

Diocese of Chester Cycle of Prayer

Sunday, 31 January to Saturday, 27 February 2021



Sunday, 31 January 2021

Fourth Sunday of Epiphany (The Presentation, transferred)

The value of prayer isn't necessarily that God will do wonderful things for us immediately we ask. The real value of prayer isn't as a sort of fourth emergency service to cling to in dire straits, it's more a lifeline to God. It keeps us connected to God. And through that lifeline, God can nourish us. So that gradually, those who have been closely connected to God can begin to recognise the holy in the ordinary. Simeon and Anna were such people, they had spent years in prayer.

In greeting the baby, Simeon and Anna seem not to look at any of the things older people usually remark on when it comes to very small children. Nothing about who the baby looks like; nothing about eye-colour or quantity of hair; and no exclamation about good looks. When Simeon and Anna saw Jesus, they were led to see something more than who he resembled, what the colour of his eyes were, or how curly his hair.

Simeon's words are specific and pointed – he saw in Jesus an instrument in God's salvation, and someone who would extend the possibility of salvation beyond the limits of those of the Jewish faith – to all people. And with the promise comes a threat. He will be opposed, says Simeon, and Mary herself will know the pain of that opposition in the keenest terms. The close of the season of nativity already has about it the shadow of Passiontide.

Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil

Monday, 1 February 2021

1701 Acton

C: Anne Lawson.

Give thanks for the 'Follow the Star' walk, the Nativity scene in the churchyard and the outdoor Nativity on Christmas Eve provided a focus for the wider community to celebrate Christmas. Please pray that different ways would be found of connecting with the community at a time when we cannot open the doors of the church, and as we consider ways in which we can continue to use the building as a community resource once the community can gather again.

Acton C of E School.

All Saints Cathedral, The Anglican Church of Kenya

Tuesday, 2 February 2021

Candlemas

1702 Audlem

C: Alison Fulford. LM: Anne Draper, Jill Williams.

Please pray for folk who are feeling isolated and also our church school communities.

Audlem St James' C of E School.

Aluakluak, The Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan

Wednesday, 3 February 2021

1703 Baddiley

C: Vacant, Dorothy Woods. LM: Elizabeth Falding, Ron High, Roger Howarth, Cynthia Gorton.

GOD OUR FATHER

You have welcomed each one of us in Jesus
and called us to be His Body in this place;

Send us your Holy Spirit,
at this time of uncertainty and change,
to fill us with vision, energy,
and faithfulness in prayer,

that we may be true to our calling
to bring new life to our community;
And guide with your heavenly wisdom
those who are to choose a new Incumbent for this parish,
that the one whom we receive
may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people:

ready to serve us with joy,
to build us up in faith,
and to lead us by example
in loving obedience to your son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen

Amazônia, Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil

Thursday, 4 February 2021

1704 Burleydam

C: Vacant, Dorothy Woods. LM: Elizabeth Falding, Ron High, Roger Howarth, Debbie Rowlands, Cynthia Gorton.

GOD OUR FATHER

You have welcomed each one of us in Jesus
and called us to be His Body in this place;
Send us your Holy Spirit,
at this time of uncertainty and change,
to fill us with vision, energy,
and faithfulness in prayer,
that we may be true to our calling
to bring new life to our community;
And guide with your heavenly wisdom
those who are to choose a new Incumbent for this parish,
that the one whom we receive
may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people:
ready to serve us with joy,
to build us up in faith,
and to lead us by example
in loving obedience to your son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen

Amichi, The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Friday, 5 February 2021

1705 Church Minshull

C: Anne Lawson.

Give thanks that the long awaited re-ordering, finished just as lockdown began in March, has enabled services to be held safely with people very well spaced out. Please pray as we continue to work out the right balance and blend of new expressions of worship and traditional worship.

Amritsar, The (united) Church of North India

Saturday, 6 February 2021

1706 Coppenhall

C: John Leal.

Everlasting God,
you have ordained and constituted
the ministries of angels and mortals in a wonderful order:
grant that as your holy angels always serve you in heaven,
so, at your command,
they may help and defend us on earth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, now and for ever.

Andaman & Car Nicobar Islands, The (united) Church of North India

Sunday, 7 February 2021

Second Sunday before Lent

In our thinking often our God is 'too small,' as the Bible translator JB Phillips once put it.

This is the 'Second Sunday Before Lent' as our liturgical Christian calendar has it. An inelegant term it seems to me – it implies preparation for the period of preparation. I've often thought it could be something of a dampener to the proper keeping of Lent. But today's readings have made me think again.

Yes, soon our whole focus will be, as it should be for Christians, the Cross of Christ, but we must see that Cross in the light of the story's beginning. These first verses of John are most familiar to us from Christmas services – that's where we must begin. Yes, it is the case that the death of Jesus is the terrible consequence of human sin, but God's dealings with us don't begin there. God is not the celestial repairman who zaps in to fix what's wrong, but who otherwise would have remained nothing more than an add on Google.

God does indeed act to save us from sin and bring us back to himself. Through the weeks of Lent we will think on that, we will pray on that, we will make our confessions, we will strive to know the immensity of that giving, but never, never, forget that the love that is uniquely expressed in the human Jesus is the same love that the world has known from the beginning – the eternal Word who was there at the beginning, the creative source of all life, 'All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being' (John 1.3).

The Anglican Church of Burundi

Monday, 8 February 2021

1707 Crewe All Saints and St Paul

C: Oliver Igwe. LM: Anne Marshall.

Please pray for recovery from our challenging circumstances, growth in our faith, outreach, and numbers. Pray for strong collaboration and commitment in our journey towards a new benefice with St Andrew and St Peter, and that we would have a greater desire to follow Jesus Christ in all we do.

Saint Andrews Dunkeld & Dunblane, The Scottish Episcopal Church

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

1708 Crewe St Andrew with St John the Baptist

C: Oliver Igwe.

Please pray that our congregation will continue to draw spiritual strength from our online services and that the ministry of our Pastoral Team will continue to bring comfort and relief to our older members. Pray that we continue to get the resources and support we need to continue our outreach in our communities through the Lunch Crewe and ministry to asylum seekers, and that these outreaches continue to bring relief to those in need at this time. Pray that our ministry with children and young people continues to flourish.

Anglican Missionary District, Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil

Wednesday, 10 February 2021

1709 Crewe St Barnabas

C: Ralph Powell.

Angola, The Anglican Church of Southern Africa

Thursday, 11 February 2021

1712 Crewe St Peter

C: Oliver Igwe. LM: Jim Shepherd.

Please pray for an end to the pandemic, so that we can welcome the community back into our church and celebrate together. Pray for an Associate Minister for our three churches, that God is already placing this on someone's heart that they may see the advert and be thinking of joining us. Pray that our telephone befriending service – Two's Company – provides friendship and relief to people who feel isolated.

Ankole, The Church of the Province of Uganda

Friday, 12 February 2021

1713 Crewe Green

C: Jane Lloyd. LM: Linda Clarke, Anne Thompson, Ron Taylor.

North Ankole, The Church of the Province of Uganda

Saturday, 13 February 2021

1714 Doddington

C: Alison Fulford.

Please pray for folk who are feeling isolated and also our church school communities.

Bridgemere C of E School.

Northwest Ankole, The Church of the Province of Uganda

Sunday, 14 February 2021

Sunday next before Lent

So much in life is mysterious. I often don't even understand the terms. Neutrinos are the fundamental particles which make up the universe. Black holes are regions of spacetime from which nothing can escape, not even light. Pseudo-randomness, are numbers which look random but aren't. And what is the Higgs Boson – the so-called God particle, anyway? And that's just a tiny selection of the science archive of that extraordinary radio programme about ideas 'In Our Time'– go on to philosophy, culture, history, religion sections and you'll find more and more fascinating and mysterious stuff. Humanity knows such a lot, and yet the more we know the more there is to know. The Pandemic has made that all too awfully plain. So much is mysterious.

Albert Einstein, whose very name is perhaps synonymous in many minds with the quest to know and understand, wrote in 1930, 'The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious ... He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.'

Whatever else this account of Jesus transfigured before Peter, James and John on the mountain top is meant to convey to us, mysteriousness must surely be the first thing – his appearance was changed as they looked; even his clothes shone with an out-of-this-world radiance; and it is as if Moses and Elijah, both dead centuries ago, were actual there, talking to him; and then even God spoke. Mysterious indeed. No wonder we're told a cloud formed! Could anything be more clouded in mystery?

And that's perhaps a key. We assume that this workaday, worrisome, weary world is far removed from the joys and wonders of heaven, but maybe it isn't. Maybe eternity is only hidden, as if by a fog, only to suddenly to break into view when so unexpected. When I was still able to drive to work, I remember an evening when I had to drive home in thick, grey fog; then in a moment as I came over the brow of a hill the fog was gone, and all was streaming bright sunshine. A mile later and I was into grey fog again. Could it be that our lives are so often fogged up with things that we can't see the bright rays of eternity through them?

The Anglican Church of Canada

Monday, 15 February 2021

1715 Haslington

C: Jane Lloyd. LM: Linda Clarke, Anne Thompson, Ron Taylor.

South Ankole, The Church of the Province of Uganda

Tuesday, 16 February 2021

1716 Leighton-cum-Minshull Vernon

C: Catherine Cleghorn. LM: Elizabeth Morris.

Please pray for us and our new vicar as we continue to work together to build God's Kingdom here in our benefice. Please pray for all who work or are treated at Leighton Hospital. Please pray too for all at Mablins Lane school, giving thanks for our relationship with them.

West Ankole, The Church of the Province of Uganda

Wednesday, 17 February 2021

Ash Wednesday

1717 Nantwich

C: Mark Hart, Vanessa Layfield, Paul Wheeler. LM: Lynne Marsh, Paul Ramsey, Sue Caunt, Herbert Rowsell, Dot Roxby, Mary Harris, Susie Boxhall.

Please pray that we may both perceive and know what things we ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same.

Antananarivo, The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean

Thursday, 18 February 2021

1718 Weston

C: Rachael Griffiths. LM: Gaynor Bracey, Ginny Lewis, Margaret Hodgkinson.

Antsiranana, The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean

Friday, 19 February 2021

Joseph of Nazareth

1719 Wistaston

C: Mike Turnbull, Paul North. LM: David Illing, Ann Stubbs.

Araucanía, Iglesia Anglicana de Chile

Saturday, 20 February 2021

1720 Worleston

C: Anne Lawson. LM: Ann Nicholas, Isobel Burnley.

Give thanks with continued good relationships with Worleston CE School. Please pray for the school as a new Executive Headteacher for the Rural Church Schools Academy Trust is sought. Please pray for the church as it continues to explore different ways of sustaining appropriate worship and ministry in the parish.

St Oswald's Worleston C of E School.

The Diocese of the Arctic, The Anglican Church of Canada

Sunday, 21 February 2021

First Sunday of Lent

I find it hard to see grace at work in the Noah story. I've a feeling that the writer of the First Letter of Peter had a similar thought. He writes that Christ who suffered for sins once for all, alive in the spirit, made a proclamation to the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3.18-20). The crucified one proclaims good news to the disobedient even from the 'days of Noah.' Those who were not saved from the waters in the time of Noah are now saved by the waters of baptism into Christ's saving death – one for all. The watery death of so many failed to change human hearts, but now the death of one, saves many.

What the flood prefigures is what water signifies – ultimate corruption and death – but that corruption is overcome by the loving one who passes through those deep waters to signify not death, but grace. God's response to sin is grace – unending and immense, wider than any flood. If God's hand was stayed while Noah built the ark for the few, now God's hand reaches out in order to bring you to him (v.18). God's hand reaches beyond death, destruction and the terror of the ages.

And that hope is there from the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. John the Baptist's baptism was one of repentance but when Jesus subjects himself to it, it becomes another prefiguring of his readiness to enter the waters of death for his people. Again, a voice from the heavens confirms the point, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased' (Mark 1.11) and nothing, not even a violent death, will overturn that promise. Terrifying aloneness and risk will not stop him. No hint of vengeance will mar his love. From the very start this Jesus will transcend the forces of evil.

The Church of the Province of Central Africa,

Monday, 22 February 2021

1721 Wrenbury

C: Vacant, Dorothy Woods. LM: Elizabeth Falding, Ron High, Roger Howarth, Debbie Rowlands, Cynthia Gorton.

GOD OUR FATHER

You have welcomed each one of us in Jesus
and called us to be His Body in this place;
Send us your Holy Spirit,
at this time of uncertainty and change,
to fill us with vision, energy,
and faithfulness in prayer,
that we may be true to our calling
to bring new life to our community;
And guide with your heavenly wisdom
those who are to choose a new Incumbent for this parish,
that the one whom we receive
may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people:
ready to serve us with joy,
to build us up in faith,
and to lead us by example
in loving obedience to your son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen

Argentina, The Anglican Church of South America

Tuesday, 23 February 2021

1722 Wybunbury

C: Alison Fulford.

Please pray for folk who are feeling isolated and also our church school communities.

Stapeley Broad Lane C of E School.

Northern Argentina, The Anglican Church of South America

Wednesday, 24 February 2021

St Matthias

1723 Wettenhall

C: Anne Lawson. LM: Ann Nicholas, Isobel Burnley.

Give thanks for the 'Christmas on the Back of a Wagon' drive in services which took place in a farmyard over Christmas. Please pray as we continue to find ways to reach out to a scattered and diverse rural community.

Argyll & The Isles, The Scottish Episcopal Church

Thursday, 25 February 2021

The Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary

1724 Warmingham

C: Catherine Cleghorn. LM: Helan isherwood, Elizabeth Morris, Peter Noden.

Please pray for us and our new vicar as we continue to work together to build God's Kingdom here in our benefice. Please pray too for all at Warmingham C of E Primary school, giving thanks for our relationship with them.

Warmingham C of E School.

Arizona, The Episcopal Church, USA

Friday, 26 February 2021

1725 Wheelock

C: Jane Lloyd. LM: Patricia Baker.

Arkansas, The Episcopal Church, USA

Saturday, 27 February 2021

Wirral South Deanery

Armagh, The Church of Ireland