

Sunday 31st January 2021
The Presentation of Christ

Readings for 31st January

Malachi chapter 3 verses 1-5

Hebrews chapter 2 verses 14-18

Luke chapter 2 verses 22-40



From Churches Together in Hitchin:- PHASE ask that we pray for teachers and other staff in schools as they cope with the ongoing uncertainty and difficulties of teaching children online and in class.

From St Mark's Prayer Cycle:- We pray for Holy Saviour Church. We also pray for people with dementia, especially those living in local residential and nursing homes. We pray for members of St Mark's who are living in care homes.

This week please pray for the residents of North Place and South Place.

Prayer Requests – please send any prayer requests for the whole church to pray for to Andrew, who will then pass them on to the groups. Do contact your own group to ask for prayer too.

6pm Prayers – The Litterick family will be leading a short period of prayer every evening on Zoom on the usual link which will be sent out on Saturday. Do join us for some or all of these sessions.

ONLINE CHURCH DIARY – links will be sent on Saturday morning.

Sunday 31st January – there will be a **Service of Communion livestreamed from church at 10am, on Zoom**. This will be recorded and uploaded to Youtube later in the afternoon.

Monday 1st February - Morning Prayer Reading & reflection on Youtube will be led by Rev Jane Robson from Tilehouse Street Baptist Church.

Wednesday 3rd February – **Online Morning Prayer** on Zoom at 9.15am.

Friday 5th February – **Morning Prayer Reading & reflection with Andrew** on Youtube.

Next Sunday 7th February will be our All-Age Service on Zoom led by Nick and Rachel. There will also be a Service of the Word on Youtube.

Call to the nation - The Archbishop's of Canterbury and York have issued a call to the nation to pause and reflect to remember the more than 100,000 people across the UK who have died after contracting Covid-19 and all those who know and love them. They say that 'Death doesn't have the last word. In God's kingdom every tear will be wiped away'.

This week our friends without computers will receive a copy of the sermon which Rev Martha Inch gave at St Mark's last Sunday, based on the story of Jesus turning the water into wine.

CHURCH & COMMUNITY NEWS

Zoom Home Groups For Lent -

Home Groups (also often called fellowship groups, small groups, or connect groups!) are a great way to deepen our faith and build supportive relationships with people in church. St Mark's already has a couple of groups that run, but many people aren't in a group at the moment. We'd like to run some groups over Zoom for Lent, with a



potential view to establishing one or two extra Home Groups after this. The initial Lent Groups will meet weekly and involve discussing a Bible study guide called '*Living Faith: invitations from the cross*' (a book that the Lent Groups were due to study last year before lockdown struck). If you think you might be interested in a Lent Group, please get in touch with Nick asap: vicar@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk or 01462 434686.

Thank you for all the cards of sympathy and messages sent to me on the death of my mother. All your prayers and kind words are very much appreciated. With love, Carol xxx

St Mark's has Talent.... Joy is planning a Zoom entertainment evening, for all ages from St Mark's. Could you sing, play an instrument, tell some jokes, read a poem (or 2), do magic tricks, recite the 7 times table, show a painting or drawing, perform a dance, get your pets to do a trick, whatever else comes to mind – maximum 5minute slot per person/family.

If you'd be interested in taking part please contact Joy via admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk
Date & time TBC once we know what interest there is.



Update on Church Closure – We know that keeping our building closed is hard for many in our church family. The DCC discussed the current church building closure this week, and have agreed that for the time being the building will remain closed. The main reasons for this are 1) the covid rates in our area are still very high (when we closed the building our local rates were around 370 per 100k, and as of Wednesday they were still up at 450 per

100k, even though they've been going down from an 8th January peak), 2) We're not yet confident that the measures we had in place would be suitable for the more infectious variant(s) of covid now in existence, 3) almost all other churches in our area – apart from very rural ones where covid rates are lower – are also remaining closed currently, and 4) we are still in a national lockdown in which we are asked only to leave our homes if absolutely necessary. These factors combined have led us to conclude that it isn't yet time to reopen. But we are reviewing this regularly both within St Mark's and the Hitchin Parish Team, and we will open as soon as we feel the risks are low enough to do so safely. We long to gather again as a family: until then online services will continue...and please do keep in touch with each other to offer friendship, support and encouragement. If anyone would like a pastoral chat with Nick, or would like to ask more questions about this decision, please get in touch via vicar@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk or 01462 434686.

Joy's Lockdown Musings... Joy is planning to make a collection of her musings over lockdown and have them published, to raise money for St Mark's and for the Guide Dog Association. She is looking for someone who is able to type them up and collate them for her, so if you have a bit of time on your hands and would like to earn some money, please get in touch with Joy, details as above.

The Foodbank – have sent a newsletter and update which can be found [here](#).

They are very grateful for the support from the churches and community over the Christmas period and were able to help 348 people during December, as well as provide 137 food hampers to various organisations and 248 Christmas food vouchers were also distributed. You can donate food at Waitrose and Sainsbury's in Hitchin, and Morrison's and Sainsbury's Local in Letchworth. Monetary support is always welcome and more details on how to donate can be found on the website: www.lethworth.foodbank.org.uk.

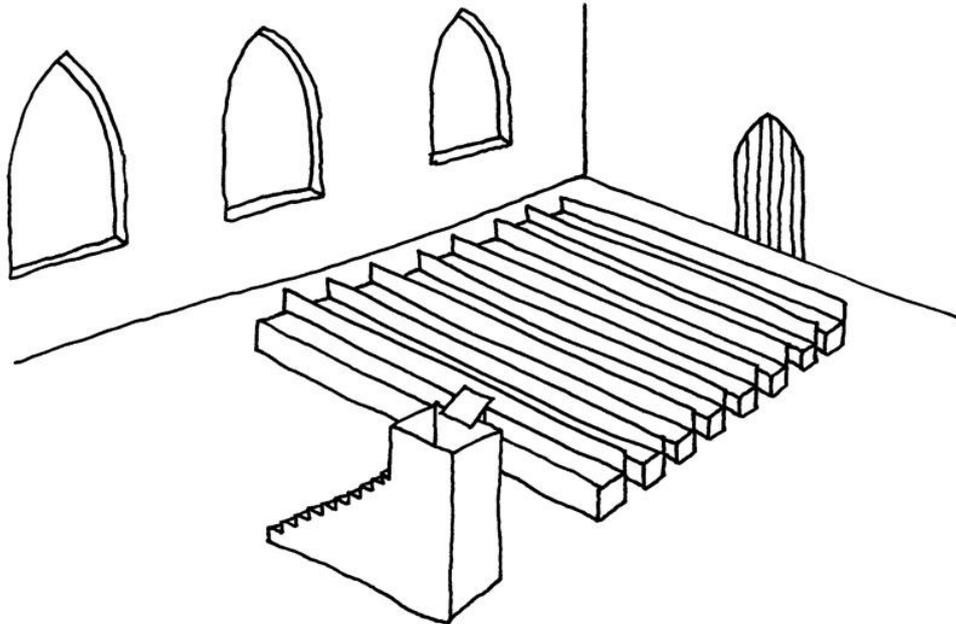
The Food Provision service which has been operating from Our Lady's church under the leadership of Caritas project worker, Liz Wills, have been asked to expand their service. They have 14 new families they would like to deliver food to weekly. To be able to do this they need more drivers, using their own cars, who are able to help with deliveries of food in Letchworth. Can you help on Thursday afternoons at 3pm to deliver 2-3 food boxes to families in need? If you can please contact Liz Wills on 07877 902313 asap.

Fondue fiasco

Well random Amazon orders are still arriving on an almost daily basis. Not one but 2 Fondue sets arrived on Tuesday. The Husband decided we needed one, for reasons best known to himself, but why 2?? So Saturday was designated as the inauguration of the first Fondue Fest. Reading the instructions obviously had to be down to me for reasons previously discussed. Luckily I did this a good few days in advance. So after the first perusal of said instructions it was very clear that a full Health and Safety Risk Assessment would have to be carried out prior to its usage. Luckily we were able to secure an emergency Amazon delivery of fire extinguishers, fire blankets, fire proof protective clothing and gauntlets in time for the Saturday. These were happily delivered by my new best delivery man friend who is

helping me with issues in a counselling and therapy way as he has noticed my nervous twitch has got worse. He, like me, is baffled by the random spontaneous purchases that he is required to drop off at our house. Beef and lamb meat cubes, stir fry veg, wine and an assortment of dips and sauces all well prepared and nicely displayed. Actually, it turned out beautifully to start withthe Firemen were so kind!!!! Joy xx

THE CHURCH IS EMPTY



THIS IS BECAUSE EVERYONE IS BUSY



HELPING AT THE
FOOD BANK



DELIVERING
PRESCRIPTIONS



CREATING
ONLINE WORSHIP



RUNNING THE
DEBT ADVICE CENTRE

CartoonChurch.com

*If you would like to have a notice included please email
notices@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk
Please send notices by 7pm on the preceding Wednesday.*