

# The Smestow Vale Team Ministry



**St Benedict Biscop and the Venerable Bede  
Keeping in Touch with our Church Family**

**Sunday 10th January**

**Celebrating the Baptism of Jesus**

Heavenly Father

at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:  
may we recognise him as our Lord  
and know ourselves to be your beloved children:  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **A reading from the beginning of Genesis**

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

*Genesis 1.1-5*

## **Mark tells of the Baptism of Jesus.**

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole 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.' In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

*Mark 1:4-11*

## **A Reflection on the Baptism of Jesus by Revd Preb Paul Brown**

it is amazing what a transformation soap and water can make, "Cleanliness is next to godliness" .... so my grandmother would be thinking as she asked her young grandson if he had washed behind his ears at bedtime.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness" .... that would have been a good slogan for the Jews. So, when John stood up to his waste in the river Jordan and encouraged people to be baptized, to have their sins washed away he was building on a tradition that was already a part of Judaism. But what was different about John's actions was that he suggested that the Jews needed to put their own personal relationships with God right. Symbolised by the washing away of the dirt in the waters of the river that brought life and fertility to so much of their country.

John was an innovator, but even he seems to have been surprised when he sees Jesus in the crowd... and he is even more surprised when Jesus asks to be baptised. Not quietly after everyone else has gone home, but publicly, in front of a crowd. All that had gone before had been on God's initiative. As an adult, Jesus is taking the initiative, he is speaking for himself, he is taking the incarnation one step further, he is saying that his Father's work ... is his work. So, by washing in the Jordan Jesus is putting his past behind him and he is preparing for a new beginning in his life.

The font, the place of baptism is a prominent feature of all of our churches. They are a reminder that part of being a baptised Christian is the duty to take part in the life of the Church. It is the duty to spread the good news

about Jesus. It is to play our part in washing away the dirt and grime that mars so much of God's creation.

Water, can only wash away dirt and grime from the surface. To get deeper you need something else... you need the Holy Spirit.

And so the Good news of the Gospel. The good news of the a new year, with the hope of mass vaccination and the defeat of Covid 19 is that the Holy Spirit is there waiting to clean away the tarnish of 2020. So tonight as we thank God for Jesus' baptism let us remember that the Holy Spirit is there for us too to guide, to strengthen to renew each of us as we play our part in the body of Christ.

*Paul*

### **Prayers for the Baptism of Christ (Epiphany 1)**

#### **Sunday**

Pray that we may live our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Mark 1: 8)

#### **Monday**

Pray for those who are unable to have their children baptized because of Covid restrictions.

#### **Tuesday**

Pray for wisdom concerning the opening of schools, and for those who learn at home.

#### **Wednesday**

Pray for the continuing roll-out of Covid vaccines in the coming months.

#### **Thursday**

Pray for a smooth transition for post-Brexit trade with Europe and the rest of the world.

#### **Friday**

Pray for strength and patience for all who have been shielding for the last ten months.

#### **Saturday**

Pray for strength, hope and love for doctors, nurses, and all who care for Covid patients.

### **Please remember those who have asked for our prayers**

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

### **Those who have died**

Michael Concannon, Keith Wilson, Patricia Mogford, James Rivett and Melvin Owen.

Please send requests for prayers to the Parish Office.

### **Thank you**

To those who helped take down our Christmas decorations in Church.

### **Lockdown and our Church**

It was with great reluctance due to the rising infection rate in all the parishes of our Team Ministry we have decided to suspend public worship on Sundays. There will be a service for the Baptism of Jesus on Facebook and YouTube.

This week it will include a reflection by the Bishop of Lichfield.

St Benedict's will remain open for private prayer.

### **Stewardship Envelopes**

Nigel Welch is preparing the new envelopes for 2021, which will be available in February. We are very grateful for your continuing support of our mission in Wombourne. During these difficult times many donors have converted to Standing Order, which has been very much appreciated. If anyone would like to change to or start a Standing Order, or to join the envelope scheme, or has changed any personal details, would they let Nigel Welch know ASAP please.

Contact: 01902 324111, womwelch@hotmail.com

### **Zoom Prayer Meeting**

With the news of a further lockdown and the decision that our churches will remain closed in the short term, we are hoping to offer a Prayer Meeting more often than once a month. The suggestion is that we meet on Zoom at 7pm on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, starting next Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup>. January.

It would be good to encourage lots of you to join us, even if you haven't been to a prayer meeting before. If you aren't used to Zoom, all you have to do is tell me that you want to come along, and I will send you a link by email. At the appropriate time, you click on the link and follow the instructions on your computer screen. If you're unsure, give me a call in advance and I will try to help.

The sessions last for half an hour: they are a mixture of music, a reading, prayer and silence. There is an opportunity for people to offer their own prayers, but no-one is under any pressure to speak- feel free to stay quiet, if that's what you want! I hope you will find it peaceful and relaxing.

Do think about giving it a try: let me know if you would like to come along next Tuesday at 7pm, by emailing me on [suewatson@telecomplus.org.uk](mailto:suewatson@telecomplus.org.uk) or phoning on 07932 175846 and I will send you the necessary email link.

