

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

9/16 January 2022 1st & 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.
For links to information about us please visit: www.northburychurches.org.uk



Carols around the tree at West Stow

Ian Hobley

In this issue:

First Sunday of Epiphany - Baptism of Christ: Sylvia Bareham
Details of worship in church and online * Epiphany Carol Service
Arrival of the Three Kings at All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
Second Sunday of Epiphany - Wedding at Cana: Adrian Mann
Coming up - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

*"I do not ask
That men should sound my praise
Or headlines spread my name abroad;
I only ask that as I voice the message
Hearts may find God."*

The Baptism of Christ

Those (anonymous) lines were at the heart of a sermon preached by an Archbishop at an Ordination Service. He said that it was not the task of Ministers to promote themselves but rather to be like John the Baptist and point to Christ. When taking services Ministers wear robes and vestments (with an historical significance) to sublimate their own personalities and to bear witness to their work – administering the sacraments and preaching the Gospel.

John the Baptist also wore a distinctive dress. St Mark tell us that he wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt. This also had an historical significance – it was the dress of a prophet who called the Israelite people back to the standards of belief and behaviour that they believed had been practised during their time in the wilderness. Elijah also was recognized by such garments (2 Kings 1.8).

Because John is seen preaching in the wilderness he is often portrayed as an unkempt, dirty and wild sort of man. Nothing can be further from the truth. He was the son of a priest and would have been highly educated. As such he had been brought up in a household that practised strict ritual cleanliness. Moreover he came from a distinguished family. His father, Zechariah, belonged to the priestly order of Abijah, and as such was a descendant of the prophet/priest Samuel. In Israel, priests and prophets were anointed for their tasks. A thousand years earlier Samuel had anointed David to be the King of Israel. And now, at the river Jordan, Samuel's descendant baptises Jesus the descendant of King David.

The appearance of John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness attracted many people. There had not been a prophet in Israel for about 400 years. Life under the Roman occupation was hard and uncertain and people were earnestly looking for a saviour. But John made no claims for himself. He pointed to one more powerful than himself. One whose sandals he was unworthy to untie. *"I baptise you with water," he said, "he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."* In St John's Gospel we read of John pointing to Jesus and saying *"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* The lamb was the ideal victim for sacrifice. The phrase would remind the hearer of the words of Abraham as he led his son Isaac up to his sacrifice *"God will provide a lamb for sacrifice, my son."*

Jesus' baptism by John is seen as Jesus being anointed with the Holy Spirit for his work as prophet, priest and king. The words from heaven, *"You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased,"* remind one of God's words to his Servant in the book of the prophet Isaiah: *"Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights."* Yet it was the fate of the Servant to suffer and die for the sins of many.

We have come a long way from the baptism of John – a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The Jews were not sailors. True they had fishing boats on the Sea of Galilee, but they did not strike out like the Greeks to visit new lands even around the Mediterranean Sea. Water, to them, meant danger and death. The great moment in their history was their escape from Egypt through the waters of the Sea of Reeds – a tsunami which killed the Egyptians in their chariots. St Paul describes this as a baptism. *“...our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”* So the Israelites had to pass through the waters that meant death to the new life of freedom on the other side.

The significance of Jesus' baptism for himself, and when his work was fully understood by his disciples, was his anointing for his vocation as the Servant of the Lord, who would bear the sins of many. He bears the sins of the world to his baptism and to his cross. The offering of sacrifices in the temple was a major part of the Jewish religious practice – everyone would know the ritual. The offerer of the sacrifice would bring his victim to the gateway of the court of the priests. There he would lay his hand upon it to identify himself with it and it would be accepted as a sacrifice to take away his sins.

Jesus was the Servant of the Lord who would bear the sins of many, and this is why he was baptized. Although sinless himself, he was baptized by John's *"baptism of repentance for the remission of sins"* for the same reason that he died. As the Representative Man he bore the sins of the world to the baptism of repentance as later he would bare them to the baptism of the cross.

Jesus spoke of his death as his baptism. He said to his disciples *"I have a baptism with which to be baptised, and what stress I am under until it is completed."* When James and John asked to take high places in his kingdom, he asked *"Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?"*

In the early church baptism was administered to adults who had undergone a serious preparation. Before the training began a candidate would be signed with the cross, which indicated that he or she would be willing to undergo martyrdom. So the words in our Baptism Service: *"Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of his cross. Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified."*

When the preparation was completed, the candidate would be totally immersed in water (dying with Christ) and, coming up, would put on a white robe and join the worshipping church for Confirmation by the Bishop.

Now we see fit to bring children to Baptism as early as possible and to follow this with Confirmation when they are mature enough to speak for themselves. But Baptism and Confirmation is not just a birth or naming ceremony – and it can be received at any age. May we value the institution of our sacraments, be faithful to the promises we make and thank God for the grace we receive.

Sylvia Bareham

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 9 JANUARY

1st Sunday of Epiphany 9 January Baptism of Christ

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Culford
8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Lackford
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
11.00am	Parish Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
11.00am	Zoom Service	Please email clairerose1953@gmail.com to receive the link.
6.30pm	Team Epiphany Carols	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Tuesday 11 January Mary Slessor, missionary

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Wednesday 12 January St Aelred, abbot

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
5.00pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds

Thursday 13 January St Hilary, bishop and teacher of the faith

9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
--------	----------------	------------------------------

Friday 14 January

7.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
--------	----------------	----------------------------

2nd Sunday of Epiphany 16 January

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Lackford
8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham All Saints
10.00am	worship@weststow	West Stow
10.30am	Christingle	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
11.00am	Parish Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

LIVE-STREAMED WORSHIP

The **Parish Eucharist** is usually live-streamed from St John's every Sunday at 11am on Facebook [@StJohnsBSE](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsBSE) and is later posted onto our website www.northburychurches.org.uk

CHURCH on ZOOM

Our **Zoom Service** is at 11am on the second Sunday of each month. All are welcome.

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 16 JANUARY

2nd Sunday of Epiphany 16 January

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Lackford
8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham All Saints
10.00am	worship@weststow	West Stow
10.30am	Christingle	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
11.00am	Parish Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Tuesday 18 January

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Wednesday 19 January St Wulfstan, bishop

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
5.00pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds

Thursday 20 January

9.30am	Eucharist (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
--------	-----------------	------------------------------

Friday 21 January St Agnes, child martyr

7.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
--------	----------------	----------------------------

Saturday 22 January In Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

12.30-13.30	Prayer Lunch (please bring your own lunch)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
-------------	--	----------------------------

3rd Sunday of Epiphany 23 January

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Culford
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
11.00am	Parish Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
12noon	Holy Communion (BCP)	Flempton

LIVE-STREAMED WORSHIP

The **Parish Eucharist** is usually live-streamed from St John's on Sundays at 11am on Facebook [@StJohnsBSE](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsBSE) and is later posted onto our website www.northburychurches.org.uk

CHURCH on ZOOM

Our **Zoom Service** is at 11am on the second Sunday of each month. All are welcome.
Please email clairerose1953@gmail.com to receive the link.

EPIPHANY CAROLS

DON'T MISS

the Lark Valley and North Bury
Churches' Epiphany Carol Service

at St John's
on Sunday 9th January
at 6.30pm

followed by nibbles
with wine or fruit juice

It's not too late to join the choir for the service:

please contact David Honeyball
on 07827 668964 or at dhoneyball5@aol.com

There will be a rehearsal at 3.30pm on the day
followed by a refreshment break at about 5pm.

From **Claire Rose**

to say thank you to Ali Miller for the Epiphany service on 2nd January

The three kings

(right) arrived at our crib in All Saints', Bury St Edmunds.



Ali blessed chalk which we were encouraged to take away and to use to chalk the blessing onto our house doors and the doors of others ...

... so we did it for our grandchildren (left).

This reminded us so much of when we lived in Germany in the early 1990s. The Star Singers came round early each New Year.

This would be three children dressed as the three kings, plus an adult. They would sing a special song and update the chalk on our front door. Here, finally, is a small reminder we have of these, from Germany.



Second Sunday of Epiphany

Wedding at Cana

Isaiah 62:1-5 Ps 36:5-10 1 Cor 12:1-11 John 2:1-11

NOT SO LONG AGO we were still in Advent, and John the Baptist loomed large, preparing the way for Jesus. He and Jesus were cousins, but they come across very differently. John was very ascetic, very austere, recognisably in the tradition of the prophets of the Old Testament.

But Jesus, by contrast, finds himself being criticised for party-going and keeping the wrong sort of company, people with bad reputations, those who were looked down upon and cast out from respectable society.

We shouldn't forget how much Jesus surprised and shocked those around him, including the disciples for much of the time. They could be critical, too. In the end he became intolerable to the powers that be. He had to be disposed of. If Jesus doesn't worry us, surprise us, shock us, set our teeth on edge, even - we may just have missed the point.

'On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee'. Jesus is at the party. It's not a long story - just 11 verses - but there is a great deal in it.

There's the sheer human detail, particularly of Jesus interacting with his mother. Isn't it such a pain - an embarrassment - at some public occasion when your mother wants you to do something you just don't want to do? And isn't it even worse when she just ignores your protests and makes you do it anyway? Likewise there is human detail in the picture of hospitality in first century Palestine, where the shame of running out would be considerable and where it's customary to serve the good wine first and save the ordinary stuff until the guests are too tired and emotional to notice.

Then, on a different level, there's some powerful religious symbolism. The six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification are replaced, superceded, by this outrageous quantity of wine which is provided by Jesus - well over 100 gallons, by all accounts. It is quite ridiculous, and this when the guests have already had too much to drink. It's all totally over the top. This outrageous quantity of wine is, it turns out, of superlative quality. So is that a top class vintage from a prime estate? Or is the writer making reference to the consecrated wine of the Eucharist, of Holy Communion? Is John allowing Jesus (the party animal) to show us what the Heavenly Banquet is like?

Somehow the *human* detail embedded in the story, the sheer *humanity* of it - speaking of relationship, community and culture - serves to set out in sharply contrasting relief the *divine* nature of an encounter with Jesus. The narrative rings true in its human reality and insight at the same time as it deploys profound poetic imagery to picture profound, inexpressible truths.

The passage from Isaiah 62 makes a proclamation of salvation using a wedding as a metaphor, an image of rejoicing and future hope. And Psalm 36 focuses on *hesed*, the loving kindness, the steadfast love, of God, poured out in abundance: 'they shall drink from the river of your delights'.

So John is using the themes of the Jewish scriptures to tell us that *Jesus* is the bridegroom at the wedding feast. He is the bringer of life in all its abundance - excessive, outrageous abundance - and this wedding feast is a picture of the Messianic Banquet in the Kingdom of God. This is what life can be like, should be like, will be like.

The story brings these distant notions, which may be hard for us to grasp or relate to, into the here and now, into the life of the church we know and experience, where we can touch, taste and swallow the bread and wine Jesus offers to us. Into the Communion service, the Holy Eucharist, with its transfigured elements signifying something way, way beyond themselves: the sacrifice made for us.

At Cana, Jesus says to his mother: 'My hour has not yet come.' Later, we know, his hour will come, and it will turn every human life around. There *the wine was sour*, but it opened the door of the banqueting hall for us. There, when he had received the wine, he said: 'It is finished.'

On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. It is the very beginning of Jesus's ministry and this is the first of the great signs of Jesus's significance given to us in John's gospel.

The significance of the three days is soon underlined. The very next passage tells of Jesus cleansing the Temple, and saying when challenged: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up'. Meaning, John explains it for us, the temple of his body.

This Jesus - who brings life abundant and enjoys a party, who dies and *on the third day* rises, who comes to meet us in our worshipping community - is the one who shows us exactly what God is like, the one we can and must follow.

Adrian Mann

Coming up ...

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity January 2022

Sunday 16th at 6.30pm

Please wear face coverings

Launch service led by Fr David Bagstaff
St Edmund's Roman Catholic Church, Westgate Street
Speaker: The Revd Simon Harvey (St. Mary's)

**Weekday lunchtime prayer sessions
All 12.30 - 13.30pm**

Please bring your own lunch

Monday 17th	The Cathedral
Tuesday 18th	Garland St. Baptist Church
Wednesday 19th	Trinity Methodist Church
Thursday 20th	St Edmund's Roman Catholic Church
Friday 21st	United Reformed Church
Saturday 22nd	St John's Church

*The material for the whole week is provided by
the Global Initiative of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.*

Don't forget

to let Julie Hooton
NBTLVB@outlook.com
and the
'Viral Bulletin'
adrian.mann@btinternet.com
have details of forthcoming
events at your church.

