

REFLECTIONS

St John's account of our Lord's involvement at the wedding at Cana in Galilee is well known, providing us with an insight into his relationship with his mother and the early impressions made on the twelve men that recently had been recruited as his disciples. As we try to imagine the situation then, a number of questions may come to mind, and we are not given all the answers! It is good to read that our Lord attended and would have enjoyed this happy social event. It is interesting that we are not even told the names of the happy couple - John's focus is on Jesus. Responding to his mother's plea for his help, Jesus took control of the situation. I find myself thinking of the part played by the servants at this wedding. There were told to fill those six huge water jars with between 120 and 180 gallons of water. That would have been some task in itself and they might well have done it with great puzzlement as to how this was going to help. Worse than that, they are then told to draw from these jars and take some of the content to the master of the feast! We know what followed! Jesus had taken the ordinary gift of water and changed it into the best quality wine. He had responded to the need and in so doing he had, said John, manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him. There are a number of things to reflect on here, may I suggest three. It is an encouragement to us to pray - and not just for 'religious matters' but for any part of life. It also reminds me that Jesus can [and does] take the equivalent of water and transform it into wine, that is a picture to me of the transformed life when Christ is welcomed in. I am also reminded by this first of seven signs in John's Gospel, that these were indeed signs that point us to who Jesus is, and that it is by seeing who he is, and believing on him, that we may have a new life transformed by his living presence with us.

The key to this incident, and a phrase for us to think and pray about could be Mary's words, 'do whatever he tells you...'

John Risby

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES ONLINE

Services in church remain suspended until further notice. The following services are available across the team - full details on the website and the email bulletin. They will all take place on Zoom unless otherwise indicated.

SUNDAY

St Mary's Saffron Walden

10.00am Holy Communion President: Andy Colebrooke
on Zoom and YouTube

St James Swards End

9.30am Simple Family Service Leader: Chris Bishop

St Botolph's Hadstock

9.30am Holy Communion President: Paula Griffiths

All Saints Ashdon

9.30am Holy Communion President: Caroline Curren

St Mary's Debden

9.15am Holy Communion President: John Saxon

Cam Villages

10.00am Family Communion President: Alex Jeewan
Preacher: John Risby

TUESDAY

5.00pm Evening Prayer (Zoom) Leader: Judith Hasler

WEDNESDAY

9.30am Holy Communion (Zoom) President: Chris Bishop

The Grapevine

COVERING THE PARISHES OF SAFFRON WALDEN,
WIMBISH, DEBDEN, ASHDON AND HADSTOCK.

Welcome to our services today

Third Sunday of Epiphany

Week of Christian Unity

24th January 2021

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: *Genesis 14.17-20*

After Abram's return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

Gospel: *John 2.1-11*

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Post Communion

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.



See St Mary's Church, SW, website at www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org to find out more.



Please 'Like' our Facebook page so we reach more people! Click on the link on our website, or go to: www.facebook.com/saintmaryschurchsaffronwalden

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

In January please pray for: **Saffron Walden Community Church, Saffron Walden County High School**
The family and friends of those who have died recently:
Margaret Pedder (Dawn Saxon's mother), Jean Towlson, Rosemary Burns, Betty Brown

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

One of the results of this extended lockdown is that some of us have re-discovered the joy of reading books! One can have so much television! We start by tidying up and rearranging [and dusting!] our books and then we may pick one up and start reading! Last week I was doing that and found a book that I had forgotten about, then started to dip into it. It is called 'A bunch of everlastings' by Frank Boreham and has contributions from 23 people with Bible texts that shaped their lives. Most of the names I knew, Luther, Wesley, William Wilberforce, David Livingstone, Spurgeon,.....but the one that caught my eye was the chapter about John Bunyan. I learnt that his favourite text appears in all his writings and it is clear that the Lord used those words to great effect in his life. John Bunyan in his autobiography describes how he had been so low and dispirited, and that he felt that God was distanced and that he was a lost soul. And then he came across these words,

'whoever comes to me I will never cast out...'

John 6.37

It was, indeed, just like a light that had suddenly shone into his darkness, and it resulted in great joy and assurance of his relationship with the Lord! In his most famous book, 'Pilgrim's Progress', written in Bedford jail, these are the very words that Christian sees as he enters the gate and sets out on his pilgrimage, they are over the portal of the pilgrim path, **'he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out!'** The rest of the chapter spells out the reasons why John Bunyan so valued these words.

What a lovely verse of Scripture to hold on to through these testing days. It was a special verse for John Bunyan, and for each of us!

With love and prayers,
John Risby

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

O God our Father, we thank you for the gift of your Holy Word. We pray that as we read it, we may not only be made wise unto salvation, but also that we may know the joy and assurance of our salvation, rejoicing that whoever comes to you, will never be cast out, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Mon 25th	Morning Psalm 66 & Philippians 3:1-14 Evening Psalm 119:41-56
Tue 26th	Morning Psalm 36 & 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Evening Psalm 145 & Matthew 26:17-35
Wed 27th	Morning Psalm 46 & 1 Corinthians 10:14-11.1 Evening Psalm 29
Thurs 28th	Morning Psalm 47 & 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Evening Psalm 24
Fri 29th	Morning Psalm 65 & 1 Corinthians 11:17-end Evening Psalm 67
Sat 30th	Morning Psalm 68 & 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Evening Psalm 72

NEWS

ONLINE SERVICES are listed on the back page. Full joining details are available on the weekly email bulletin and on the website. Please email Dawn if you would like to be added to the bulletin distribution list.

LIVE WORSHIP by phone - you don't need a computer or tablet to join our services from home. If you would like to know more please contact Judith Hasler on 525041 or John Saxon on 541619.

PRIVATE PRAYER St Mary's, Saffron Walden is closed during the current lockdown. All Saints, Ashdon, remains open every day. St Botolph's, Hadstock will be open by appointment only.

HYMNS AND PRAYERS SHEET - the sheet issued for Christmas and Epiphany will continue to be used for Wednesday services and for private prayer until the end of January.

THE PARISH PRAYER DIARY has been updated and is available for download from the Prayer page of the website. Paper copies available by contacting the Parish Administrator.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2021 St Mary's is unable to hold an HMD event this year, but if you would like details of a streamed event which will go out at 7pm on **Sunday 24th January**, please contact Rufus Barnes by phone on 523776 or by email on loavesandfishes@ymail.com. The Wednesday Zoom communion on 27th January will also include this theme.

LENT MODULES A series of courses offered across the Diocese in Lent, most on Zoom, costing from £15 -£25 per course. This includes **The Big Screen and the Bible**, based on issues raised in the film, The Man who knew Infinity, which will be led by our own Andy Colebrooke and Angela Want. Contact the Parish Office for more information and a booking form.

HOME MADE MARMALADE for sale at £2 a pot for church funds available from Lesley Green. Please telephone 01799 521356 to place an order and arrange delivery. Lesley still has Bullace and Victoria Plum jam for sale if anyone is interested - same price.

PRAYER DIARY The Parish Prayer Diary has just been updated and circulated. It will be kept up to date on the website and Alan Curren has kindly agreed to oversee it. If you have any questions, please contact him. As Joe Hordern retires, we thank him for doing such a great job in starting it and keeping it steadily going so diligently and faithfully. *Sue Walker*

We are having an **ONLINE COMPLINE SERVICE** on **Sunday 21st February** led by Marisa Baltrock. There will be a workshop/practice at 5.30pm with the service beginning at 6.30pm. Anyone wishing to have a singing part should contact Bron Ferland by Monday 8th February. Details of how to join the service will be available nearer the time. Email: bronferland@yahoo.co.uk

All items for the **GRAPEVINE** should be sent to secretary.swrectory@ntlworld.com by 9.00am on Wednesday.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS The Parish Administrator is available by phone or email on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9.30am - 12noon. The office is not currently open to personal callers.

MINISTRY TEAM

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Revd Alex Jeewan	01799 531153
Revd John Saxon	01799 541619
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