

# St Mary's Newsletter - 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021

As usual, this is in hard copy, via email & on the church website: <https://www.stmarysacocksgreen.org>

**'Baptism of Christ' Service is on 'St Mary's Acocks Green' YouTube channel – 'Playlist' version:**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od\\_umSYUyDw&list=PLOq\\_5jU3L9SXXWRGwdIspyZ7hFTtCTYgi](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od_umSYUyDw&list=PLOq_5jU3L9SXXWRGwdIspyZ7hFTtCTYgi)

**\*You may like to Light a Candle, sit down and watch this video at 10am on Sunday morning.\***

**If you cannot view the service – you may like to light a candle and use the sheets to say a service at 10am.**

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## Service + Collect & Readings on separate sheets

### Hymns for the week:

O Worship the Lord

Be Thou my Vision

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytBTMr0K\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytBTMr0K_I)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AdBkJurR4&t=41s>

### The Thought

We continue the season of Epiphany: the revealing of Jesus to the world. Last week it was to the wise men. This week it is at his Baptism by John the Baptist in St Mark's Gospel. We have gone straight from the Babe of Bethlehem to Jesus as a grown man. It's a shock to the system, but there is very little in the Bible between Jesus' birth and the beginning of his grownup ministry.

St Mark's Gospel goes straight into Jesus' adulthood anyway. It's chapter one and four verses in John the Baptist is dressed in severe clothes, living in the wilderness and existing on a bare diet of locusts and honey; a wild man in aspect, clothing, eating and lifestyle – everyone in those days would have seen him as a prophet; an aesthetic challenging all Jews to revisit their faith and belief. And they responded, knowing that this authentic prophet could see right through them to their true selves. It was natural to confess their sins honestly, laying themselves open to this trustworthy man of God. Their reward? God's forgiveness in the symbolic washing of Baptism. A new start for them with God.

But, John says, this takes you only so far. He then speaks of a greater and worthier one to come, who will take them further, as he will baptise with the Holy Spirit! Jesus is the One! We are then given the treat of the description of his Baptism in the presence of the Trinity: the loving voice of the Father, the descending of the dove-like Spirit, all onto the incarnate Son of God, confirming his deity as well as his humanity! But this is not just telling us about Jesus. His Baptism and revelation as the Son of God takes us straight to our own Baptism, whether it was only a little while past or at the start of our lives; for he has travelled our way in life so that we can travel his way, to eternal life.

So, we move on from the Christmas birth to our relationship with him in Baptism. We are reminded of the washing. By more than a splash of water, it is actually symbolic of full immersion into the cleansing, forgiving love of God. Needing Jesus' death on the Cross to complete it, we all received the sign of that Cross on our foreheads. Because of God's cleansing forgiveness, the Church has then added an extra symbol to our baptism: a candle symbolising the Light of Christ. Having His Light within ourselves, we are to take out to the world God's Light and Love.

So from Jesus' human beginnings, we remember our own in his faith, one which we take out to others, even in, especially in, this pandemic. For every person on the planet is in need of God's Light and life. And if we do this, we will receive his blessing, as Jesus received from the Father, 'You are my child, my beloved, with you I am well pleased.'

### Intercessions

Give thanks for your baptism, with its promise of God's cleansing forgiveness, healing and light for you, the Church and the world. Pray for strength for Bishop David and Bishop Anne in the Lord's service, and for St Mary's fellowship as it has to close its doors again.

Pray for wisdom for the Queen and all in authority, especially as the nation enters another lockdown. Pray for family and friends, that they may gain the support they need.

Pray for the safety of emergency service workers, for medics and health workers, together with members of our armed forces, as they work together to deliver coronavirus testing and vaccinations.

Remember the United States as it deals with civil unrest, and for all nations in the world struggling with political and economic uncertainty. Remember fellow Christians in Nigeria, the Sudan, Turkey and the Middle East and ask for the Lord's comfort and solace upon them during these trying times.

Pray for the victims of racist and sexist abuse that they may receive support. Lord, bring an end to bigotry in all its forms.

Pray for the Sick, especially.... **Phil Lee, Barbara Paul, Chris Bootes, Dave Job, Michael Brailsford, Callum Shorthouse, Anthony Page, Neville Round, Stella Skillen, Pat Kennedy, Rev John Self, Rev Bill Sands, Christine Law, Irene Storm, Christina Hanson, Belinda Quill, Mary Wood, Susan and Doreen Draper, Susan, Waj Murad, Muriel Cook, Roger Peckett, Hazel King, Jean Myers, Maxine Powis, Donna Cockran, Peter, David, Jean & Denis Ward, Mike Kidd-White, Lynn, Evie-May Flowers and others we call to mind.**

And recently Departed..... **George Robinson and Josie Green**

And in our Year's Mind..... **Robert Worrall, Claire Law and Ann Gardner**

## St Mary's Church closure – a message from Fr Andrew

With so many people affected by the new variant of Covid-19, Bishop David has given churches permission to close. So, for everyone's safety, the PCC and I have decided that St Mary's has to close for Public Worship.

We will keep up Online services on YouTube via email and St Mary's website and Facebook page.

**\*Please continue phone contact with your St Mary's friends and reassure them with your prayers\***

**Family News** – For your prayers: a new member, Phil Lee, who is having an eye op on Saturday (9<sup>th</sup>).

**St Mary's Birthdays** - belatedly to Daniel Job 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan and to David Treadwell on 11<sup>th</sup> Jan.

**Magazine** – Could you write an article for the February Magazine? Perhaps in the 'It happened to me....' Series about an experience of God or on any subject that might be of interest. This is an important way of us keeping in touch with one another when we are not able to mix. Please email [stmarymagazine@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stmarymagazine@yahoo.co.uk) or deliver articles to Aimee or the Vicarage by 17th January.

**Cuppa and Catch Up Zoom Meeting** – As the church is once again closed, Aimee has set this up for us at 11.15am on Sundays in lockdown.

Here is the link which Andrew will also email out to you with the service details.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76475180821?pwd=N3lPWFIJQUUpEci9xRkV6K01aODJ1dz09>

Meeting ID: 764 7518 0821

Passcode: PBf6Xa

**Swan Group Candlemas Zoom Service** - On Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 4pm, we will be having a joint Zoom service for Candlemas with St Cyprian's and St Michael's. We hope that all who are able to access Zoom will join us for this special service which ends the Christmas Season.

### **Church Finances**

**\*\*Thank you for your continued generosity in 2021 !!\*\***

**Stewardship Envelopes** - There will be a collection at church on Sunday *or deliver them to the Vicarage.*

**Cheques** are payable to 'St Mary's PCC' & ***paying online by BACS***, 'St Mary's Parochial Church Council'  
bank details are: **Barclays Bank, Solihull Branch Sort Code: 20-77-62 Account No: 53215512**

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**For further support, please ring Fr Andrew on 0121 706 9764 (answerphone available)**