

Sunday 9th January 2022

1st Sunday of Epiphany

Baptism of Christ



1. Readings & prayers
2. Church diary
3. Living in Love and Faith course details
4. Our Church Cross
5. Hitchin Theological Society meeting – Sunday 16th Jan
6. Church rotas
7. Lost & Found
8. Just the husband and me on Christmas Day – Joy

Readings for 9th January

Acts chapter 8 verses 14-17

Luke chapter 3 verses 15-17, 21-22

PRAYERS:-

At last Sunday's morning communion, as we have done at St Mark's on the first Sunday of January for some years, we used the Methodist Covenant Prayer at the end of our intercessions.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism in the 18th century, learned the prayer from the Moravians, a Christian group in Germany, and was so impressed that he commended it to his followers for use on the first Sunday of every year. That practice continues in the Methodist Church and has been adopted by members of many other Christian traditions throughout the world.

It is set out below so that, whether you were in church or not able to be there, you may be reminded of its words. It is a challenging prayer, not said lightly, but each year it is a reminder of what may be ahead of us as followers of Christ - and maybe it has a special resonance at these testing times.

Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you;
exalted for you, or brought low for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty;

let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant here made on earth,
Let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.



From Churches Together in Hitchin - We pray with **Walsworth Road Baptist Church** as they explore new ventures within their children's and youth work. **PHASE** ask for that we pray for God's blessing on their call for volunteers in the office and as part of the schools team.

From St Mark's Prayer Cycle:- This week please pray for the work of PHASE in Hitchin schools and for our local schools and colleges, their students and teachers as they return after the Christmas break.

This week please pray for the residents of King George's Close, Deacons Way, Portman Close & Times Close.

CHURCH DIARY

Links for online services will be sent by email on Saturday morning.

Friday 7th January – 9.30-11am Little Lions

2-4.30pm Friday Friendship Club – cancelled this month.

Sunday 9th January– 8am Simple Communion in church.

10am Communion in church and livestreamed on Youtube.

Due to the increase in Covid 19 we are currently required to wear face coverings in church and there will be no refreshments served after the service this week.

Monday 10th January – Reading & reflection with Nick on Youtube.

Wednesday 12th January – 9.15am Morning Prayer in church

Thursday 13th January – 6.30-9pm GWNN

Sunday 16th January - 10am All Age Service in church. 11.15am Simple Communion in church and livestreamed.

All services which are livestreamed will also be uploaded to Youtube for watching at a later date, available on the St Mark's Youtube channel – details will be sent out with the links.

HALL DIARY – these are the non-church groups hiring the hall.

Monday 10th – Signing Groups 8.30am-3.30pm

Tuesday 11th – Jo Jingles 9.30am-12.30pm; Rainbows 5-6pm; Antenatal Yoga 7-9pm

Wednesday 12th – Home Education Hub 11am – 4.15pm; Yoga 5.15-7pm

Thursday 14th – Childminders Support group 9.30-11.30am; Dorothy Wells Violin Group 4-5.30pm

This week our friends without computers will receive a copy of the sermon given by Nick on Sunday 2nd January.

CHURCH & COMMUNITY NEWS



LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

Dear St Mark's family, before Christmas we introduced the Living in Love and Faith course to you. This course is an important opportunity for us to learn and grow together in our understanding of issues of sexuality and gender identity, and how they relate to our Christian faith. These issues are important for us all, and I am excited at the prospect of learning together as a church. The course will run fortnightly on Thursday evenings from **Thursday 3rd of February**. We will gather to share a simple supper (covid permitting), before starting the session. Precise time TBC, but probably the session will start at around 7.30pm. We are requesting a £5 donation to cover the cost of the course booklets (BUT do speak to Nick or Trish if this will be difficult for you...your presence is far more important to us than the money!). Please note: you don't need to be academically minded, or to have experience thinking about these issues: the course is suitable for anyone at all, with resources available to suit everyone. The important thing is to be willing to turn up with an open mind and listen. If you'd like to sign up you can do so at the welcome table at the back of church, or by emailing/calling Nick to let him know. We look forward to learning with you about how we can live in love and faith with one another.

OUR CHURCH CROSS – You will all have noticed by now that our wooden cross has been taken down and is awaiting repair. Many thanks to Joy Hukin who kindly paid for a Christmas tree to be put in its place – see the photo of Nick putting the tree up, a rather precarious job for a Vicar which he said hadn't been mentioned at theological training college...



If anyone wishes to make a donation towards the repair of the cross, it would be very

welcome – please contact Louise via admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk



We have had some rather large, unexpected expenses recently, not only the wooden cross, but we also had to have the toilet drains professionally cleared just before Christmas, partly due to roots getting into the drains. We have been advised to have a drain lining fitted to prevent this occurring again, which we will do in due course, but again is an expense we weren't anticipating. Thank you to everyone who has been so generous in supporting St Mark's over the years, and please continue to support us if you can.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HITCHIN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The fourth meeting of the Theological Society will take place on **Sunday 16th January, 6.30-7.30 pm** in St Mary's Church. Its theme is *Diversity in Unity* and speakers from different Christian traditions, including Nick, our Vicar, will look at our various approaches to faith, asking whether/how we can disagree in a kindly way and remain in fellowship with each other. All are welcome - we have had good attendances at the meetings so far and look forward to another worthwhile meeting. Further details available from Charmaine Sabey-Corkindale - 01462 435497.

ROTAS – I shall soon be preparing the February – May rotas for the various aspects of our Sunday services and church work which keep our church life running smoothly. If anyone would like to get involved in St Mark's in any way please do get in touch with me as soon as possible – there are plenty of varied opportunities, from helping with the children's work; welcoming people to services; cleaning the church; reading or leading prayers; serving coffee; helping to serve communion and joining the gardening team. Contact Maggie on admin@stmarks-hitchin.org.uk

LOST & FOUND - in the process of tidying up the big cupboard at the back of church we came across a small CD player buried in some dressing up clothes, and a bag with a whole set of Charles Dickens paperbacks. Does anyone know who they belong to please? Contact Maggie, as above.

JUST THE HUSBAND AND ME ON CHRISTMAS DAY - Hi folks I do hope you all had a wonderful time this Christmas. Strange time for us. For the first time in forever it was just me and The Husband alone for the 25th. I confess to have started out dreading the prospect (enforced upon us by the COVID threat) how alone would we feel? could we get through a whole day without crosswords!!!!, luckily the Husband had saved some Christmas themed ones from the previous week's newspapers and so despite a small disagreement about the sprouts boiling duration we have survived. Do you know it was one of the most enjoyable, relaxed Christmas Days that we have ever had. No stress, no timings to stick to. Breakfast at some time in the morning, starters at some time in the early afternoon and main meal at whenever it was done in the evening. We sat and talked to each other, no television, some carols playing, about stuff we have never covered before in such depth. The absence of our parents, how much they meant to us, family traditions around Christmas that we have adopted as have our children like salmon on toast for breakfast, not opening presents till after lunch, etc. What we had hoped for our lives when we were younger, what have we achieved, are we proud of what we have accomplished, what would

we like to change/go back in time. These strange and difficult times we live have had some wonderful largely unappreciated benefits, not material things, but just love and friendship. We can look at our lives and realise how very lucky we are to live where we do, have all that we need (probably more than we need) feel safe, warm and maybe overfed!!! How privileged are we!!!! Love Joy xx



*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.*