

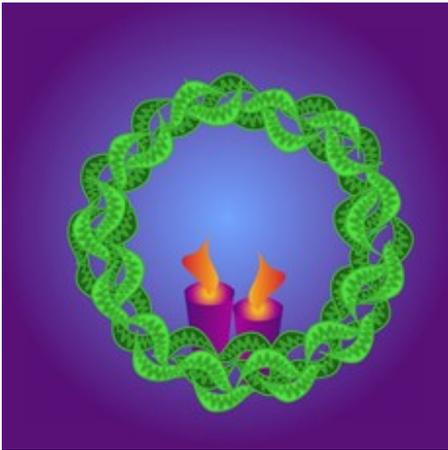
The Smestow Vale Team Ministry

St Benedict Biscop and the Venerable Bede

Keeping in Touch with our Church Family

Sunday 6th December

2nd Sunday of Advent



A reading from the prophet Isaiah

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah
Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!' See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

From Isaiah 40

Mark begins his Gospel. Good News.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,"' John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ
comes again as judge and saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God. Amen.

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.'

Mark 1:1-8

A Reflection from Sarah Malpass.

Getting ready....

When we think about getting prepared for the arrival of someone special, important, there is undoubtedly a sense of getting ready, a hive of activity to get things "just right".

Both Isaiah and Mark speak of this in our readings, with Isaiah speaking of preparing a way for the Lord, coming from the Babylonian custom of making ready ways for the coming of a victorious king, and Mark describing how John the Baptist was sent as a messenger to 'prepare the way for the Lord'. The call to us now is for us to prepare that way for Christ to come into ours, and others lives. Advent is the time we have to set aside for getting ourselves ready, preparing ourselves to encounter Emmanuel, God with us. And of course, this year, it has a different feel to it as we come out of lockdown 2.0. perhaps for many there is more of a sense of not being ready, all of a sudden the year is dwindling and before we know it, Christmas will be here. As such, panic about not being ready may set in. But, the sense of getting ready that the scriptures allude to here, is one of preparing ourselves, spiritually throughout advent. In years past, advent used to be a longer season, referred to as 'little lent' and in the orthodox and Celtic

tradition remains a longer period of 40 days. As such we can begin to understand how we might best prepare ourselves, using the other penitential period as an example. There is a tension to be had as a Christian at this time of year, a sense of wanting to hold both the joy and wonder of the season with our non-Christian friends and neighbours, whilst retaining the sense of “not yet”.

Getting prepared for Christmas....making the mince pies, ‘feeding’ the Christmas cake, wrapping gifts...all these are examples of getting ready for the joy to come but our greatest preparations we can make are those in which we consider what obstacles there are in our lives that prevent Jesus coming into our hearts. Then we might best prepare.

Sarah

Prayers for the Second Week of Advent

Sunday

Pray that the Holy Spirit we will remind us to follow our baptismal vows. (Mark 1: 5b, 8)

Monday

Pray for strength and wisdom in following Tier 3 restrictions.

Tuesday

Pray for a continued reduction in the numbers affected by Covid 19.

Wednesday

Pray for the Team clergy and other ministers.

Thursday

In this season of hope, thank God for the imminent vaccines.

Friday

Pray that ways will be found to support those businesses which are near collapse.

Saturday

Pray for victims of the virus in countries where health care is poor.

Please remember those who have asked for our prayers

Lisa, Morgan, Margaret Ward, Joy Waistell, Michael Concannon, Sarah Aldridge, Jane, Delma Scriven, George Moorhouse, Tony Bridgewater, Joan Edwards and Carl Baker.

Those who have died

Andrew Glazzard, David Dunn, Maureen Brennan, Christine Brown, Kevin Tanner, John Fogarty, Iris Pardoe and Veronica Waterworth.

Please send requests for prayers to the Parish Office.

Sundays in Tier 3

St Benedict’s will be open for private prayer through out the week. Next Sunday there will be:

8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Parish Communion.

Don’t forget that restrictions are still in place so it is **very** important to book with Hilary on 01902 892856 or by email hilmoore@gmail.com. Please telephone by 12noon on Saturday. There will be a service led by Paul on Facebook and on You Tube this Sunday.

From the Government Guidelines

In Church “, you must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble.”

“A household is a person or a group of people who live together in the same accommodation.”

“A support bubble is where a single adult living alone, or a single parent with children under 18, can form an exclusive network with one other household where social distancing does not have to be observed.”

“The 2 households that form a support bubble count as one household for the purposes of this guidance.”

Christmas Lights

The Christmas lights are twinkling on the Yews trees
If you would like to sponsor a set (£20 including batteries.) please give the money to Martin or into the Parish Office

Friday Coffee @ 11 with Sarah

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 779 6471 7903 Passcode: y6Zs9C

Need help with Zoom contact Sarah

Sarahm.horn@goolemail.com

Christmas cards

Due to the continuing Covid 19 restrictions and the advice on the handling of paper please do not leave Christmas Cards for collection church.

Foodbank

Today we have our traditional Christmas Food bank collection. . Please bring your donations with a Christmas theme to Church. They will be put in storage for three days before being sent to the Charity

Grapevine Magazine December/January

Disappointingly with the restrictions relating to the Covid 19 , we are unable to produce and distribute a printed copy of The Grapevine Magazine. Digital copies will be sent to those we have email’s for If you, or anyone you know who has not been on the previous mailing, would like a copy please send your email address to (office@stbenedictbiscop.org.uk) requesting a copy.