

# The Smestow Vale Team Ministry



## St Benedict Biscop and the Venerable Bede Keeping in Touch with our Church Family Sunday 24th January

### Epiphany 3

God of all mercy  
Your son proclaimed good news to the poor,  
release to the captives  
and freedom to the oppressed:  
anoint us with your Holy Spirit,  
and set all your people free  
to praise you in Christ our Lord. Amen

#### Abram meets Melchizedek

After Abram's return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

*Genesis 14.17-20*

#### Jesus is a guest at a wedding

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But

you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

John 2.1-11

#### A Reflection on the Marriage at Cana by Sarah Roberts-Malpass

Weddings at the moment may be smaller gatherings without parties afterwards, so much less chance of wine running out, but the passage in the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus as a guest where this unfortunate eventuality occurs. Unfortunate and possibly embarrassing for the wedding party, but illuminating and essential in showing something of the divinity of Jesus for the reader, contrasting elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel where John's portrayal shows Jesus with a whole range of emotions, revealing his human nature. Signs point helpfully to what we need to see - the signs in the Fourth Gospel point to the revelation of God's glory. This first of the seven signs (as John calls miracles) not only gets the wedding guests out of a pickle, so to speak, but helps the reader to see something of the abundance of God's generosity and exhibits Jesus bringing in the new messianic age.

The transformation at the heart of the passage changes a substance that is ordinary, every day, into something of the best quality, something extraordinary. Transforming as it does, water - life giving and freely obtained in its abundance - into vast quantities of the best wine in abundance, speaks of the blood of Christ given freely so that we may have life. Just as the abundance of loaves and fishes responded to the physical needs of many and the manna allowed the Israelites to flourish in the desert, the extravagant

generosity exhibited at Cana glorifies God and by pointing beyond itself enables a spiritual flourishing of those following Jesus.

We may not be seeing abundance at weddings, at feasts and in large gatherings at the moment, but perhaps we are challenged as we reflect on the Gospel reading, to see other signs that point to God's abundance in our lives and the world. Where can you see God's generosity this week? abundance in our lives and the world. Where can you see God's generosity this week?

*Sarah*

### **Prayers for the Epiphany 3**

#### **Sunday**

Pray that we may see the glory of God in action in these times of uncertainty. (John 2: 11)

#### **Monday (Conversion of St Paul)**

Pray that we may be moved with Paul to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. (Acts 9: 20)

#### **Tuesday**

Thank God for all the vaccinations that have taken place so far, and pray for their continuing.

#### **Wednesday**

Pray for the schools in the Team area as they continue to provide education.

#### **Thursday**

Pray for those whose businesses have failed or are close to failure because of Covid.

#### **Friday**

Pray for medics under tremendous pressure in these times of stress.

#### **Saturday**

Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance on how to bring people close to God when churches are closed.

### **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.

### **Prayers for those working in the NHS and Care Workers**

Lewis, Jayne, Sandy, Anthony, Vicky, Helen and Karen

### **Those who have died**

Keith Wilson, James Rivett, Melvin Owen, Brenda Hunt, Sonya Taylor and Elizabeth Ryman.

Please send requests for prayers to the Parish Office.

### **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 third Sunday of Epiphany on Facebook and YouTube.

St Benedict's will remain open for private prayer.

### **Compline**

Sarah Malpass is inviting you to a Zoom meeting for

Compline : Sunday at 8.30pm

Please let Sarah know if you would like to join and she will send you the Zoom meeting details  
email: Sarahm.horn@googlemail.com

### **Stewardship Envelopes**

The envelopes for 2021 are being prepared for distribution in February. We are very grateful for everyone's continued support. Thank you to those that have converted to Standing Order. If anyone would like to join them or start giving through envelopes or has changed any personal details, would they let Nigel Welch know ASAP please.

Contact: 01902 324111, womwelch@hotmail.com

### **The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity I**

Traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Almighty and eternal God,  
you keep together those you have united.  
Look kindly on all who follow Jesus your Son.

We are all consecrated to you  
by our common baptism;  
make us one in the fullness of faith  
and keep us one in the fellowship of love.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one  
God, for ever and ever.

Amen

### **Prayer Meeting**

The next scheduled Zoom meeting is on Tuesday 26th January at 7.00pm. More details are available from Sue Watson [suewatson@telecomplus.org.uk](mailto:suewatson@telecomplus.org.uk)

