



St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh

WORSHIPPING AT HOME

Advent 3

Sunday 13th December 2020

WELCOME to our Worshipping at Home resources for this week, provided for us by The Rector, Canon Roy Woodhams and the Revd Rutton Viccajee.

THIS WEEK (*Events in **red** will be online events*)

Sunday 13th December – Advent 3:

8.00: Holy Communion (CW).

10.00 (**Zoom**): Church at Home.

11.00: Holy Communion (CW). **Also livestreamed.**

11.15 (**Zoom**): SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code is ID: 148-785-166)

From 16.00: Virtual Christingle Service (Livestreamed).

Tuesday 15th December

12 noon: Holy Communion (1662)

Thursday 17th December

10am: Advent Reflection: 'Peace'

(Words and Music as we prepare for Christmas)

Friday 18th December

11am: MU Christmas Communion (CW)

Sunday 20th December – Advent :

8.00: Holy Communion (1662).

10.00 (**Zoom**): Church at Home. (*Continued*)

11.00: Holy Communion (CW). Also livestreamed.

11.15 (Zoom): SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code is ID: 148-785-166)

**From 15.00: Village Service of 9 Lessons and Carols
(Pre-recorded with our own choir and Livestreamed).**

RULES AND REGULATIONS in connection with COVID-19 are changing fast at the moment – we will make every effort to keep you up to date with what’s happening!

If you know of anyone who does not have internet, and who would like a written communication from us each week, please email:

nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk or call the Parish Office on 01483

273620. I am aware that this Christmas is going to be challenging and

difficult for many people, so please feel free to contact either Nicola, or

myself (roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk 01483 800655), if you have, or are

aware of, any particular pastoral or practical needs during this time.

ADVENT 3:

COLLECTS:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming
sent your messenger to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

OLD TESTAMENT READING: *Psalm 126*

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter
and our tongue with songs of joy.
Then said they among the nations,
'The Lord has done great things for them.'
The Lord has indeed done great things for us,
and therefore we rejoiced.
Restore again our fortunes, O Lord,
as the river beds of the desert.
Those who sow in tears
shall reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed,
will come back with shouts of joy,
bearing their sheaves with them.

GOSPEL READING: *John 1:6-8, 19-28*

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him,

‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord”’, as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

SERMON (for Sunday, written by Revd Rutton Viccajee):

Psalm 126 v1: When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream...! A great psalm of joy and praise.

Verses 1 to 3 talk about a restoration *past*, and a time of great delirium as we come back with joy to a restored temple perhaps, but the rest of the psalm is very clearly about future restoration and hope, and not past events. Redemption has not yet happened in the second half. So, which is it? Are we looking back in Psalm 126, and saying thank you God for amazing deliverance, or are we looking forwards and anticipating future hope in God? And which one is better?

And currently, do we look back on 2020, and thank God for much deliverance from a very difficult year? Or, do we look forwards to next Christmas 2021, and maybe removing those masks and putting them in the bin?

Well, I think there's a lot to be said for looking forwards. At this time of year, we often quote those wonderful Isaiah passages from Isaiah 40 onwards, which speaks so often about remembering not the former days, or considering the things of old, because God says I'm about to do a new and a wonderful thing.

Conversely, Ecclesiastes says "Do not consider the former times better than these. For it is not out of wisdom that you say this". He is saying, don't long for the 'good old days' because they probably only exist in your imagination! It's a mistake to look back in that way. So, looking back can be a mistake. Looking forwards in faith, and pressing on, is so often the better option.

But Psalm 126 seems to do both. So, how do we reconcile this? Which way do we jump? Forwards, or back?

I think the good thing about looking forwards positively is that it is filled with faith. There is a Latin phrase *respecie finem*, which means, look to the end, press onto the goal. A theme is very much taken up by Paul in Philippians 3 for example, where he says "I am pressing on! I want to run the race with purpose, I want to finish the race, I want to win the crown of gold God has in store for me".

The idea of unlocking the power of looking forwards in faith, and not looking back, comes up often in all walks of life.

But what's the problem of looking back? Wouldn't we all like to rescue the family photograph album from the burning house? Well, there are good things about looking back and thanking God for His many blessings. Yes that's true. But there are also many traps. Here are just two traps of looking backwards: fear and complacency.

Complacency first: Jesus says the rich fool looks back on his life and says I've done well! I'll build my barns even bigger to store all the good stuff that I've accumulated. That's complacency. And it has a sticky end. But there is also a danger of looking back in fear. If I said to you the name John Landy, will it ring any bells? John Landy was the runner of the four-minute mile with Roger Bannister, Bannister's name I suspect is much more familiar to us. But they were *both* under four-minute mile runners, and they were both the first to do it. But Landy isn't remembered much, *except as the man who looked back at the crucial moment*, possibly with a touch of fear at being overtaken, and thus famously lost his race with Bannister.

Fear and complacency. Looking forwards seems the safer option. Where does that leave us on 13th of December? Looking forwards or back? You might say the question is irrelevant. I've got too many problems now! I have to get through today! Or this week. Enough of your past and future tenses! We've got Covid, we got distancing, we've got lack of social contact, we got isolation, we've got a thorough and utter disruption to our normal social lives, particularly with Christmas coming up. Never mind forward or backwards - what have you got to say to us *now* from Psalm 126?

Well, look again at those last verses. Those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. What it is saying is this: let's get through the hard times now, because *resurrection is coming, and also now is*.

Psalm 126 is one of those wonderful old Testament passages that refers indirectly to resurrection. We look forwards not because we are empty optimists, or because we polish up our shaky faith in the future, and hope for the best. No. We look forwards because we believe in the

transcendent truth of resurrection. Because one day we will be changed into his likeness, and exchange one degree of glory for another.

And so, we sow in tears, because life can be hard. But we also sow in faith. Despite the tears, indeed through the tears, there is a steely gleam in our eyes. Because we know that God *can and does* make all things new. Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

SEASONAL PROVISION (to be used at the Live-streamed Communion)

ADVENT CANDLE LITURGY

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT: The Promise of Joy

SCRIPTURE: *“I will rejoice in the Lord greatly; my whole being shall exalt in my God; for he has clothed me with the garment of salvation.”*

LITANY:

Leader: Our response is **“O God, give us joy.”**

Leader: Lord, through your prophets you have promised us your joy. You have declared good news to those who are oppressed. R

Leader: We continue to place our hope in your promise, O God, to bind up our broken hearts. R

Leader: We depend upon your promises, Giver of Joy; your promise of freedom to all captives. R

Leader: Lord, we wear our baptismal garment; help us to know that our only garment is You. R

Leader: We take comfort in your promises to us and await you with joyful and expectant hearts. R

(The third Advent Candle is lit)

PRAYER: God of the Good News, the promise of your joy draws us to the manger. As we approach Jesus' birth, let us kneel and adore him. Let us bow down before the mystery of Emmanuel —God with us. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Invitation to Confession:

When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

Introduction to the Peace:

In the tender mercy of our God,
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Extended Preface:

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.

For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world
to open for us the way of salvation.

Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,

we now watch for the day

when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.

And so we join our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven

to proclaim your glory,

for ever praising you and *saying:*

Blessing:

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,

scatter the darkness from before your path,

and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;

and the blessing

WEEKLY PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

Church and Christian Ministry:

- For all Church Musicians, Organists, Choirs, Music Groups, Bell Ringers, and all who enhance our worship through the arts.
- For our own Musicians,(especially for Michael Clarke, our Director of Music and Chris Robinson our Captain of Ringers).
- For all churches working to provide stimulating and creative worship resources both live and online this Christmas.

National and World Affairs:

- For our government and for guidance in the making of difficult decisions as we leave the European Union on 1st January.
- For research scientists working on vaccines, and for all affected by Coronavirus, and those whose livelihoods are at risk.

Community and Family:

- For those who live in Northdowns.
- For the Industrial Units in our Village.
- For all the businesses in our High Street, struggling as a result of COVID.

The Sick and those in Need:

- Jane Bloss, Ray Corver, Mike Ford, Stefan Godier, Stella Goldsmith, Michael Hart, George Hill, Amy and Dennis Loveless, Libby O'Brien, Brian Pettyfer, Jean Quallington, Jean Sandow, Jack Sieber, Bert and Eileen Steed, Maureen Steele, Dennis and Rosemary Talbot, Marion Tomkins, Mac Walker, Frances Webb, Angela Wild, Henry Young and Nicholas (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Amanda and Hugh, Tim Bailey, Michael Burt, Barbara Crabb, Sarah Godwin and John Davies, William Mason, Sally Rivett, Sue Simper, Jacky Williams, Bill and Tracy Wood, Alli, Judy Bolt, Sue and Dennis Evans, Sheelagh Thomason, Lorna Thompson, Sami Bennewith*).

The Departed:

- All we have known and loved, and especially Peter Hoad. (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Ann Lilley, Dru Ridley, Roger Styles*).

WEEKLY NOTICES:

Items with a blue heading are new or updated this week!

CAROLS IN THE CHURCHYARD Now that it is permissible to sing outdoors, we will be having a Carol Singalong in the Churchyard at 5pm on Tuesday 22nd December. Social distancing is vital (2m between family groups/bubbles, and individual attendees will need to take responsibility for their own safety and those around them. Words will be provided, so please bring a torch!

NEW YEAR WALK Sadly we won't be able to have a New Year's Day walk and lunch this year. So, have a stroll and raise a glass to St Nicolas friends, on Friday 1 January. Happy New Year to us all!

ST NICOLAS ADVENT CALENDAR Our 'virtual' Advent Calendar started on 1st December, on our the church website. You can see familiar faces and hear familiar carols along with beautiful pictures and verses to help you prepare for Christmas. There is something to be found for all ages as the days of December unfold! www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

COMING TO CHURCH Now that we are open again, we will be operating a more stringent entrance and exit routine to minimize the risk of passing on COVID-19. Please be prepared for this when you come to church, and please do not arrive more than 20 minutes before the due start time! **For the following services you will need to book a place in advance The cut off date for doing this will be 12noon on Tuesday 22nd December:**

24th December, 11pm 'Midnight' Communion

25th December, 8am Holy Communion

25th December, 11am Holy Communion

ADVENT REFLECTIONS There are two remaining Advent Reflections, with words and music to help us prepare for Christmas. Sessions, still to follow:

17th December at 10am: 'Peace' (presented by *The Rector*)

24th December at 10am: 'Hope' (presented by *Revd Tim Clifford Hill*)

CRANLEIGH LIONS: Do visit the newly established Cranleigh Lions weekly market stall, where you will find a wide selection of donated items that are being sold to raise funds to help those in need in our community. They have new additions every week and some great present ideas, ranging from Bird Boxes to Books and Bikes and Beyond!

TRAI DCRAFT: Sue Knight is offering Traidcraft goods for sale by appointment or would be willing to deliver to Cranleigh on receipt of an order. She will have catalogues or you can go on line at traidcraftshop.co.uk to see the whole range and if she has to order it in, this usually takes about a week. You can pay for any orders by BACS or she will accept cheques. Call Sue on 275032 or 07950 025137.

GIVING TO THE LIFE AND WORK OF ST NICOLAS CHURCH During this year of pandemic lockdown, St Nicolas Church has lost several large income streams – The Rectory Fete, Gift Day, income from the Church Rooms, and the casual gifts made by people who worship at and visit the church! One of the times that we get a lot of cash donations is from the thousands of people who pass through our doors at Christmas, and that is not going to happen this year.

During lockdown, the work we do has continued to thrive and even expand:

- Continuing to offer a vibrant and relevant programme of worship (on-line and in printed form, as well as continuing worship in Church when we have been able to
- Offering Pastoral Care of those who have not been able to get to Church
- Supporting those who have been bereaved or who are experiencing serious illness
- Engaging in a new way with young families and children, through the amazing on-line programme that Gabrielle has put on
- Engaging with Community Groups in supporting the vulnerable
- Being a beacon of hope, shining the light of Christ into a dark time

Our Finance Team have been working hard to restrict unnecessary expenditure, but setting the budget for 2021 has been very challenging, and the PCC have been forced to agree to a deficit budget! If you are someone who would normally donate through one of those streams, I do ask you to consider making a donation this Christmas to support the ongoing work of St Nicolas, as we move into another year, even if you are not able to be with us in person. Cheques should be made payable to 'Cranleigh PCC' and can be sent to our Treasurer via the Church Office, or you can contact the Office about other ways of giving electronically etc. And please don't forget to Gift Aid if you possibly can! This also gives me an opportunity to say a huge thank you to so many who have 'stepped up' to help us avoid making a big deficit in 2020!

We have also arranged for the ability to donate up to £20 via text message. For a one-off donation: Text the word **stnics** followed by a space, followed by the amount (up to £20) you wish to donate in numbers to 70470. e.g: Send '**stnics 10**' to 70470 for a one off donation of £10. After you have donated, you will receive an additional

text message regarding gift aid, if you are able to, please follow the guidance in that message.

Please send notices for next week to Margie Nursey at
1, Elm Cottages, Smithwood Common (01483 273693)
notices@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk by **7pm on Tuesday**

KEEP IN TOUCH:

The Rector - Revd Canon Roy Woodhams

(Day off: Monday)

Tel: 01483 800655. Email: roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

The Curate - Revd Tim Clifford Hill

(Day off: Monday)

Tel: 01483 276267. Email: tim@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

The Part time Curate - Revd Rutton Viccajee

(Works Wednesday, Friday, Sunday)

Tel: 01252 910212. Email: rutton@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Interim Administrator - Nicola Craven-Smith

(Works Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.30-2.30)

Tel: 01483 273620. Email: nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Young People's Minister - Gabrielle Clarke

Tel: 07427 748408. Email: gabrielle@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

**Church Website: www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk
and on Facebook.**