

REFLECTIONS

I do enjoy a good film but, to be honest, I prefer a good book.

If you have a group watching the same film, they are following the same story, with the same characters before their eyes, living out the story line with the same scenery etc.

If you had the same group of people reading the same book, the story would be the same but, because of the pictures in their minds and their imaginations, the characters would all look different and the scenery conjured up by the writer would be different to each reader. Books are so much better for the imagination!

Thousands of years separate us from the writers of the Epistle and Gospel for today, and human understanding about the world and so many other things have changed in that space of time. Now, with 21st century eyes and minds, we read the sometimes strange and yet uplifting things people wrote back then. In recent generations, biblical scholars with knowledge of languages and archeology, to name but two skills, reflect upon what has been handed down to us, and so, when we read, they help us picture what was happening back then. We need their help to enrich our minds and understanding.

Words written by contemporaries of our Lord were people of a different world view, yet also people of faith. The words of Mark, with all its urgency of 'listen and take note' as he speeds through his account of Jesus' life and ministry, and 1 Peter, with words of a new generation of baptised people and a new world in the making, are there to encourage us. Generation after generation have read the same words but with different pictures in their minds, just as a group who meet together for Bible Study will have different insights to share.

Chris Bishop

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 Family Service

Leader: Tracey Nicholls

Talk: Matt Williamson

6.30pm Compline Led by Marisa Baltrock & St Mary's Choir

St Botolph's Hadstock

9.30am Holy Communion

President: Paula Griffiths

All Saints' Ashdon

9.30am Holy Communion

President: Caroline Curren

All Saints' Wimbish

9.15am Holy Communion

President: John Saxon

Cam Villages

10.00am Iona Service

Leader: Alex Jeewan

Preacher: Alan Curren

3.30pm iChurch

Leader: Alex Jeewan

TUESDAY

5.00pm Evening Prayer

Leader: Sue Walker

WEDNESDAY

9.30am Holy Communion

President: Paula Griffiths

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



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

The Grapevine

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

Welcome to our services today

First Sunday of Lent

21st February 2021

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; 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: 1 Peter 3.18-22

Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you – not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Gospel: Mark 1.9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Post Communion

Lord God, you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven; by it you nourish our faith, increase our hope, and strengthen our love: teach us always to hunger for him who is the true and living bread, and enable us to live by every word that proceeds from out of your mouth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Jeremy and Alison Trew and their family as they move to Saffron Walden
 In February please pray for: **Our Lady of Compassion Roman Catholic Church, St Thomas More School**
 Those who are unwell: **Wendy Nicolson**

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

Without a doubt, everyone's life has changed in many ways since this time last year. If it hasn't changed, you must have been living on a self-contained desert island with no access to outside communication! For one reason or another, our awareness of time has also been affected. Slowness of time, frustration that certain 'good times' have been missed and the presence of 'bad times' in the news are all shared experiences. In a nutshell, we are all changed people.

But what might that mean? Are we angry people, are we impatient people, are we despairing people? Has our faith in our fellow human beings and in human nature been diminished or enriched? Has our faith been challenged? Have we begun to think of life differently because of the limitations of our ability to move about and fill up our time with all sorts of activities?

What we are going through is completely unprecedented. Perhaps the nearest we could get to it would be to liken all this to a 'World War Three'; being under assault by an unseen enemy, enormous casualties, communities being encouraged to work together to combat the foe, and trust being placed in the skills of those who will be able to produce the weapons to defeat the enemy. Unlike warfare of the past, when the faithful gathered together in prayer in the face of the threat, we are, this time, scattered.

Yet, despite everything, the wonders of science come to our aid with great inventions like ZOOM. So, face to face we can, imperfectly, still worship together.

Here we are for our second Lent under the Covid restrictions. We have been here before and so we hold on to our traditions, our worship, our reflections and prayers until we meet again face to face.

With prayers and love

Chris Bishop

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Lord, make us, your church, into the people you want us to be, and forgive us where we fall short. Teach us to be generous in judgement, and sensitive in listening; where we find no love, let us bring love, and make us more like you. Amen.

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Mon 22nd	Morning Psalm 11 & John 5:1-18 Evening Psalm 13
Tue 23rd	Morning Psalm 44 & John 5:19-29 Evening Psalm 49 & Galatians 4:8-20
Wed 24th	Morning Psalm 6 & John 5:30-end Evening Psalm 28
Thurs 25th	Morning Psalm 42 & John 6:1-15 Evening Psalm 142
Fri 26th	Morning Psalm 22 & John 6:16-27 Evening Psalm 55
Sat 27th	Morning Psalm 63 & John 6:27-40 Evening Psalm 4

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.

STEWARDSHIP: a reminder to please respond to our letter on planned giving circulated last week. You can email David Birchall treasurer@stmaryssaffronwalden.org or send the response form to the Parish Office. Thank you. *Denis & Gill*

BEDTIME CHURCH 21st February 6pm. We look forward to welcoming children aged 0-7 years and their parents/carers to this short Zoom session featuring songs, a Bible story, prayers and a special gift from Barnaby Bear. Please contact Alison Knights for the link alisoncinque@hotmail.com

CAM VILLAGES LENT COURSE - What on Earth is the Church for? A reminder and a challenge as we remember God's purposes for His church. Open to everyone - weekly meetings in Lent on Zoom on Wednesdays from 7.30-8.30pm starting on **24th February**. Please register your interest with Alex Jeewan vicar.camvillages@gmail.com

LIVE LENT Booklet of Daily Reflections still available from the Parish Office - contact Dawn if you would like one.

QUINQUA QUIZ IN AID OF THE BISHOP'S LENT APPEAL will be held on Zoom on **Saturday 27th February** at 7.30pm. More information on p 19 of the Parish News. Contact Chris Bishop 01799 523722 to register.

DATES FOR DIARY:

Wednesday 3rd March 7.30pm Institution, Induction and Installation of Rev. Jeremy Trew as Team Rector and Area Dean by the Bishop of Colchester and the Archdeacon of Stansted. This service will be livestreamed to YouTube from St Mary's, Saffron Walden.

Saturday 13th March A LENT ZOOM QUIET MORNING from 10am (Zoom opens from 9:50) to noon led by the Rev Hilary Davey. **LOVE IN THE TIME OF COVID:** finding God's Hope in difficult times. This will be an opportunity to reflect on our personal experiences, good and bad, of this last year; ponder what we have learnt and want to retain and find hope for a still uncertain future. All are welcome. *Sue Walker*

THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE scheduled for 5th March cannot take place, collectively, this year due to Covid restrictions. However, service booklets can be delivered to your home by 'phoning 01799 501381, in order for you to read this personally and share with the ladies of Vanuatu who prepared it. You may wish to join a Zoom or YouTube service by entering wdp.org.uk and typing in "Cambridge". Should you wish to make a donation to WDP, please use the envelope provided in the book or a plain envelope. These will be collected by 'phoning the above number, and sent to WDP as gifts from Saffron Walden Churches. *Ruby Parsons*

MINISTRY TEAM

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