

ST. NICHOLAS, NEWPORT, LINCOLN, LN1 3DP
Registered Charity Number: 1133977
www.stnicholaslincoln.org.uk
3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
12th December 2021

TODAY

9:00 am Family Eucharist

Hymns: 46; 108; 727; 486

10:30 am Parish Eucharist

Hymns: 46; 38; 727; 475

THIS WEEK

MONDAY

8:45 am Morning Prayer

10:00 am Church open

TUESDAY

8:45 am Morning Prayer

10:00 am Funeral – Rita Desforges

7:30 pm Concert – Music for Christmas

WEDNESDAY

8:45 am Morning Prayer

9:30 am Said Eucharist

10:00 am Church open

THURSDAY

8:45 am Morning Prayer



9.30am-11.30am - ST. NICK'S NIPPERS
Worship & Coffee & Friendship for young
children and those who have care of them.

FRIDAY

10:00 am Church open

SATURDAY

10:00 am Church open

4:00 pm Festival of Lessons and Carols

NEXT SUNDAY – 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

9:00 am Family Eucharist

10:30 am Parish Eucharist

4:00 pm Christingle Service

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK

<u>SUNDAY 19TH DECEMBER</u>	<u>WEDS 22ND DECEMBER</u>
Micah 5:2-5a	1 Samuel 1:24-end
Magnificat	Psalm 113
Hebrews 10:5-10	Luke 1:46-56
Luke 1:39-45	

FROM THE VICAR

If you grew up in the 1970s, like me, you will perhaps remember the early moments of the musical *Godspell*, when St John the Baptist sings 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' It's an arresting entrance, interrupting the cacophonous 'Tower of Babble' with a simple yet cryptic message.

Today's focus in our reflections and in our worship is St John the Baptist, and that message is a good place to start. We should notice immediately that it was

not, in fact, St John, who came up with the slogan. The words are those of the prophet Isaiah. All four gospels link them to the ministry of John the baptiser. This was what he came to do, to prepare the way of the Lord. That was how he himself understood his role, and how the church has understood it ever since.

For John, there was a clear way to go about this. The obstacles that stood in God's ways were (and are) human sinfulness in all its varieties. Selfishness, greed, injustice, and violence called (and call) for repentance, a comprehensive rejection of the past and re-orientation of life around God's commands. John co-opted a ritual to enact this repentance – baptism. Its double-symbolism of death and re-birth, of cleansing and purification, meant (and mean) nothing less than total conversion.

Many people these days think that repentance is mostly about feeling guilty and ashamed. That's really not the case. There is no good in feeling guilty while keeping on doing the things that make you feel that way. In the long run, that is just a recipe for emotional disorder. What is needed is deep, real and lasting change, of heart, mind and behaviour.

As St John the Baptist recognised, this kind of change is not something that repentance alone can bring about. Repentance *prepares* us to receive what only God can give, the grace that changes us from the inside out, taking away both the fact of our guilt and the feelings that accompany it, and empowering us to live differently from now on.

That is the astonishing gift that we are preparing for in this season of Advent, the gift that comes first in the Christ-child at Christmas. We are all busy preparing for that celebration in lots of practical ways. If we listen to St John the Baptist, we should give some thought also to our inner preparations. What obstacles to God's love and grace are there in our lives? Is it time to recover our baptism by repenting afresh from everything in us that stands in God's way?

May God bless you all,

Hugh

PARISH INFORMATION

Vicar: Rev'd Dr Hugh Jones

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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

THANK YOU, HUGH

Sunday, December 26th will be Hugh's final day as our Incumbent. However, owing to popular demand and pre-planned holiday arrangements for so many of the congregation, Hugh has accepted an invitation to return to St Nick's on 9th January for a 'proper goodbye'. He will preach and preside at 10:30 – this will be the *only* service that Sunday.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

We wish Margaret Sawyer a very happy 90th Birthday, with love and congratulations from all at St Nick's.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Our Christmas 'special' services are as follows:
Festival of Lessons and Carols – 18th December
@ 4:00 pm

Christingle Service – 19th December @ 4:00 pm

Crib Service – 24th December @ 4:00 pm

Midnight Mass – 24th December @ 11:30 pm

Christmas Day Eucharist – 25th December @ 10:00 am

All are welcome.

COVID RESTRICTIONS

Following recent government announcements, it is now compulsory to wear face masks when attending acts of public worship, unless you are specifically exempt. For the safety of all those who worship with us, please respect this requirement.

VIRTUAL POSADA

The Posada, our travelling crib set, is virtual this year. You can watch our video as many times as you like, and pray that as you welcome Mary and Joseph into your home you will be made ready to welcome Jesus into your heart. The link for the video is:

<https://youtu.be/JwtTWdg7r8c>

(You may need to copy the text of the link into your browser to access the video.)

'MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS' - A CONCERT

TUESDAY 14TH DECEMBER, 7:30 PM

The University of Lincoln Chamber Choir and Chamber Orchestra will perform an exciting selection of vocal and instrumental music for Christmas, here at St Nick's, this coming Tuesday night. Entry is free, no ticket is required, and a retiring collection will be made for our Church. Do come along!

LIFTS TO CHURCH

We have some people who find it difficult to get to church, would there be anyone prepared to give them a lift? Please contact the office if you can help. *Carolyn Jones*

CAROL SERVICE & MINCE PIES

We will be taking donations of mince pies for the Christmas Carol service from now until Wednesday 15th December. The service is on Saturday 18th December at four o'clock, so please ensure that the use by dates are after that date. Please leave donations on the refreshment table.

CHURCH KEYS

If you have a church key – of any sort – that you no longer need, would you please return it to the Parish Office or to Sandra Gratrack as soon as possible.

FAIR TRADE GOODS

I am still able to obtain fair trade goods, the sale of which benefits the church and the producers. However I shall not be able to operate a monthly stall with goods on display. I have catalogues for people to browse, both the Christmas Gift Guide and the main autumn/winter edition from which goods may be ordered. If interested, please speak to me at church or by telephone on 526783. *John Simmons*

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FROM THE TREASURER

First, I would like to thank all the members who have continued with their giving during this difficult year. This has helped keep us afloat. However, as we start to renew our usual activities in this final quarter of the year we are now spending more than our income. So I am sending out a plea for the New Year and hope people will think it is time to increase their giving. No matter how small, every little will help. We are due a visit from the Covenant Team asking us to review our Parish Share. In lieu of this visit I have budgeted for our projected income requirement for the coming year to be £7,086 a month in order to cover the committed expenses. Based on our current income which is £5,907 we have a shortfall of £1200 every month that needs to be made up by fundraising, centre lettings, legacies, drawing on reserves and other fees. I trust these figures will give you an idea of our position for the coming year. Thank you taking the time to read this appeal. *Sandra Gratrack*

REGULAR GIVING

Those who have used numbered envelopes this year will receive new envelopes for 2022 during December. These will be boxes of 52 weekly envelopes. Just use the one with the date nearest the date of your donation and discard the rest. Envelopes are the most expensive and time-consuming way for us to collect regular donations. Perhaps you could consider a different method?

The **Parish Giving Scheme** is our preferred method and costs us next to nothing in bank charges and manhours. You can register online at <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/> Or, you can set up a standing order to pay directly into our current account. Contact me on 01522 520729 or 07722 121161, or at joanberesford1@gmail.com, for the account details.

Regular giving is vital to our plans for mission and development at St Nicholas'. If you are not yet a member of one of our schemes, make this the day you start. Do not hesitate to contact me if you need more information.

Joan Beresford – Planned Giving Officer

READINGS

Sunday 12th 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

ZEPHANIAH 3:14-END

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgements
against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

CANTICLE

A SONG OF DELIVERANCE (ISAIAH 12:2-6)

Refrain: All the earth, shout and sing for joy.

Surely God is my salvation;

I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the Lord God is my strength and my might;
he has become my salvation. **R**

With joy you will draw water from the wells of
salvation. And you will say on that day:

Give thanks to the Lord,
call on his name;

make known his deeds among the nations;
proclaim that his name is exalted. **R**

Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.

Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,

for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. **R**

SECOND READING

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.
Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord
is near. Do not worry about anything, but in
everything by prayer and supplication with
thanksgiving let your requests be made known to
God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all
understanding, will guard your hearts and your
minds in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL READING

LUKE 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized
by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to
flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of
repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We
have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is
able from these stones to raise up children to
Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of
the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear
good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'
And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we
do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two
coats must share with anyone who has none; and
whoever has food must do likewise.' Even tax-
collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him,
'Teacher, what should we do?' He said to them,
'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for
you.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should
we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from
anyone by threats or false accusation, and be
satisfied with your wages.'

As the people were filled with expectation, and all
were questioning in their hearts concerning John,
whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all
of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one
who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not
worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will
baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His
winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-
floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but
the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'
So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the
good news to the people.

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 15th 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**