

ST. NICHOLAS, NEWPORT, LINCOLN, LN1 3DP  
Registered Charity Number: 1133977  
www.stnicholaslincoln.org.uk  
**4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
20<sup>th</sup> 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 -CHRISTMAS EVE**

8:45 am Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary  
10:30 am Crib Service with Christingles  
2:00 pm Crib Service with Christingles  
3:45 pm Carols in the Church Yard  
4:30 pm Crib Service with Christingle  
11:30 pm Midnight Mass (Said Service with Incense)

#### **FRIDAY – CHRISTMAS DAY**

10:00 am Christmas Day Eucharist

#### **SATURDAY – BOXING DAY**

*No services or events in church today*

### NEXT SUNDAY – FEAST OF ST JOHN

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

### READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK

SUNDAY 27 <sup>th</sup> DECEMBER	WEDNESDAY 30 <sup>th</sup> DECEMBER
Exodus 33:7-11a	1 John 2:12-17
Psalms 117	Psalms 96:7-10
1 John 1	Luke 2:36-40
John 21:19b-end	

### FROM THE VICAR

Back in the early summer I had a notion that we might be able to restore our normal pattern of worship around the middle of the autumn. It seemed like a conservative hope at the time. Yet here we are at Christmas with Covid cases rising once more, restrictions still in place in what we are permitted to do in church, and the spectre of a third national lockdown haunting us. It's an odd time to be writing about hope.

Yet the season of Advent is all about hope. In our Christian faith, hope is the virtue that relates to our understanding of the future. It isn't really the same

as the hope that there may be some fine weather over the Christmas break, or the hope that we may emerge from the pandemic sooner rather than later. Those are reasonable things to hope for, but Christian hope takes a longer view. It has to do with the great sweep of human history and the plan of God that is unfolding within it.

This weekend we encounter a figure who had a startling grasp of this. Mary, the mother of Jesus, certainly understood that there was nothing hopeful in the short-term about what God was asking her to do. It would expose her to gossip, possibly outright contempt. It did, we learn from Saint Matthew, bring her close to a broken engagement. And in the end it exposed her to the dreadful agony of witnessing the death of her firstborn in the most cruel and sadistic way imaginable. It is a stretch to see this as 'good news'.

To find the hope in it you need, as I mentioned, to take the longer view. The hope God offers is not for a comfortable, respectable existence in this world, with a vague aspiration to a peaceful afterlife. It is rather a call to join in the labour of building the Kingdom of God in this world, and the promise of sharing in God's life for all eternity.

This is a better hope by far, but one that asks more of us than we readily acknowledge. Mary understood what it asked of her, and agreed to it.

I wish I could write this column promising that everything will soon be all right again, just the way we know it and like it. But I rather suspect that things will never again be quite as they were, and I have no confident notions of what might take their place.

Instead, I write on this final Sunday of Advent of a hope that operates on a longer timescale, a much longer timescale than we normally occupy. To discern that hope, to be brave enough to trust in it even when it is costly and painful, is what the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary inspires us to. May we be granted a share of that wisdom and courage in our own place and time, and may God bless you all,

Hugh

### PARISH INFORMATION

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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**

### **ALICE GETS HER MA!**

Huge congratulations to Alice who has been awarded the degree of Master of Arts after much hard work in challenging circumstances.

### **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.

### **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](mailto: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 20<sup>th</sup> December*

### COLLECT

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### FIRST READING

2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16

Now when David the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.'

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle.

Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

### CANTICLE

MAGNIFICAT

*Refrain: My spirit rejoices in God my saviour.*

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name. **R**

His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. **R**

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. **R**

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.' **R**

### SECOND READING

ROMANS 16:25-END

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

### GOSPEL

LUKE 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

### POST COMMUNION

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December**

**COLLECT**

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

**FIRST READING**

MALACHI 3:1-4, 4:5-END

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

**PSALM**

PSALM 25:3-9

**Refrain: Remember, Lord, your compassion and love.**

Make me to know your ways, O Lord,  
and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you have I hoped all the day long.

Remember, Lord, your compassion and love,  
for they are from everlasting. **R**

Remember not the sins of my youth  
or my transgressions,  
but think on me in your goodness, O Lord,  
according to your steadfast love.

Gracious and upright is the Lord;  
therefore shall he teach sinners in the way.

He will guide the humble in doing right  
and teach his way to the lowly.

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth  
to those who keep his covenant and his  
testimonies. **R**

**GOSPEL READING**

LUKE 1:57-66

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbours, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

**POST COMMUNION**

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**