

A deep clean



Katharine Smith *reflects on* Luke 3:1-6

The woodwork, walls and ceilings are being repainted. Threadbare carpets are being replaced; soft furnishings are being cleaned. Something exciting is happening. The news is in the air we breathe. He's coming, the king is coming at long last – quick, get ready, prepare for the promised day of the Lord, bringing freedom and peace.

And us? What about us? Are we clean and smart enough to meet the king? Certainly we'll wash and put on our best, maybe even new, clothes. But inside? We have to be clean inside as well? Suddenly we remember speaking unkindly about a colleague, being impatient with a friend, feeling jealous of someone's good fortune, hanging on to an old grudge. Suddenly we think of the words of the prophet Malachi: "who can endure the day of his coming?... he is like a refiner's fire... a refiner and purifier of silver". Suddenly we don't feel so excited after all. We are afraid of standing before the king "to whom all hearts are open, all desires known", as the Collect for Purity puts it. We become aware that we need God's refining fire and the deep waters of baptism. We know we need God's forgiveness and help to be ready to receive the Son, both in the Bethlehem stable, as we remember his birth, and at his coming again in clouds of glory. ☺

Yorkshire carols

Sheffield carols

by Caroline Fletcher

Caroline lives and works in Stannington, on the edge of the Peak District.

Everybody knows carols like "Away in a Manger", but visit a pub in the north west of Sheffield before Christmas and you are likely to hear carols you've never heard before. From mid-November pubs are packed with locals singing

selections of carols distinct to each establishment. Some are so local they are named after particular Sheffield villages.

They have their roots in eighteenth-century church music which was composed by local people and played on fiddles and wind instruments. In later years, after vernacular music fell out of favour with the church authorities, parish churches replaced this music with standardised hymns, robed choirs and organs. However, local musicians kept these carols alive, taking them around villages and into pubs, adding new festive tunes to their repertoire. While these carols have died out across most of England, in this tiny part of Yorkshire they are thriving. ☺

Lord Jesus, as we prepare to celebrate your birth, help us also to prepare for your return. Give us a vision of your glory, shine your light in our darkness and bring joy and peace into our hearts and minds. Amen.

National Parks

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

by Jo Jones

I have not visited this National Park, north of Glasgow – a typical failure to appreciate what is in my own country, when I have travelled extensively in Europe. But looking at photos on the internet I am inspired, wondering if I am fit enough to climb Ben Lomond.

The UN's International Mountain Day is on Tuesday, to remind us how important mountains are to our world. They supply food and clean energy, and sixty to eighty per cent of the world's fresh water. They cover around twenty-two per cent of the earth's land surface and are home to thirteen per cent of the world's population. They look majestic, yet their fragile ecosystems are under threat from climate change, land degradation and over-exploitation.

In the Bible, mountaintops are "thin" places, where God is met and heard. I think they continue to remind us what matters in life. ☺

“Theology makes sense only in the context of worship and action.

John Macquarrie (1919-2007), Scottish theologian

Bible Readings

Hebrew Scripture

Malachi 3. 1-4

The Coming Messenger

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Interregnum Update

On instruction from the Archdeacon, Anne Gell, we are able to inform you that the interview for the new priest for our parish has taken place.

The Church Family will be informed of the outcome as soon as possible during a forthcoming Sunday worship.

Thank you very much to everyone who took part in the informal visits day, our parish representatives, Max and Anthony, and to all those who have been praying for God's will to be done.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3. 1-6

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." '

Christian Scripture

Philippians 1. 3-11

Paul's Prayer for the Philippians

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel.

For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Blessed Thought

Say to those with fearful hearts,
'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come;
He will come to save you'
(from Isaiah 35. 3 - 4)

Benedictus (Song of Zechariah)

Luke 1. 68-79

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favourably on his people and
redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty saviour for us

in the house of his servant David,

as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets
from of old,

that we would be saved from our enemies and from
the hand of all who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our
ancestors,

and has remembered his holy covenant,

the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,

to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands
of our enemies,

might serve him without fear, in holiness and
righteousness

before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most
High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people

by the forgiveness of their sins.

By the tender mercy of our God,

the dawn from on high will break upon us,

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.'



What's On

www.theparishofthreesaints.org.uk

office.tpots@gmail.com



Christmas Celebration

SUNDAY 16 DECEMBER

Carols by Candlelight

St Mary's Church, East Brent, @ 5.30pm

SUNDAY 23 DECEMBER

Parish Eucharist

St Christopher's Church, Lympham, @ 10.00am

CHRISTMAS EVE Monday 24th December

Crib Services

St Mary's Church, East Brent, @ 3.30pm

St Christopher's Church, Lympham, @ 5.30pm

First Communion of Christmas (Midnight Mass)

St Michael's Church, Brent Knoll, @ 11.30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas Thanksgiving

St Christopher's Church, Lympham, @ 10.00am

CAROLS FROM THE BIKE SHED AT BRENT KNOLL SCHOOL

MONDAY 17th DECEMBER 7PM
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS:

HARMONY PLUS

Brass group

**REFRESHMENTS IN THE
SCHOOL HALL**

In aid of

 **BritishRedCross**

**Please bring
a torch or lantern**



We still need 2 representatives from our parish!

Burnham and Highbridge Churches Together

On 7th November a large group of Christians from several different churches in the wider Burnham area, including nine people from our own parish, gathered together to meet one another and explore better ways of working together.

The evening was led by Rev Sharon Crossman and some of the questions we considered were;

Who are we as Christians in this community?

Where and how might God be calling us?

How do we best work together?

There was a lot of discussion, sharing of ideas and post it notes(!) over tea, coffee and cake.

When all the post it notes were looked at, one common theme that kept coming up was COMMUNICATION.

So to help with this, an information sheet for Christmas is being put together and we are also being asked to forward the names of two representatives from our parish to get more involved with the Churches Together initiative.

If you feel this could be you, please see Mike Smith.

There is a Christian Unity service planned for **20th Jan 2019 at 6.30pm** at the Church of Our Lady & The English Martyrs in Burnham-on-Sea. More information to follow.

Please also see our website www.theparishofthreesaints.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who supported
the recent Christmas Events in our
parish.

We raised £715 at St Mary's Festive
Coffee Morning, £270 at St Christopher's
Christmas Coffee Morning and approx.
£600 at St Michael's Christmas Fair.

Thank you!

Mince Pies needed for 16th December !

Please contact Carole in the Church Office
(tel: **01278 769082**) by Wed 12th Dec if you are
able to make some mince pies for the
**Carols by Candlelight Service at St Mary's at
5.30pm on 16th Dec.**

Thank you!

**Blessed are you, Lord God of all Creation; through your goodness we have this money to offer.....
to do your work in the world.**

During our worship an offering will be collected. If you wish to join with our offering there is a yellow envelope nearby for your contribution or you can, of course, simply add your donation to the bag that will be passed along the pew during our first hymn. Many of our Church Family make a regular contribution to the running and work of the Parish by Standing Order. If this is something you would like to find out more about, please see one of the Stewards or a Churchwarden.

Prayer

Prayer and Healing Ministry

As a Church Family, God calls us to “**pray without ceasing**” for one another and for our neighbourhood. With this in mind, a Calendar of Prayer covering the whole of The Parish Of Three Saints has been drawn up. Each Sunday we will be highlighting a particular road or street, plus an organisation or group of people in our Parish or Diocese and encouraging you to pray for them during the week. The Calendar of Prayer will also be available in the prayer corners of each of our church buildings.

This week please pray for...

- **Those living in Prospect Close and East Drive, East Brent .**
- **The Diocese of Bath and Wells - the Diocesan strategy: Mission - Living your story; Evangelism - Telling your story.**

Don't be afraid to ask for Prayer!

If you or a loved one are going through a difficult time and would like prayer, please contact our Prayer Group Co-ordinator Gwen Hatton 01934 750416. The Friday Prayer Group will support you in prayer for as long as you need it and everything is absolutely confidential.

Alternatively, if you or a loved one would like to be included in this public prayer list in the Sunday Link and prayed for by the whole Church Family, please contact Carole in the Church Office 01278-769082 or Ginnie Soffe 01278-769117. Please ask for the person's permission beforehand.

Please also contact us if you would like to remain on this list as we are currently looking to update it. Many thanks.

At present we continue to pray for Iona, Ben, David, Carole, Kathryn, Peter, Nathan, Silla, Carol, Sue, Mervyn, Luke, David, Pam, Di, Bob, Richard, Jodie and Marcus.

Diary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>9th December</u> 08.00 St Michael's Worship of the Word 10.00 St Mary's Parish Eucharist	<u>10th</u>	<u>11th</u> 10.30 Toddlers Christmas Party	<u>12th</u> 08.45 Coffee Time St Mary's 10.00 St Christopher's Mid Week Worship 14.00-15.15 Emmaus Church Office	<u>13th</u> 14.30 Comfort Group 19.30 All Sorts Choir St Mary's	<u>14th</u> 10.00 Prayer Group 2 The Worthings, Lympsham	<u>15th</u>
<u>16th December</u> 08.00 St Christopher's Worship of the Word 10.00 St Michael's Parish Eucharist 17.30 Carols by Candlelight St Mary's, East Brent All Sorts Choir	<u>17th</u> 16.00-17.30 Alzheimer's and Dementia Carers' Group Brentcombe House, East Brent. 19.00 Carols at the Bike Shed Brent Knoll School	<u>18th</u>	<u>19th</u> 08.45 Coffee Time St Mary's 10.00 St Christopher's Mid Week Worship Emmaus Group lunch at Ollie's	<u>20th</u>	<u>21st</u>	<u>22nd</u>
<u>23rd December</u> 08.00 St Mary's Worship of the Word 10.00 St Christopher's Parish Eucharist 18.30 St Michael's Evening Prayer	<u>24th</u> <u>Christmas Eve</u> 15.30 Crib Service St Mary's 17.30 Crib Service St Christopher's 23.30 Midnight Mass St Michael's	<u>25th</u> <u>Christmas Day</u> 10.00 St Christopher's Christmas Thanksgiving	<u>26th</u>	<u>27th</u>	<u>28th</u>	<u>29th</u>

Contacts

Reader	Nikki Burns	reader.tpots@gmail.com		Tel: 01278 760860
Church Administrator	Mrs Carole Carter	office.tpots@gmail.com	Church Office, Church Road, East Brent, Somerset. TA9 4HZ	Tel: 01278 769082

For further contact information please see our parish website - **www.theparishofthreesaints.org.uk**

If you would like to submit anything for the Sunday Link please email it to Carole at office.tpots@gmail.com by **Thursday. Please also send anything for **The Parish of Three Saints** website to the same address.**