

# "Blessed is she who believed"



Katharine Smith *reflects on* Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Last week we were out in the wilderness listening to John the Baptist calling people to repent and be baptised. We heard him talking about the one who was to come after him, a powerful one, who would baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Today John is yet unborn, held in his mother's womb – an unexpected but longed-for baby, to be born in fulfilment of God's promises. And the powerful one who is to come after John, Jesus, is also held in his mother's womb – an unexpected baby to be born because Mary said "yes" and accepted God's will for her. Even before their birth it seems John is aware of the presence of Jesus and lets his mother know that.

Both mothers-to-be are filled with joy and praise God for his great faithfulness and goodness to them and to their people. Mary sings of God's compassion and mercy and the justice he brings to all people.

We don't know if Elizabeth is still alive when her son meets his violent death. We do know that Mary's heart is pierced with bitter agony and grief when her son is nailed to the cross. And we can imagine that, when Jesus is raised from the dead, Mary again sings the songs of joy and praise that we hear today. ☺

**Lord Jesus, help us to follow the example of your blessed mother Mary, who humbly accepted God's will. In all our joys and sorrows may we know your loving presence alongside us, our saviour and our friend. Amen.**

## Yorkshire carols

keeping the tradition alive

by Caroline Fletcher

It's not just older folk who keep Sheffield's local carols alive. Emily Jowle is nineteen and plays tenor horn with Stannington brass band. Throughout December her band plays local carols in pubs, village halls and golf clubs around the north west of Sheffield. They

even walk round Stannington village playing carols on Christmas Day. It's a challenging schedule for a teenager in the midst A-level studies, but Emily enjoys it. "It's such a good atmosphere," she says. "It's really Christmassy and has a nice community spirit."

It is through her involvement in the band that Emily discovered local carols. Her favourite is "Stannington", which is special for her because it's named after her own village and was written by a Stannington lady in the 1950s.

You can watch the band playing Stannington by doing an internet search for "Sheffield Carol Countdown: Stannington Brass". ☺

## Christmas in West Virginia

by Helen van Koevering

Last Christmas Eve, Mark and I were invited to serve at St Bernard's Chapel at Snowshoe Mountain, and our whole family went. The snow was falling thickly and the four Christmas trees behind the altar stood out in green simplicity. The chapel was full of bundled-up people – strangers and families together – all ages and races, all denominations and

none, waiting. Waiting for a word of joy. It was a brief time to sit, stand, sing and pray, but mostly to listen and watch. It was a night like no other at the end of a busy year, where all our joys, hurts, desires and plans came together like that shining star above the stable. Just for a moment, in the silent snowfall and gentle singing, it seemed that the world's focus was on the Bethlehem baby.

Gathered round that altar for the breaking of bread, tradition came to life and meaning in the presence and remembrance of he who came to turn our world around. ☺

**"This is what my heart hungers for when it comes to the Lord. I want connection. I want communion. I want closeness. Not only in a distant heavenly future but right here. Right now.**

Lysa TerKeurst, author and speaker



# Bible Readings

## Hebrew Scripture

### **Micah 5. 2-5**

The Ruler from Bethlehem  
But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.  
Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labour has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.  
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of  
the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;  
and he shall be the one of peace.  
If the Assyrians come into our land  
and tread upon our soil,  
we will raise against them seven shepherds  
and eight installed as rulers.

## Gospel Reading

### **Luke 1. 39-55**

#### Mary Visits Elizabeth

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

#### Mary's Song of Praise

And Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

## Christian Scripture

### **Hebrews 10. 5-10**

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure.  
Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).' When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

## Blessed Thought

**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.  
I do not give as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.**

(John 14. 27)

## Interregnum Update

Following the recent interview and the recommendation of the Parish representatives, we are pleased to announce that the Bishop has appointed the Reverend Kevin Wright to the post of Priest in Charge of the Parish of Three Saints (Brent Knoll, East Brent and Lympsham).

This appointment is subject to the satisfactory completion of the usual statutory checks made on all clergy taking up a new post.

Please hold Kevin in your prayers as he prepares to begin a new ministry among us and pray too for his current congregations, to whom this announcement has also been made. We expect Kevin and his wife Chris to arrive in the Parish in the Spring and a Service of Welcome and Institution is being planned for March 2019.

## Psalms

### **Psalms 80. 1-8**

#### Prayer for Israel's Restoration

To the leader: on Lilies, a Covenant. Of Asaph. A Psalm.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,

you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth  
before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.

Stir up your might,  
and come to save us!

Restore us, O God;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

O Lord God of hosts,  
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

You have fed them with the bread of tears,  
and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us the scorn of our neighbours;  
our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

You brought a vine out of Egypt;  
you drove out the nations and planted it.



## What's On

[www.theparishofthreesaints.org.uk](http://www.theparishofthreesaints.org.uk)

[office.tpots@gmail.com](mailto:office.tpots@gmail.com)



We would like to wish everyone in the Parish of Three Saints,  
and in our neighbourhoods and wider communities,  
a very *Happy Christmas*, filled with God's love, peace and joy.



# 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, Lympsham, @ 10.00am

### CHRISTMAS EVE Monday 24<sup>th</sup> December

#### *Crib Services*

St Mary's Church, East Brent, @ 3.30pm  
St Christopher's Church, Lympsham, @ 5.30pm

#### *First Communion of Christmas (Midnight Mass)*

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

### CHRISTMAS DAY

#### *Christmas Thanksgiving*

St Christopher's Church, Lympsham, @ 10.00am

**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...

- **The whole parish this Christmas Time.**
- **The seed of faith to be planted in those who do not have a relationship with God.**
- **The seed of faith, that is already planted, to start growing.**

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

# Diary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b><u>23rd December</u></b> 08.00 St Mary's Worship of the Word 10.00 St Christopher's Parish Eucharist 18.30 St Michael's Evening Prayer	<b><u>24th</u></b> <b>Christmas Eve</b> 15.30 Crib Service St Mary's 17.30 Crib Service St Christopher's 23.30 Midnight Mass St Michael's	<b><u>25th</u></b> <b>Christmas Day</b> 10.00 St Christopher's Christmas Thanksgiving	<b><u>26th</u></b>	<b><u>27th</u></b>	<b><u>28th</u></b>	<b><u>29th</u></b>
<b><u>30th December</u></b> 10.00 St Mary's Parish Eucharist	<b><u>31st</u></b> <b>New Year's Eve</b>	<b><u>1st January</u></b> <b>New Year's Day</b>	<b><u>2nd</u></b> 08.45 Coffee Time St Mary's	<b><u>3rd</u></b>	<b><u>4th</u></b>	<b><u>5th</u></b>
<b><u>6th January</u></b> 08.00 St Mary's Worship of the Word  10.00 St Mary's Parish Eucharist	<b><u>7th</u></b>	<b><u>8th</u></b> 10.30 Toddlers Brent Knoll Methodist Church	<b><u>9th</u></b> 08.45 Coffee Time St Mary's  14.30 Emmaus Church Office	<b><u>10th</u></b>  19.30 All Sorts Choir Meal	<b><u>11th</u></b>	<b><u>12th</u></b>

# Contacts

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For further contact information please see our parish website - **[www.theparishofthreesaints.org.uk](http://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](mailto:office.tpots@gmail.com) by **Thursday**. Please also send anything for **The Parish of Three Saints** website to the same address.**