

St John the Evangelist

Signpost Weekly

Epiphany

6th January 2019

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first Signpost of 2019. Happy New Year! Rev Sharon and I do hope that you enjoyed time with family and friends as you celebrated the birth of our saviour, Jesus, and welcomed in a new year. Today is the twelfth day of Christmas when we celebrate Epiphany, the arrival of the Wise Men/Magi/Kings. As their journey reminds us of our own journey of faith, it is our prayer that we might all draw closer to Jesus in the coming year, that we would be attentive to the light guiding our way, and open to fresh experiences and new opportunities. At the start of 2019 please do consider if God is inviting you to serve our church and community in a new way; as a baptism friend, a server, a reader, intercessor, PCC member, church warden or in any other way. Your help in ensuring the church family, and our wider community, can continue to journey closer to Christ is both essential and appreciated. Rev. Dan.

## The joy of a return

The country of Ghana is making 2019 'The Year of Return' to mark 400 years of the slave trade. Akwase Agyeman who is heading up this year of celebration said this:

'We will celebrate the resilience of the African. Like Joseph in the Bible who was sold to slavery and later connected to his brothers, there was a celebration and in 2019 there shall be a celebration for Africans in Diaspora'

I wonder how we might make 2019 'a year of return'. I don't mean as a return to things past because we mourn a past glory. I'm thinking of the story of Joseph. Joseph was separated from family because his family were jealous of him. His brothers sold him into slavery, out of sight, out of mind. It's when they have need of food that they inadvertently come across Joseph again, this time he holds their fate in his hands. It would have been so easy for Joseph to seek to get his own back on his brothers. In fact he does play a trick on them. However when all is revealed we find many tears shed and reconciliation is achieved.

I wonder how many families in our communities have faced such a fracture in relationships?

Rembrandt's famous painting, 'The Return of the Prodigal' is one of those iconic pictures which draws us into experiencing the depth of feeling the parable speaks of. The embrace of the father to the kneeling son shows us not only the emotion of a family relationship restored but that of God's love for us, his wandering people. Many of us have personal experience of discovering the love of the Father for us, his children. Perhaps this year we could pass on that story to others and help them to find the joy and celebration of a return to the Father who gave everything in order to release them from the slavery of sin.

Let's make this not just 'a year of return' but rather a lifetime!

Rt Rev Ruth Worsley

Bishop of Taunton

## COLLECTS AND READINGS

**6<sup>th</sup> January Epiphany** Readings: Isaiah 60.1-6; Ephesians 3.1-12; Matthew 2.1-12

**Collect:** Creator of the heavens, who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child: guide and sustain us, that we may find our journey's end in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Post Communion:** Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek: may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**13<sup>th</sup> January Baptism of Christ** Readings: Isaiah 43.1-7; Acts 8.14-17; Luke 3. 15-17, 21-22

**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.

**Post Communion:** Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Our Pastoral Prayers



*To include somebody on this prayer list please let Shirley in the office know by lunchtime on Thursday, making sure the person you wish to be included wants their name in print.*

**Baptisms:** We pray for parents, godparents and those preparing to be baptised.

### **Those in need of our prayers:**

Margaret Moyle, Hazel, Betty Montgomery, Betty Player, Christine Marston, Val & George Crawford Maureen & Ian Thompson

**For those who have died:** We pray for those who have recently died and their loved ones who grieve their loss.

Alan Walker, Gladys Harwood

### **Those whose anniversary falls this week:**

Lillian Paul, Barbara Boundy, Margaret Martin

## PRAYER FOCUS

### **Sunday:**

*For all who are facing a journey today*

### **Monday:**

*For those returning to school today*

### **Tuesday:**

*For those who are struggling at the start of a new year*

### **Wednesday:**

*For the work of our local Foodbank*

### **Thursday:**

*For those in positions of leadership in local and national government*

### **Friday:**

*For those who are waiting, for news, for operations and treatment, for a new birth*

### **Saturday:**

*For your neighbours and those on your street*

**Would you like to offer some prayer suggestions? Mention it to Rev Sharon**

## ***Baptism Friends***



### **Your Church Needs you!**

Baptism welcomes individuals of all ages from our community into God's local family in Highbridge.

Baptisms are often attended by a large proportion of people who would not normally come to church who appreciate a good, friendly welcome and help.

We are seeking people who would be pleased to join our team of friends who represent the church at our services of baptism.

If you could help, or would like to know more, please speak to Rev Dan or Rev Sharon.

## ***Advent Book Chat***



If you journeyed through Advent using the Advent Book we would love for you to join us to chat about how you found the experience on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> January.

There are two opportunities;  
**2pm** at the Vicarage  
**7.45pm** at the Vicarage

If you are unable to join us but read the book, please do share any feedback with Rev Dan or Rev Sharon as it will help us with our future thinking and planning.

## ***Having a clear out of STAMPS, JARS, CARDS?.....***

If you haven't thrown out all those Christmas cards yet, please bring in to the office/hall/church, along with any old Birthday/Anniversary/Get Well cards for Pat's ongoing recycling of cards for our funds. She would also be very grateful for any jam jars for her preserve making – also a popular fundraiser.

Pat continues to be happy to receive used postage stamps to pass on to the Spinal Unit in Salisbury.

## ***Week of Prayer for Christian Unity***

The week of prayer for Christian Unity is a really good opportunity to get together with our friends from other churches. Two events are coming up this month:

**A Quiet Reflective time on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 9.30am – 1pm (including lunch)** at West Huntspill Methodist Church.

**The Service For Christian Unity on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January at the Roman Catholic Church in Burnham-on-Sea at 6.30pm.** After the service there will be a shared supper so please take a contribution to the refreshments i.e. cold finger food. Coffee/tea and soft drinks will be supplied.

6<sup>th</sup> January

# JANUARY CALENDAR

## Who's Who at St John's:

Vicar: Rev'd Preb Sharon Crossman 789290  
Associate Priest: Rev'd Tonya Nixon 793950  
Training Curate: Rev'd Dan Crouch 325194  
Churchwarden: Chris Perry 783753

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**Sun 6<sup>th</sup> Jan EPIPHANY 8am Said Communion 9.30am Sung Communion**

Tues 8<sup>th</sup> *Toddlers on Christmas break*

Wed 9<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Said Communion & 10.00am Foodbank Listening Place in church hall

Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> *Little Angels on Christmas break (N.B. change to date in diary)*

1pm Funeral

2pm or 7.45pm Advent Book discussions in the vicarage

(a few Christmas Nibbles may be on offer!)

**Sun 13<sup>th</sup> 8am Said Communion 9.30am Family Communion**

Tues 15<sup>th</sup> 10am Toddlers in church hall

7.30pm PCC meeting in hall

Wed 16<sup>th</sup> 9.30am Said Communion & 10.00am Foodbank Listening Place in church hall

Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Little Angels in church hall

Fri 18<sup>th</sup> 7.00pm BINGO evening in hall

**Sun 20<sup>th</sup> 9am Said Communion 3pm Shorter Communion followed by tea**

**4pm Baptism Friends meeting in church**

Tues 22<sup>nd</sup> 10am Toddlers in church hall

Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> 9.30am Said Communion & 10.00am Foodbank Listening Place in church hall

Thurs 24<sup>th</sup> 10.30am Little Angels in church hall

**Sun 27<sup>th</sup> 8am Said Communion 9.30am Family Communion**

To submit an article for the Signpost Weekly please e-mail  
[office@stjohnshighbridge.org.uk](mailto:office@stjohnshighbridge.org.uk) or leave a message on 01278 780633

Parish office opening hours:

Weds 8am-2pm Thurs 8am-10am Fri 8am -noon

*Please ring in advance*