying and as sour as you want! But it is a recognition that God places among us people whose role it is to unsettle us. Growth in faith requires change, and change is never comfortable or easy.

The natural response to provocation is to fight back, to defend one's current position with an equal and opposite reaction. But we are called to live out our identity as baptised people by being ever ready to repent, to change our minds, to look at our lives and our faith with new eyes, to be changed by the Holy Spirit of God.

The ministry of John the Baptist warns us that the more we have to lose the harder we will find this to do. We will want to hold on to what gives us a sense of security, what makes us feel that we're doing OK all things considering. We may well be. But God doesn't ever leave us there.

These are not 'tidings of comfort and joy' – you need to wait just a little longer for those. It's still Advent, and we're still in that season of longing and waiting, yearning and penitence, when we allow ourselves to be made uncomfortable by the challenging messages of the forerunners of Christ.

Today, as we celebrate St John the Baptist, let's all of us ask whether there is some aspect of our own lives as Christians that needs a bit of provocation, to be unsettled, to be opened up to the healing and transforming power of God.

May God bless you all,

Hugh

PARISH INFORMATION

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Parish Office

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Notices for next week's sheet by Wednesday please.

Online & Social Media

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www.stnicholaslincoln.org.uk

NOTICES

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

For obvious reasons our normal pattern of Christmas Services cannot go ahead this year. But we are delighted to announce that we will be celebrating Christmas in church!

There will be three 'Crib Service with Christingle' events on Christmas Eve, at 10:30 am, 2:00 pm, and 4:30 pm. The last of these will be preceded by a little *al fresco* carol singing in the churchyard.

There will be Midnight Mass at 11:30 pm, with the use of incense.

With apologies for the short notice, we do need volunteers to help steward these services. Please get in touch if you can help.

MESSAGE FROM PETER ELSMORE

Dear friends,

This is a very warm and very sincere thank you for all the cards, gifts, good wishes and above all else, prayers that were associated with my Licensing last Saturday. It was a memorable day in so many ways. My precious daughter and her family were not allowed to attend because of the Covid Tier Three regulations. Similarly, many of Chris's and my life long friends were also not able to be there.

However, Gareth had both the skills and the kit to make a live-stream that went out on YouTube to the whole diocese and also to my brother in Brisbane and my sister in Melbourne. Thank you, particularly, Gareth. (And also, of course, thank you to Hugh and to Alice and to ... Chris and everyone who was able to be in church then.)

We had no party! This is an 'IOU' for some cake and some fizz as soon as we are permitted to meet together again in church for such a purpose.

The office of Reader is a proper calling. (If you have any doubt, please ask to read the licence and the Certificate of Admission that I was given by Bishop Nick during the proceedings.) We worship a gracious and generous God who dearly loves each one of us.

What is He asking you to do at this time? *Peter Elsmore LLM*

DISTRIBUTION OF CHRISTMAS CARDS IN CHURCH

We are delighted to be worshipping together again and, over recent days, there have been several optimistic announcements about developments in the battle against CoVid 19. However, Lincolnshire remains in Tier 3 and stringent restrictions to prevent transmission of the virus still apply in church. Sadly, this means that we will not be able to distribute Christmas cards via the baskets at the back of church as we have done in previous years.

SPRING CLEANING IN DECEMBER

How good are you at climbing high ladders? Whilst we have not been in church so often this year, the spiders have been busy and some of their work is

too high for our weekly cleaners to reach. If you can help, please contact me at

joanberesford1@gmail.com or by phone at 01522 520729. Thanks, *Joan Beresford*

VIRTUAL POSADA

Don't forget that you can welcome the Holy Family into your homes this season using our Posada video. Do get in touch if you need help in accessing this.

REGULAR GIVING SCHEMES

If you used envelopes in 2020 then new sets for 2021 will be delivered to you before the end of the year. Alternatively, you can join our Parish Giving Scheme (our preferred option) where monthly or quarterly donations are collected by direct debit. Or you could set up a standing order for your regular giving. Whichever method you choose, your regular donation is so important to the planning for our church's ministry and mission. Thank you for your continual support.

If you don't give regularly because you've never got round to it, please make today the day that you start. You can contact me at joanberesford1@gmail.com or by phone at 01522 520729 for more information. *Joan Beresford*

FUNDRAISING FOR ST NICK'S

If you use Amazon for on-line shopping, you might like to think about using Amazon Smile. Through Amazon Smile, you will have access to exactly the same range of goods as on Amazon, at the same prices, but for each purchase you make, Amazon Smile will make a donation to St Nicks. How does it work? Instead of logging in to your normal Amazon account, just log in to Amazon Smile instead. You will be asked which charity/good cause you would like to support. Search for and select "The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of St. Nicholas With St. John Baptist, Lincoln". You can then make your purchases in the normal way and St Nick's will benefit to a small degree from each purchase. If you are happy with on-line shopping and all that entails then why not give it a go. *Sue Humphrey*

HUGH TO BE MADE NON-RESIDENTIARY CANON

I'm so grateful for the messages of support and encouragement I've received since the announcement of my being made a Non-Residentiary Canon of Lincoln Cathedral. This will happen in February, so no changes to the letterhead yet!

READINGS

Sunday 13th December

COLLECT

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-END

The servant of the Lord said:

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
For I the Lord love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

PSALM

PSALM 126

Refrain: The Lord has done great things for us.

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter
and our tongue with songs of joy. **R**
Then said they among the nations,
'The Lord has done great things for them.'
The Lord has indeed done great things for us,
and therefore we rejoiced. **R**
Restore again our fortunes, O Lord,
as the river beds of the desert.
Those who sow in tears
shall reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed,
will come back with shouts of joy,
bearing their sheaves with them. **R**

SECOND READING

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

GOSPEL

JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

POST COMMUNION

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever. **Amen**

Wednesday 16th December

COLLECT

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 45:6B-8, 18, 21B-END

I am the Lord, and there is no other.
I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the Lord do all these things.
Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the skies rain down righteousness;
let the earth open, that salvation may spring up,
and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also;
I the Lord have created it.
For thus says the Lord,
who created the heavens
(he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it
(he established it;
he did not create it a chaos,
he formed it to be inhabited!):
I am the Lord, and there is no other.
Declare and present your case;
let them take counsel together!
Who told this long ago?
Who declared it of old?
Was it not I, the Lord?
There is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Saviour;
there is no one besides me.
Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.
By myself I have sworn,
from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness
a word that shall not return:
'To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear.'
Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me,
are righteousness and strength;
all who were incensed against him
shall come to him and be ashamed.
In the Lord all the offspring of Israel
shall triumph and glory.

PSALM

PSALM 85:7-END

Refrain: Show us your mercy, O Lord.

Show us your mercy, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.
I will listen to what the Lord God will say,
for he shall speak peace to his people and to the
faithful,
that they turn not again to folly.

Truly, his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land. **R**
Mercy and truth are met together,
righteousness and peace have kissed each other;
Truth shall spring up from the earth
and righteousness look down from heaven.
The Lord will indeed give all that is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness shall go before him
and direct his steps in the way. **R**

GOSPEL READING

LUKE 7:18B-23

The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' When the men had come to him, they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"' Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. And he answered them, 'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

POST COMMUNION

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever. **Amen**