

## REFLECTIONS

The Book of Malachi comes at the close of the Hebrew scriptures, and has, therefore, the last word on what those scriptures have to say. The prophet warns us to expect God's coming to be an uncomfortable, alarming affair. I remember as a boy that sometimes I would get extremely muddy. That was when my mother would put me in a bath of very soapy hot water, and if I did not do it myself, she would come and scrub me all over until I was clean again. Malachi says God's coming will be a bit like that: he'll use the strongest soap, and he'll scrub and scrub until all the dirt is gone. 'Who can endure the day of his coming?', asks Malachi. Surely, it is the one who does not fear him and succumbs to the soap and the scrubbing brush, uncomfortable though that may be.

### Going deeper...

Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus to the Temple where they are greeted by the old man Simeon. He realizes that what he holds in his arms is the very thing he has longed for and prayed for all his life. Now that life is near its end he is filled with joy, as he humbly prays: 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.' These words have formed the evening prayers of generations of Christians as they have closed the day in simple trust of God's care. Simeon's song recognises that God's promises go beyond the borders of Israel and encompass the whole Gentile world, but Mary is told that salvation will not be achieved without opposition and much pain.

### I wonder...

In times of crisis when things are not easy, we may be more alert to God coming to us in unexpected ways, be it a purging or a new life experience. How can I see God coming to me in fresh ways?

Andy Colebrooke

## 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: John Sibson  
on Zoom and YouTube

#### All Saints Ashdon

9.30am Holy Communion President: Caroline Curren

#### All Saints Wimbish

9.15am Family Holy Communion President: John Saxon

#### Cam Villages

10.00am Iona Morning Prayer Leader: Alex Jeewan

### TUESDAY

5.00pm Evening Prayer (Zoom) Leader: Alan Curren

### WEDNESDAY

9.30am Holy Communion (Zoom) President: Alex Jeewan

# The Grapevine

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

**Welcome to our services today**

**Presentation of Christ in the Temple**  
**31<sup>st</sup> January 2021**

### Collect

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

### First Reading: Malachi 3: 1-5

Thus says the Lord God: See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

### Gospel: Luke 2.22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.' There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanael, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

### Post Communion

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna, who lived to welcome the Messiah: may we, who have received these gifts beyond words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.



See St Mary's Church, SW, website at [www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org](http://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](https://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:  
**Betty Brown, John Bullen, Joyce McGeehan**

## MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Life brings many puzzles, some easy to solve, others seemingly intractable. When our daughter was very young, before she could read, she loved singing along to hymns and choruses. One day she came to us and asked, 'What's a dance settee?' We couldn't see what she meant until she sang, 'I am the Lord of the dance settee.' Then we understood.

Forest Gump said that life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get. Hazel and I have found that life can also be like a crossword puzzle, since the clues to life's questions can be cryptic and fiendishly difficult. We regularly attempt the crossword in The Church Times, which has a distinctively ecclesiastical flavour and can be peppered with jaw-cracking bible names. We find that it is best attempted together since our minds work in strangely different directions, which combine to good effect.

Then again, life can seem like a jig-saw puzzle; there is great satisfaction when pieces fit snugly together and a bigger picture begins to emerge, but at other times nothing seems to work leaving us frustrated.

At the moment there is much puzzling about virus variants, vaccines, and how we are going to get out this pandemic. There have been some things that have clearly been misunderstood and views have had to change. These puzzling times have highlighted the need for many minds to work together, to see the bigger picture, find where the pieces fit, and discover the route out of this crisis.

The same can be said of the Christian life. None of us holds all the answers or has a vantage point to see the complete picture. But in Jesus and his promise, 'I am with you always' (Matthew 28.20), we have enough to see us through. Also, let's be encouraged by St Paul, 'For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.' (1 Corinthians 13.12)

With love and prayers,  
Andy Colebrooke

## PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Today, O Lord, I yield myself to you.  
May your will be my delight.  
May your way have perfect sway in me.  
May your love be the pattern of my living.

Richard Foster

## BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

<b>Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Feb</b>	Morning Psalm 1 & 1 Corinthians 12:12-end Evening Psalm 4
<b>Tue 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Morning Psalm 5 & 1 Corinthians: Chapter 13 Evening Psalm 9 & Matthew 27:27-44
<b>Wed 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Morning Psalm 119:1-32 & 1 Corinthians 14:1-19 Evening Psalm 11
<b>Thurs 4<sup>th</sup></b>	Morning Psalm 15 & 1 Corinthians 14:20-end Evening Psalm 18
<b>Fri 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Morning Psalm 19 & 1 Corinthians 16:1-9 Evening Psalm 22
<b>Sat 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Morning Psalm 23 & 1 Corinthians 16:10-end Evening Psalm 24

## 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.

**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.

Caroline Curren will be leading a series of **WEEKLY ZOOMED MEETINGS DURING LENT** focussing on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 'Living his Story'. She is calling this an 'accompanied journey' during which we will share our responses to the book, which has discussion questions at the end of each chapter. There will be an evening meeting on Thursdays, but if there is sufficient interest, an afternoon group may also be possible. For more details and to register your interest, contact Caroline on [c.curren@btinternet.com](mailto:c.curren@btinternet.com) as soon as possible, but by 10<sup>th</sup> February at the latest.

**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 24<sup>th</sup> February. Please register your interest with Alex Jeewan [vicar.camvillages@gmail.com](mailto:vicar.camvillages@gmail.com)

**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.

We are having an **ONLINE COMPLINE SERVICE** on **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> February. Details of how to join the service will be available nearer the time. Email: [bronferland@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bronferland@yahoo.co.uk)

**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.

**FEBRUARY'S PARISH NEWS** is available on the website at <http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews>

## MINISTRY TEAM

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