



St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh
WORSHIPPING AT HOME
St John the Evangelist
Sunday 27th December 2020

WELCOME to our Worshipping at Home resources for this week, provided for us by The Revd Peter Poole.

CONGRATULATIONS to Peter and Sheelagh Poole, as they celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary today!

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

Sunday 27th December (St John the Evangelist):

11.00: Holy Communion (CW). **In Church and Livestreamed**
ALL AGE WORSHIP for today is provided by Guildford Diocese

Tuesday 29th December

12 noon: Holy Communion (1662)

Thursday 31st December

10am: Time for prayer

Sunday 3rd January – Christmas 2:

8.00: Holy Communion (CW). **In Church and Livestreamed**
10.00 (**Zoom**): Church at Home.

11.15 (Zoom): SEA Church (for young people)
(the Zoom joining code for both of these is ID: 148-785-166)
11.00: Holy Communion (CW). In Church and Livestreamed

ST JOHN, EVANGELIST AND APOSTLE:

COLLECT:

Merciful Lord,
cast your bright beams of light upon the Church:
that, being enlightened by the teaching
of your blessed apostle and evangelist Saint John,
we may so walk in the light of your truth
that we may at last attain to the light of everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ your incarnate 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 John 1.*

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with

the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

GOSPEL READING: *John 21.19b-end*

(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?' When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about him?' Jesus said to him, 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!' So the rumour spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say

to him that he would not die, but, 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?'

This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
that the Word made flesh
proclaimed by your apostle John
may, by the celebration of these holy mysteries, ever abide and
live within us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON (written by The Revd Peter Poole):

December 27th 1960 was a very cold day with a severe frost in the morning. However the sky was cloudless and we had total sunshine until about four in the afternoon. I arrived at St Oswald's Norbury in time for the eleven o'clock Service. On my arrival I was greeted by Sheelagh's uncle who asked, "What relationship are you to the bride?" I replied, "Actually I am the bridegroom!"

Subsequently, at the reception this same uncle made this comment. "Seeing this wedding has taken place between the feast

of St Stephen, the first martyr, and the feast of the Innocents, I wonder who is the martyr and who is the innocent.”

Without boring you too much with personal details I think it is important to give you a brief outline of how we got to our wedding and what happened in the first five months. We had met at a Summer School in Broadstairs where we were both on the staff, Sheelagh for a fortnight and me for four days before starting my theological training at Wells. We immediately found a mutual attraction, but sadly, after those four days we were parted for the length of my first term. We met up again briefly at half term and agreed that we wanted to be married. We got engaged at the start of 1960, but, again, for most of the year until the Wedding we were apart from each other.

It did not stop there, for I was not due to be made a deacon by God through Archbishop Fisher until the end of May. The Archbishop knew the situation and said this to me. “It will be difficult, but don’t make it more difficult than it is!”

What all this means is that, from the time of our meeting until seventeen months later, we were more absent from each other, than together. Which makes it all the more miraculous that we are still as madly in love today as we were when we first met. Indeed I would go so far as to say that we are more in love now than we were then.

But all this does raise the question as to what love is and how it is expressed in our relationships one with another. Obviously because we are physical beings the physical aspect of love is vitally important especially when we are young. Yet somehow that aspect for us was held in abeyance until we had been married for five months. And then of course we were faced with what was to become the biggest challenge to our relationship, the fact that I had given my love and devotion to God through becoming, first his deacon and then his priest. How was I to love my God with heart and mind and soul and body while at the same “forsaking all others be faithful to Sheelagh”. I have to admit that I did not manage it very well and as Sheelagh once put it, “How was I to argue with God?” Yet there was this something between us which helped us through all the strains and stresses which continued until we retired and came to Cranleigh at the beginning of 1999. At my farewell reception at Chalfont St Giles Sheelagh told the assembled company, “He’s mine now!”

I hope this has not been too much personal unburdening because I hope that is getting us to look at what love is. Today we think of St John the Divine who through his writings has, probably more than other of the Gospel writers, spoken of love in its various aspects. In his Gospel we have the marriage at Cana in Galilee. We have the wonderful meeting of the foreigner at the well. We have the emotional reaction at the graveside of Lazarus. We have the reaction to the woman taken in adultery. We have the relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene with her being the only one to

be at the foot of the cross when Jesus died. Then we have the encounter between those two in the garden on Easter morning.

At the end, just before the passage which forms today's Gospel, we have the conversation between Jesus and Peter where Peter's honesty is tested to the full. In our English translations the impact of this is minimalised for we have just the word "love" for a translation of different words for love in Greek. They had three or four different words to differentiate between the various aspects of love which we often miss.

For love is many faceted. Obviously, as I said at the beginning, the physical is very important. But within the one word there is compassion and understanding and forgiveness and much, much more. Again St John helps us with that great saying of Jesus. "Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends" Indeed Jesus went one further than that in that he lay down his life for his enemies as well.

Which brings us to our relationship with God and his with us. God is love and that means that, whatever happens, we are loved by him. However we behave we can be assured that He will never cast us off. A message most clearly shown, not this time by St John, but by St Luke who gives us the parable of the Prodigal Son.

So that is our faith. And when we fully accept it then we respond to the full to him, and using the words of the Lord's Prayer endeavour to say, "Thy Will be done."

I return to my personal thoughts at the beginning. There I showed that Sheelagh and I, having instantly fallen in love managed to live without the usual expressions of young love for seventeen months. So in the last months since March we have had to readjust to life without the usual ways of worship, especially the receiving of the bread and wine. But what we have perhaps come to realise is that, important though these things are they are not indispensable. It is possible for God to show His love for us without these signs and we can show our love for Him without them.

So, as Sheelagh and I thank God, for what he has helped us to do over the years, let us all spend some time contemplating the full nature of love. And why not as the last thing you do at night before you go to sleep, turn to God in thought and say out loud “I love you”, just as Sheelagh and I say to each other after we have prayed the Lord’s Prayer and a prayer for our home.

WEEKLY PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

Church and Christian Ministry:

- For Bishop Andrew, Bishop Jo, Archdeacon Martin Breadmore, Archdeacon Paul Davies and their staffs that they may transform the lives of those in this diocese into a closer relationship with God.

- For our own Church Ministry Team as we approach a new year.

National and World Affairs:

- For our government, seeking to bring about a Brexit solution.
- For our nation at this time of crisis.
- For those whose role it is to administer the delivery of Covid vaccinations around the UK.

Community and Family:

- For those who live in Durnsford Way.
- For Waverley Borough Council.
- 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, Darcy Wigfield, 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, Norman Edsall, William and James Mason,*

Sally Rivett, Sue Simper, Jacky Williams, Bill and Tracy Wood, Alli, Judy Bolt, Sue and Dennis Evans, Lorna Thompson, Sami Bennewith)

The Departed:

- All we have known and loved, and especially Kit Gibson (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Dru Ridley, Sheelagh Thomason*)

WEEKLY NOTICES:

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

THANK YOU To Everyone who worked so hard to make Christmas at St Nicolas happen this year:

- Our Ministry Team
- Our Churchwardens
- Our Musicians and Bellringers
- Those who decorated the church so magnificently
 - Our 'Tech' Team, providing worship on-line
 - Our Churchyard Team

COMING TO CHURCH – RULES AND REGULATIONS in connection with COVID-19 are changing fast at the moment – **Our entry to Tier 4 has not significantly changed the regulations, but cases in our area are definitely on the increase and the danger is significant. If you are able to access our worship on-line, you**

may want to consider not coming to church for the next few weeks in order to reduce the risks to yourself and others. We will make every effort to keep you up to date with what's happening, but it should always be remembered that our printed material may have gone out of date by the time you read it!

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.

TRAIDCRAFT: 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.

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.**