

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

17 December 2023

3rd Sunday of Advent

Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.

For information about us please visit: www.northburychurches.org.uk



Holly by the River Linnet

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Wonder Club at St Lawrence, Lackford

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services

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3rd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61.1-4,8-end Psalm 126 or Magnificat
I Thessalonians 5.16-24 John 1.6-8,19-28

Today's readings give us much to think about. In this third Sunday of Advent we focus on John the Baptist. John who came as a witness, seeing himself simply as a Voice. A Voice crying out in the wilderness, bearing testimony to the light.

John, who was great indeed, for even Jesus said in Matthew 11:11, 'among those born of women, no-one is greater than John the Baptist'. So John was greater than Abraham, Moses, Elijah...he was indeed great.

But John was there purely to be a Voice, bearing witness to someone else. For as it says in John 1:8, he came to testify to the light.

I wonder that if John had been born today in our culture of celebrity and football hero worship, would he have had a cult following and been a great TV personality? He could have had a recording contract and a house in the country and been on his way to making his first million.

But he didn't see himself as the hero of the hour ... instead he pointed away from himself to the 'one who is coming after me' ... to Jesus who is the light of the world.

Are we ready to be like that? Are we willing to give up our desire for self-expression ... to see ourselves as wholly there for others? I am reminded of both Mother Theresa and Brother Roger of Taizé here ... two people who gave up any personal desires they may have had of self-fulfilment, to work wholly for God.

Our Old Testament reading is the passage that Jesus applies to himself in his sermon in Nazareth, which we read about in Luke, chapter 4. It expresses the sense of being anointed and commissioned to act and speak, not for ourselves but for God. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me', we hear Jesus saying, using the words of Isaiah, 'because the Lord has anointed me...' Then we hear so many wonderful prophecies: the poor will receive good news, broken hearts will be healed, there will be liberation for prisoners and justice will reign ... all to be fulfilled in the life of Jesus the Messiah.

But let's look at what Paul is saying in our second reading for a moment. There is so much packed here into a very small space.

We are to rejoice. Our celebration is rooted in what Jesus Christ has done for us. We are to pray ceaselessly ... we may think this is easily done, as we attempt to pray for less than one hour in every 24. Paul was busy too, but he could still speak of anticipating, here and now, the life of heaven. We are to be grateful in all circumstances ... gratitude is at the heart of the genuine humanity modelled for us by Jesus Christ ... living in the present, in the light of God's promised future. We can see this in the lives of both Mother Theresa and Brother Roger too.

But it also reminds me of Terry Anderson, a journalist, who wrote 'Den of Lions' a few years back. He was caught up in the troubles in Lebanon and lived in chains for 7 years.

Half way through his imprisonment he wrote:

"I rarely ask God for freedom any more. He knows how much I want to go home. I've told him so often, he'd better know by now. I pray for patience, acceptance, strength. I give thanks for what I have. I'm not a saint or anything. But I'm sane. I think I am. I still rage. Sometimes I want to scream in frustration, but less often now. I am deeply unhappy and alone, but I know I can live. I'm just trying to be in touch with God. Not praying for freedom, but just trying to be in touch with God."

That speaks to me so much of Paul's words in our reading today:

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit...may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely." [1 Thess. 5]

Terry Anderson lived those words. Although he was unable to rejoice always, he was able - really able - to remain faithful in prayer.

As we reach the mid-point of Advent today, perhaps we all need to get more in touch with our own life of personal faith and prayer?

We often pray, 'Come Lord Jesus', asking Jesus to come into the situation we are in. Asking Jesus to come to us as we really are, to help us to embrace our lives, whatever may be happening this very day. Helping us, in the midst of the reality of our lives, to be filled with praise and thanksgiving. Helping us to worship in Spirit and in truth.

In this kind of prayer, we are not just asking for God to change things around us. We are being open to the possibility of change within us ... change in how we see things, how we experience things, how we evaluate things in the light of faith and hope.

We live out our lives of faith and prayer individually, person by person. You and I will live out our lives of faith and prayer, just as for centuries people like Isaiah, Paul and John the Baptist, once lived ... all of whom are featured in our readings today. If faith and prayer can sustain Isaiah, Paul and other great Bible figures ... as well as in more recent years ... Mother Theresa, Brother Roger and Terry Anderson ... who's to say that you and I, too, will not be sustained in our own lives of faith, hope and prayer?

And a concluding prayer for this Advent season:

Come to us Lord Jesus, here and now.

Be our Lord, our guide and our teacher here in this place.

O come Emmanuel: be God with us, God in our world.

O come thou Wisdom from on high: show us the path of knowledge.

O come thou Dayspring from on high:

cheer us by thy drawing nigh, alongside each one of us.

O come, Desire of Nations:

make us instruments of peace and reconciliation.

Maranatha: come Lord Jesus, come!

Amen.

Val Gagen

*Lark Valley and North Bury Churches
St John's, Bury St Edmunds*

TEAM EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE

Sunday 7th January 2024 ~ 5pm

**Candlelit procession, carols
and seasonal refreshments**

All are welcome!

Volunteers to read or sing are especially welcome.

To read please contact the Revd Ali Miller

01284 728714 teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com

To sing please contact David Honeyball

07827 668964 dhoneyball@hotmail.co.uk

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 17 DECEMBER

SUNDAY 17 December 3rd SUNDAY of ADVENT O Sapientia

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	All Age Worship (gathering at 9.15am)	West Stow
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham All Saints
10.30am	All Age Worship	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
3.00pm	Nine Lessons and Carols	Timworth
5.00pm	Nine Lessons and Carols	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds

Monday 18 December O Adonai

9.30am	Christingle Coffee Morning (until 11.30am)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
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Tuesday 19 December O Radix

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
7.00pm	Nine Lessons and Carols	Fornham All Saints

Wednesday 20 December O Clavis

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 21 December O Oriens

9.30am	Eucharist (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
3.00pm	Wonder Club	Lackford

Friday 22 December O Rex Gentium

7.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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Saturday 23 December O Emmanuel

SUNDAY 24 December 4th SUNDAY of ADVENT

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Benefice Eucharist (CW)	Culford
11.00am	Parish Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

CHRISTMAS EVE

3.30pm	Crib Service	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
4.00pm	Crib Service	Fornham St Martin
9.30pm	'Bethlehem' Midnight Mass	Fornham All Saints
9.30pm	'Bethlehem' Midnight Mass	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
11.30pm	Midnight Mass	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
11.30pm	Midnight Mass	West Stow

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 later posted onto www.northburychurches.org.uk

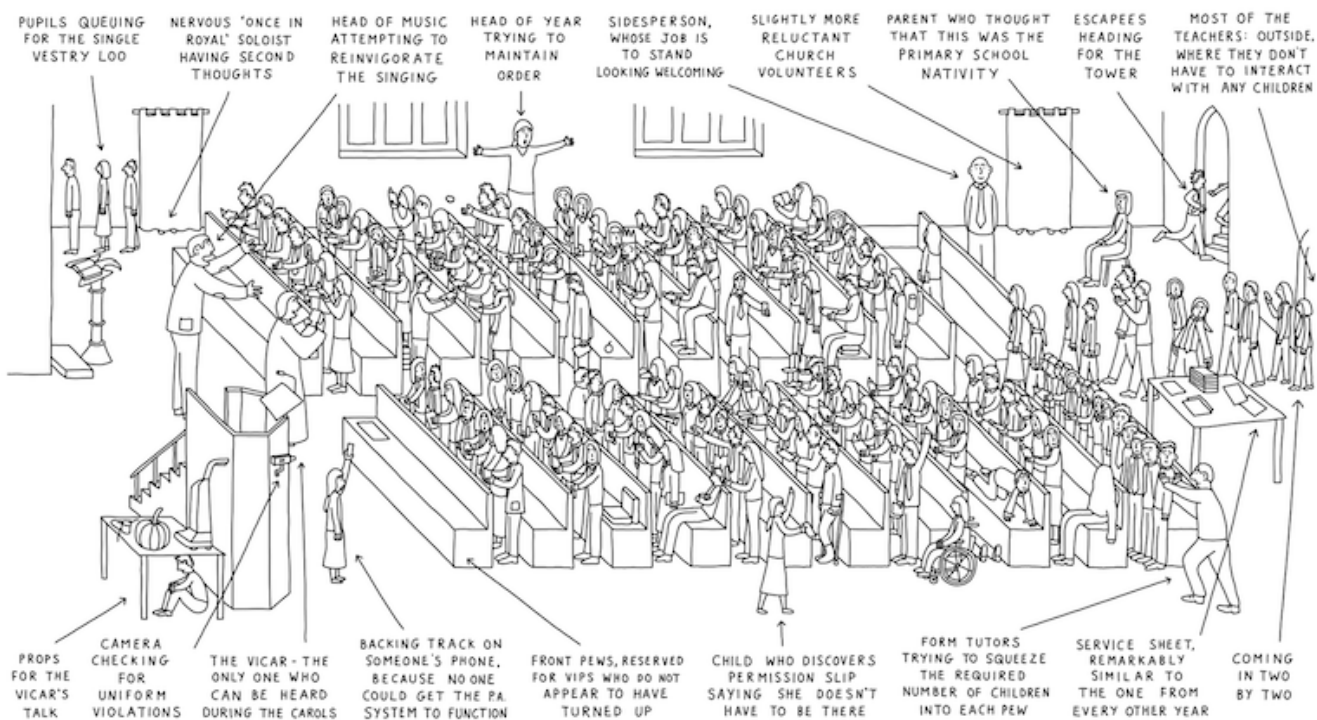


Carols and Readings at St George's, 10th December

With thanks to Val Gagen

THE SCHOOL CAROL SERVICE

YEAR 8 VISIT THE PARISH CHURCH



Timworth

Nine Lessons and Carols

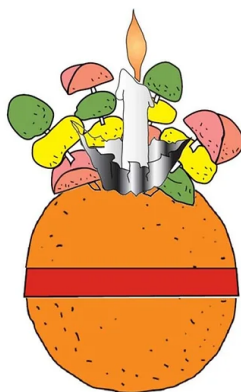
Sunday 17th December at 3pm

All Saints', Bury St Edmunds

Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 17th December at 5pm

Christingle Coffee Morning



Donations will
go to the
Children's
Society.

St George's Church

Monday 18th December

9.30 am - 11:30 am

ending with a blessing of the Christingles for those who
wish to take part.

Coffee and cake and Christingle making!

All welcome

Fornham All Saints

Nine Lessons and Carols

Tuesday 19th December at 7pm

The Wonder Club

St Lawrence Lackford

Story * Wondering * Craft * Prayer * Cake

Thursday 21st December at 3pm

All Saints', Bury St Edmunds

Crib Service

CHRISTMAS EVE Sunday 24th December at 3.30pm

Fornham St Martin

Crib Service

CHRISTMAS EVE Sunday 24th December at 4pm

St George's, Bury St Edmunds

'Bethlehem' Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS EVE Sunday 24th December at 9.30pm

Fornham All Saints

'Bethlehem' Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS EVE Sunday 24th December at 9.30pm

West Stow

Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS EVE Sunday 24th December at 11.30pm

St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS EVE Sunday 24th December at 11.30pm

All Saints', Bury St Edmunds

Christmas Day Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY 25th December at 9.30am

Timworth

Christmas Day Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY 25th December at 9.30pm

Fornham St Martin

Christmas Day Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY 25th December at 10am

Lackford

Christmas Day Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY 25th December at 10am

St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Christmas Day Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY 25th December at 11am

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

15 November .. Florence Ethel Andrews West Suffolk Crematorium

15 November .. James Doig

All Saints', Bury, *followed by* West Suffolk Crematorium

21 November .. Nora Salmon West Suffolk Crematorium

24 November .. Barry John Nudds West Suffolk Crematorium

Burial of Ashes

21 November .. Florence Ethel Andrews Borough Cemetery

8 December .. David Dennis Hoggett Fornham St Martin

CAPTION COMPETITION

A choice of fairtrade wine or chocolate awaits the person who can contribute the winning caption for this photograph, kindly provided by Ali Miller.



Please send your entries by Monday 18th November to the Viral Bulletin at adrian.mann@btinternet.com

Contacts

Revd Dr Andy Miller	01284 728714	teamrectorlvnb@btinternet.com
Revd Ali Miller	01284 728714	teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com
Revd Val Gagen	01284 361963	rev.valgagen@gmail.com
Team Office	01284 700400	NBTLVB@outlook.com

We also have assistance from priests within the benefice with permission to officiate.

Please don't forget ...

to let Julie Hooton NBTLVB@outlook.com
and the 'Viral Bulletin' adrian.mann@btinternet.com

have details of events which have happened
and events which are coming up at your church.

And your photos are always welcome, jpeg format preferred.
