

## 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 at 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 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 continue to pray for Mervyn, Iona, Ben, Luke, David, Carole, Kathryn, Peter and Marcus.

## Diary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>22nd December</b> 10.00 St Michael's Parish Communion (Said) 17.30 St Mary's Carol Service	<b>23rd</b>	<b>24th</b> 15.00 St Mary's Crib Service 17.30 St Christopher's Crib Service 23.30 St Michael's Midnight Mass	<b>25th</b> <b>Christmas Day</b> 10.00 St Christopher's All-Age Communion	<b>26th</b>	<b>27th</b> <b>Church Office Closed</b>  Emails will be checked during the Christmas holidays.	<b>28th</b>
<b>29th December</b> 10.00 St Christopher's Parish Communion	<b>30th</b> <b>Church Office Closed</b> Emails will be checked during the Christmas holidays.	<b>31st</b>	<b>1st January 2020</b> <b>Church Office Closed</b> Emails will be checked during the Christmas holidays.	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b> <b>Church Office Closed</b> Emails will be checked during the Christmas holidays.	<b>4th</b>
<b>5th January</b> 10.00 St Christopher's Parish Communion	<b>6th</b> <b>Church Office Re-Opens</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>11th</b>

**SAFEGUARDING:** We take safeguarding very seriously. If you have any concerns for a child or a vulnerable adult please contact our parish Safeguarding Officer (a voluntary position) Kathy Quinnell (01278-760031) or contact the central diocesan team <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/diocese/safeguarding/rep>

## Contacts

Priest in Charge	Revd. Kevin Wright	priest.tpots@gmail.com	The Rectory, 3 Ash Trees, East Brent, Highbridge, TA9 4DQ	Tel: 01278 760844
Please Note that Friday is the "Vicar's Day of Rest". Thank you for your understanding.				
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](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.

# A good sign



God of grace, help us respond to your sign this Christmas. Show us how to change the direction of our lives and to stand up for what is righteous and true. Amen.

## Advent and Christmas in the hospital

by Ricarda Witcombe

In the week before Christmas children from the local primary school come to sing carols in a neighbouring care home. Elderly people smile as they hear the familiar music and watch the excitement of the children. For

this hour, any tension or sadness is lifted.

Last year, afterwards, the children were instructed to say goodbye. One little boy tried to talk to a man with advanced dementia. The man looked confused and the boy didn't know what to do. Then, solemnly, he held out his hand. The old man took it, and the two held each other's gaze for a few moments. No words were spoken.

There was something in that encounter that spoke of the hope and love that this season points towards. Words cannot hold it – but we are held, and gazed upon, by a love that will never let us go. 🍷

Heather Smith *reflects on* Isaiah 7:10-16 and Romans 1:1-7

King Ahaz has signed away Judah's liberty; they are now a vassal state of Assyria. Isaiah has come to give God's word to Ahaz and he is offered a sign. Surely a sign from God is a good thing? But Ahaz refuses it.

An Old Testament sign explains something that cannot readily be understood. So for example the sabbath is a sign of God's covenant. Signs like these usually end up forcing someone to change their mind or move forward in a way they hadn't quite intended.

God gives Ahaz a sign anyway. We know it as a prophecy foretelling the birth of Christ: "the young woman is with child and shall bear a son", but it also refers to God's plan to liberate Judah from Assyria. Ahaz has taken a line-of-least-resistance approach to ruling, allowing pagan practices to flourish. God's deliverance might require Ahaz to stand up for what is right, not something he has so far shown much inclination for.

We understand the sign of Christ's birth to the young woman Mary as grace – unearned favour from God. Opening his letter, Paul greets the Romans with the words "Grace to you", which seems a comfortable reassuring greeting. But it is just like the sign. God's unearned favour requires us to make a change in the way we live. 🍷

## Walking with Poppy

In the dark

by Gillian Cooper

Poppy seems to have an inbuilt clock, and expects her morning walk to start at 7.30. She is not impressed, however, when she looks out of the door. It takes a while to persuade her that the darkness outside is not rain. Then she is happy to trot across to the garden as usual.

Advent is the time before dawn. Although on our walk I can already see the Christmas lights, it is the dark river in which they are reflected that belongs to this season. It is a serious time, a time of anticipation and dread, when we make the effort to look into the darkness in the world and in ourselves as we wait for the light of the world to dawn. Soon we will greet the light that can never be overcome. But first we have two more days when we, like Poppy, must walk in the dark. 🍷

“It is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began.”

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), *Mere Christianity*

## Bible Readings

### First Reading

#### Isaiah 7. 10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.

Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also?

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

### Gospel Reading

#### Matthew 1. 18- end

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,

'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

### Second Reading

#### Romans 1. 1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.



### Collect for Today

God our redeemer,  
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of your Son:  
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our  
saviour,  
so we may be ready to greet him  
when he comes again as our judge;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God,  
now and forever.

Want to keep Christ in Christmas?  
Feed the hungry, clothe the naked,  
forgive the guilty, welcome the  
unwanted, care for the ill, love your  
enemies, and do unto others as you  
would have done unto you.

- Steve Maraboli  
www.stevemaraboli.com

## What's On



office.tpots@gmail.com  
www.theparishofthreesaints.org.uk



### Our Vision for the Parish of Three Saints

*Our desire is to deepen our spiritual awareness and relationship with God so that we can serve our communities more effectively as His hands and feet, and also to develop our sacred spaces to make them welcoming, flexible and suited to the broad ranging needs of our communities.*

(Taken from The Parish Profile 2018)

### A Message from The Rectory.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the fantastically warm welcome we have received from the TPOTS church family in our first nine months here.

Thank you also for the number of Christmas gifts and good wishes we have received.

Wherever you are, whatever you have planned, we wish you a very special Christmas.

May we together flourish and grow in 2020.

With love in Christ,  
Kevin & Chris.

## The Parish of Three Saints Christmas Celebration

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December

Parish Communion

10.00am St Michael's Church, Brent Knoll

Carols by Candlelight

5.30pm St Mary's Church, East Brent

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

Crib Services

3.00pm St Mary's Church, East Brent

5.30pm St Christopher's Church, Lympsham

First Communion of Christmas (Midnight Mass)

11.30pm St Michael's Church, Brent Knoll

CHRISTMAS DAY

All Age Communion

10.00am St Christopher's Church, Lympsham



Gluten-free wafers are available for communion. Please speak to a Steward or Churchwarden before the service.

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 offertory 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.

### St Mary's Pop Up Restaurant

Valentine's Dinner  
(Proceeds to the roof fund)

At 7.00pm  
On Friday  
14<sup>th</sup> February 2020

At Woodlands,  
Brent Knoll

Menu choices for the 3  
course meal, and how to  
make a booking, will be  
published in January's  
Sunday Link.

We will be asking for a donation of  
£25 per person, please