

REFLECTIONS

One of the most important phrases in today's gospel is that the "heavens were torn apart". At his baptism, Jesus began a journey which ended in his death when, we are told, the veil of the Temple was rent in two, from top to bottom. Now we can all enter the holy of Holies or, in the words of St. Paul, we can enter without fear before the throne of God and call God Abba, Father.

By going into the Jordan waters, Jesus was making himself our scapegoat, the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world. Because God is not confined by our concept of time (as we are especially at New Year) and all time is totally before him at any given second, this action of Jesus would directly impact upon every sin committed from original sin until the end of time. Later on, with both arms extended on the cross, he would embrace the past and the future in the total outpouring of the now.

As with Jesus, our baptism is but the beginning of a journey. In baptism we set out on a journey back home and, of course, the way ahead is made ready for us. Jesus is the way and he tells us that "they who follow me shall not walk in darkness but will have the light of life". We set out on a journey, to do battle with the forces of evil within us and around us. We know the result because we already have the victory. Our job is to proclaim that victory to others. Today's world is badly in need of good news, but how can we proclaim that victory if we do not experience it in our own lives?

Michael Lovegrove

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES ONLINE

With rapidly increasing levels of COVID in Uttlesford as well as wider afield, our churchwardens have decided that, for the safety of all, we should suspend having congregations in church 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: Michael Lovegrove
on Zoom and YouTube

St James Swards End

9.30am Simple Communion President: Chris Bishop

St Botolph's Hadstock

9.30am Holy Communion (BCP) President: Paula Griffiths

All Saints Ashdon

9.30am Holy Communion President: Caroline Curren

St Mary's Debden

9.15am Sunday Praise Leader: John Saxon

TUESDAY

5.00pm Evening Prayer (Zoom) Leader: Joe Hordern

WEDNESDAY

9.30am Holy Communion (Zoom) President: Angela Want

SAFFRON WALDEN & VILLAGES TEAM MINISTRY

The Grapevine

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

Welcome to our services today

Baptism of Christ

10th January 2021

Collect

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; 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 1.1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Gospel: Mark 1.4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.' 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.'

Post Communion

Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



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:

The family and friends of those who have died recently:
Revd. Jeremy Collingwood, Margaret Pedder (Dawn Saxon's mother), Jean Towlson, Barbara Wickenden,

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

A new year gives us the opportunity to think about the past even as we enter into the future. Paul knew how to reflect on and come to grips with the past. However, his preoccupation was with the present, with the future, with what is and what is to come. His chief goal, his primary aim, was "to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering". But then he would confess that he was not there yet; he was not yet whole, not yet perfect, but his mind was focused on the destination:

"I press on...forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus"

The year 2020 has been a dreadful year for the world, for our nation and for many individuals. Loved ones have died, jobs have been lost and businesses have failed. Many have suffered with Covid-19 and its effects and our doctors, nurses and carers have been put under great pressure.

But new vaccines bring new hope. So as a new year begins, I pray that it may mark a turning point for the world and for our nation and in our own lives, as we forget what lies behind and press forward toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

With my love and every blessing for the year that lies ahead,

Michael Lovegrove

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Almighty God, who hast given us thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life; Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (Book of Common Prayer).

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Mon 11th	Morning Psalm 2 & 1 Corinthians 1:1-17 Evening Psalm 34
Tue 12th	Morning Psalm 8 & 1 Corinthians 1:18-end Evening Psalm 45 & Matthew 21:18-32
Wed 13th	Morning Psalm 20 & 1 Corinthians Chapter 2 Evening Psalm 47
Thurs 14th	Morning Psalm 21 & 1 Corinthians: Chapter 3 Evening Psalm 61
Fri 15th	Morning Psalm 67 & 1 Corinthians: Chapter 4 Evening Psalm 68
Sat 16th	Morning Psalm 33 & 1 Corinthians: Chapter 5 Evening Psalm 85

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 Church, Saffron Walden, is open on Wednesdays and Sundays between 2pm and 4pm. All Saints, Ashdon, is open every day. St Botolph's, Hadstock will be open by appointment only. NB. We are waiting for detailed guidance on whether this can be continued during the current lockdown.

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.**

REVD. JEREMY COLLINGWOOD'S FUNERAL will take place in St Mary's on **Friday 15th January** at 10.30am. Whilst only close family will be able to attend in person, the service will be livestreamed and can be viewed on YouTube via the church website.

A MEETING OF THE SAFFRON WALDEN PCC will be held on Zoom on **Wednesday 13th January** at 7.45pm. *Lisa Brook (PCC Secretary).*

MOTHERS' UNION We are sorry to report that our meeting on 14th January at 2pm is cancelled. There will only be further meetings when government restrictions are lifted. Members will be notified when that happens. *Helen Hawkes*

THANK YOU to all those who had Christmas Crackers from Diana - it raised £240 for church funds. She hopes you enjoyed them!

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.

FLOWER TEAM Due to present Covid restrictions I will not be issuing any Rotas until Easter. *Pam Russell*

AMENDED PARISH OFFICE HOURS The Parish Administrator is available by phone or email on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9.30am - 12noon, but no longer on a Tuesday. The office is not currently open to personal callers.

Foreign and British commemorative **STAMPS, CURRENCY & BRITISH COINS** and notes that are no longer in circulation, please hand to me or St Mary's Parish Office. All proceeds go to Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. *Margaret Walter*

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

IS THERE MORE TO LIFE THAN THIS?

You are invited to explore questions of life and faith with others on an **Alpha Course**.
Wednesdays 8-9.30pm 13 January - 24 March or
Thursdays 2-3.30pm 14 January - 25 March
Online via Zoom. Ideal to invite family and friends along to seek faith or just come by yourself! *John Saxon*

MINISTRY TEAM

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Revd Alex Jeewan	01799 531153
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