

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Jan – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Epiphany (Baptism of Christ)**

You will, no doubt, be aware that we entered another period of National Lockdown as of Wednesday 6th January 2021. In view of the rapidly rising infection rates and the new strain of Covid-19, we have had to make the difficult decision to close the church building for public worship with immediate effect.

We understand this is disappointing but we believe this is the right decision at this time to best care for our church family. However, we continue to live stream Sunday services on the [church Facebook](#) page at 10am which will then be copied onto the [church website](#) for those who wish to catch up later.

<b>Hymns</b>	529	O worship the Lord
	204	Hail to the Lord's anointed
	115	Do not be Afraid
	275	I heard the voice of Jesus say

**Epiphany blessing of our homes.** As 2020 was such a difficult year for many and so many of us were isolated in our homes I thought I would offer the following ancient transition of house blessing for Epiphany.

An Epiphany blessing at our door for the New Year:

- to ask God's blessing on our home and on those who live in or visit the home.
- an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows

Marking the doorway to one's home is rooted in the Bible. Holy Scripture reminds us that God has at times commanded his people to mark their doors. The Israelites marked their doors with the lamb's blood on the night of the passover (Exodus 12:7). A similar command was given with the Shema Yisrael:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart ... and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-6, 9).

**We write 20 + C + M + B + 21**

The initials have two meanings both Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar and Latin words Christus mansionem benedicat, "May Christ bless the house." + signs represent the cross and 2021 is the year.

We Pray: O God of Light, bless this home and this family. May this be a place of peace and health. May each member of this church cultivate the gifts and graces you have given us, dedicating our talents and works for the good of all.

Make this home a shelter in the storm and a haven of rest for all in need of your warmth and care. May all who come and go here find healing, refreshment and new life through Jesus.

And when we go out from this place, may we never lose sight of your light. As we go about our work, our study, our play, keep us faithful and make us witnesses to your love. Amen

### Collect

Heavenly Father, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

### Reading : Acts 19.1-7

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

### Reading : Mark 1.4-11

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open

and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

## More news

- ↪ **News From Natalie** I am now able to announce that, after my ordination on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June at Liverpool Cathedral, I will be serving my title as curate at St Giles church Aintree with the Rev Nathan Thorpe. This is dependent on successful completion of my remaining assignments and the final decision rests (as always) with Bishop Paul. Being part of ASSF has been a time of joy, growth and learning for me. It has been a privilege to share in your journey, walk alongside you, and participate fully in the life of your wonderful church community. To say I have enjoyed the experience would be something of an understatement. There are so many of you who I wish to thank, it is not possible to mention you all by name. So, I will say one multitudinous "thank you" to Rev Kath, Church Wardens, PCC and everyone and to wish you well. I will be returning in between placements so will see you before I leave on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May. I am sure I will keep in touch with the many friends I have made here. Of course, you are all more than welcome to attend my ordination service in June. It would be a joy to have you share the special occasion with me. May God continue to bless you all - *Natalie*
- ↪ **Christmas Break** - Kath is taking time off from the 4<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> January
- ↪ **A big thank you** to all who contributed to the International Aid shoebox appeal. Boxes are sent off to Moldova, Ukraine and Transylvania this Autumn. Please can you continue to donate knitting wool, shoeboxes with a detachable lid and your old Christmas cards. I can collect - Thanks Ailsa 0151 9124 1336
- ↪ **Flower Rota 2021** - The rota sheet is now available for those who wish to sign up to sponsor Church flowers in 2021. Please leave a message for Lynn Murthwaite on the Church phone. Sincere thanks to all who so generously sponsor our flowers.
- ↪ **Many thanks** to all who supported the sale of Traidcraft Christmas cards and gifts supporting the livelihoods of producers in the Global South. Thanks to generous donations and discounts the church has been able to send a gift of £78 to the charity Action around Bethlehem Children with Disability [www.abcdbethlehem.org](http://www.abcdbethlehem.org) which seeks to improve the quality of life for disabled children across the Occupied West Bank.
- ↪ **Chair-based exercises back on Zoom** – Until the latest lockdown is eased, chair-based exercises have gone back onto Zoom. If you feel like trying a Zoom exercise class, you are very welcome to join us 10am every Monday morning. Contact [annepennington7@gmail.com](mailto:annepennington7@gmail.com) for the Zoom link and further details.

↪ **History Evening** – Following a successful history evening with Hugh Hollinghurst in November, St Luke's are hosting another free online presentation about Bootle History on Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Jan @7.30pm. Register at [www.stlukecrosby.org.uk/events](http://www.stlukecrosby.org.uk/events)

### Help for you

- ↪ The Church of England has a **free dial-in worship service** which offers music, prayers and reflections on a free telephone line 0800 804 8044
- ↪ **Advice Centre** all enquiries should be directed to Citizen's Advice Sefton on 0344 493 0012 [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk). Debt Advice 0151 318 6407 and help to claim Universal Credit 0800 144 8444

### We continue to pray for

Dave Rogers	Mark Isherwood	Eric Anderson
Mark Wilson	Marian Palin	Phyllis Bell
Barbara Maddock	Billy Harding	Judith & Frank Kelly
Ted Meighen	Ken Rimmer	Dave Bruford
Don Wylie	Ken Lawson	Margaret Williams
Michelle & Chris Watson		

**Prayer for World Mission** – This month was chosen by the United Nations to commemorate World Braille Day. People with vision impairment are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, neglect and violence. The coronavirus pandemic and its consequent impact, such as lockdowns, has worsened their challenges, isolating them further. Give thanks for the United Nations agencies which are producing resources including braille documents to help poor communities to access the vital information they need in combating the virus.

**Prayer for Israel/Palestine** - As Israel celebrates an impressive, record setting vaccination drive, having given initial jabs of coronavirus shots to more than a 10th of the population, pray that they will observe their legal obligation as an occupying power, to provide equal protection to the Palestinians who live and work in close proximity to those, including illegal settlers in the West Bank, who have been given the vaccine.

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