



# ST JAMES' CHURCH, ISLINGTON N1 8PH

10 January 2021 EPIPHANY 1 Year B 21/2

Welcomers: Lockdown: Service of the Word  
 Reader: Kerri Allen and Susan Sorensen  
 Interceder: Ros Ford  
 Cantor: N/A  
 AV editor: Sinead Burniston

Brother Giles: Blessed are those who do good to others without expecting that they should do good to them back.

**Collect: Holy Father, you revealed the wonder of your glory at the baptism of your beloved Son: grant us a glimpse of that glory in our lives, that we may be constantly renewed in our relationship with you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**



## CHURCHWARDENS LICENSING

One of the few good things about the Covid pandemic is that the usual annual swearing in of Churchwardens - which often takes place in a bigger church somewhere else in the Deanery - has been scrapped for 2020/1 and is now being done locally. So today part of the 10am Mass is given over to this legal requirement. Which gives us a great opportunity to think about what Churchwardens do - and in our case, how well they do it!

Churchwardens have had a legal role in the English Church since at least 1250ad

and they often take a leading part, with the Bishop and Archdeacon, in choosing new clergy. The aim is that the parish priest and the Churchwardens share the responsibilities of caring for the Church and making sure everything is in order and so it is crucial that they get on well. I am delighted to say we do!

While Hilary Roden and Isabel Nisbet have very different backgrounds they work really well together, drawing on different skill sets to cover all the jobs that fall to them. Their faithful support of this parish is absolutely exemplary and I am so pleased to have this opportunity to say thank you to them on behalf of us all.

**LOCKDOWN** In Arena84 I shared some thoughts with you about whether we should continue to have live services in Church. Since I wrote that at the beginning of the week the Mayor of London has made the urgent request for churches to close. After wide consultation we have decided to respond to that appeal and details can be found in the Arena85 e-newsletter. So thank you for all the feedback. We will of course be reviewing what we are doing at the PCC meeting on Monday 18th January. The principle always is to offer the best we can - with whatever resources we have. I am very grateful for your willingness to be flexible.

**BACK ON LINE** Thanks to the Cloudesley Trust we have been able to replace the Vicarage iPad with one more suitable for Church and to start streaming our services once more. I know this has been missed over the last few weeks. For the next three Sundays the Services of the Word will be recorded and then published on YouTube. From Candlemass on 31st January we will be trying our hand at live streaming for the first time. We hope it will just become part of the new 'normal'!

*St James' Islington: discovering how to live like Jesus in the 21st century*

**GUIDE TO ST JAMES'** With so many visitors to the Church it is high time we had a printed guide to point out some of the best features. At some time I would like to write a little booklet but for the moment I have put together an A4 sheet with the history of the parish on one side and fourteen features to find (with the aid of a map) on the other. There are some laminated copies to keep in Church and some black and white copies for people to take away if they would like to.

**AWFUL PUN** You should never trust an atom. They make up everything...

**CONSISTORY COURT** The preliminary hearing for the Consistory Court met on zoom on Friday morning. Despite the format which takes a bit of getting used to - the Chancellor and the Registrar in Norwich, the four contenders here in Islington - there were, as you can imagine, a whole raft of instructions issued. We heard how a Consistory Court is more like a Coroners Court where the presiding judge has more opportunity to be interventionist than in a criminal case and where the papers already submitted are largely taken as read. The format of formal statements and cross examinations is pretty similar however but there are strict time limits which we will need to adhere to. The most important thing to share with you today is that the court case will sit on **Thursday March 4th, running over into Friday 5th** if we haven't been able to wrap up the case in a day. The Chancellor will not make an immediate judgement and we should allow up to 14 days for the final outcome ie 19th March. The March PCC meeting will therefore be on the 22nd.

### THIS WEEK

Sun *BAPTISM OF CHRIST* Church services suspended until further notice  
 Wed 6pm Grace Church, Alvin, Texas Zoom prayers.  
 Thurs 8-1pm BT install a new Broadband connection into Church. 10am Deanery Chapter (by zoom).  
 Sun 17 *EPIPHANY 2* Church services suspended until further notice

### Calendar and Daily Prayer themes

Sun 10 *BAPTISM OF CHRIST* Shirley Chinery; Carly, James, Michael, Francis  
 Mon 11 *DEL Epiphany 1* Cyril Daley; Dennis Davis; Adam Dickson  
 Tues 12 *Feria* Teresa Pereira, Richard, Mae and Ivy Dennison  
 Wed 13 *George Fox* Amanda Doyle; Will Ellsworth-Jones  
 Thurs 14 *Feria* Amy Eldon Richier, Scott, Freddie and Callum Kinch  
 Fri 15 *Feria* Luigi, Jane, Luca, Francesca, Matteo and Gloria Falcioni  
 Sat 16 *Feria* Weini and Ethan Faloppa; Paige Bella and Lola Flynn  
 Sun 17 *EPIPHANY 2* Lisa and Sonny Follet; Wendy Fisher-Gordon; Maria Flavius

## PRAYER BOARD/NOTICES Requests for prayer welcome

**BIRTHDAYS** Many Happy Returns tomorrow to Bow Wheatley who will be 7.  
**SICK** Christopher Browne, Mariolina and Peter Freeth, Emily Grainger, Alastair and Diane Hume, Kris Hyde, Hayley Jenkins, John, Kingsley Lewis, John Scott, Charlie Sharpe, Vera Taggart, Geoff Turner and Melanie Toogood.

**ANNIVERSARIES** Today: Vera Chambers (2017); Geoffrey Hetherington (1995); 14th: Nancy Barton (1997), Jenny Bogle (2015); 15th: Harry Holness (1986), Mary Murphy, Nick Garsed (2010).

**INTERNATIONAL CHURCH LINKS** In the US: Suzanne Smith, Rector of Grace Church, Alvin, Texas. Suzanne's husband Travis is Rector of Holy Comforter, Angleton, 14 miles away. In Japan: Fr Sebastian and Yuki Naniwa serving in Ehime near Hiroshima.



**PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE** Our prayers continue for Nazanin Zaghari Radcliffe in the hope that some kind of formula can allow her to return to the UK as soon as possible.

Streamed services on Facebook

You do not need to have your own Facebook account to be able to access our streamed services on the St James' Islington Facebook page.



Each Monday at 12.30pm.





SERVICE OF THE  
WORD  
for Epiphany 1  
Sunday January 10th 2021.

as streamed from  
St James' Church  
Islington N1

**SERVICE OF THE WORD FOR EPIPHANY I**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Peace be with you.

Welcome to St James' Church, Islington, for this Service of the Word for the first Sunday of Epiphany.

As you know we were planning to hold our regular services in Church throughout January. These were to include the commissioning of our two Churchwardens today, a sermon by our ordinand in training, Joe Ammoun in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and finally the Baptisms of Ava, Ivy and Bella Wilson and the admission to five First Communicants Amariah, Tayah, Matilda, Barnaby and Ava on Sunday 31st!

Sadly the figures of those suffering from Covid have led us, and nearly all churches and places of worship, to conclude that we really couldn't take the risk of adding to the problems being faced by the NHS at this time. We simply have to heed the request by our mayor to 'stay home'.

So in double quick time we have tried to adapt what would have been our usual 10am Parish Mass into a Service of the Word for the first Sunday after Epiphany, a day usually focusing on the Baptism of Jesus by his cousin John the Baptist. It has had to be done rather quickly and I am sorry there is so little music.

But for a theme, I wanted to see if we could trace a link between Baptism and the work of our Churchwardens, Hilary and Isabel, who are swearing their oaths today as part of the formal 'taking up of office' for 2020/21.

And as we do so, we give thanks for their hugely appreciated ministry here at St James'.

But before we begin, let us call to mind the presence of God - wherever we are - thanking him for all that he has given us this week; thanking him too for the fellowship of the Church which links us not just with other members of St James' but also with our fellow Christians around the world, starting with the Collect for the 1st Sunday of Epiphany

**Collect**

**Holy Father, you revealed the wonder of your glory at the baptism of your beloved Son: grant us a glimpse of that glory in our lives, that we may be constantly renewed in our relationship with you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## The Word of God

*1st Reading:* (1 Kings 8: 56-61) Then King Solomon said, 'Blessed be the Lord, who has given harmony to his people Israel according to all that he promised; not one word has failed of all his promises which he spoke through his servant Moses. May the Lord our God be with us, as he was with our ancestors; may he not leave us or abandon us, but incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his ordinances, which he commanded our ancestors. Let these words of mine be near to the Lord our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires; so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other. Therefore devote yourselves completely to the Lord, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

King Solomon was very pleased with himself. He had rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem and at long last the Ark - containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them which had been carried through the wilderness for 40 years - had a permanent home.

In fact God had blessed Solomon every inch of the way since his father David had died, and he had every reason to feel upbeat about the future. The people lived in peace; there was plenty to eat and drink and now they all felt able to trust God to keep his promise to protect his people Israel for evermore. So long - of course - that they kept their word and didn't go chasing after other gods.

What Solomon wanted most of all was security and the contentment that flowed from knowing that God was on their side. He wanted his Temple to last and his people to be faithful. It was a feeling very much echoed by St Paul as he wrote these famous lines to the people of Phillipi:

*2nd Reading:* (Philippians 4: 4-9) Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Today we are giving thanks for our Churchwardens, Hilary and Isabel. Elected each year at the AGM, we could take them - and their work for granted!

So in this pandemic year when their commissioning is being done in the parish rather than in a Deanery service, I thought we might look again at what a Churchwarden does...

In fact it is a very ancient office in the English Church and is much older than the Reformation. The earliest reference goes back to the 1250s and a hundred years later there is the first evidence that the two people were elected, one by the people and the other by the priest - a habit that seems to have disappeared in the last 100 years but is still to be found in some parishes.

So for over 800 years Churchwardens have been responsible for the fabric of the Church and they have to record all that the Church owns in books called Terriers and Inventories. Each year they have to do a physical check of each item—and every third year they have to do it in the presence of the Archdeacon!

But more importantly the Churchwardens are the eyes and ears of the parish, charged to support the parish priest and to offer help and support whenever they can. The rules say they are to relieve him/her of 'any superfluous administrative tasks' for example and to do their best to resolve any rifts or disputes within the Church - and indeed between the Church and the wider community. As a result it is the Churchwardens to whom the bishop can turn if they want another opinion about how things are going. In law Churchwardens are bishop's officers and she can call them in at any point - as she will certainly do in three year's time when the search will be on for a new parish priest here.

But what other 'more ordinary jobs' need to be done to keep the Church working properly? Fortunately the Churchwardens are not on their own. Most of the financial stuff is delegated to our two treasurers and some of the big admin tasks have been picked up by Adam our PCC secretary and parish administrator who deals with the endless demands from the Diocese for statistics, data protection, congregational lists, GDPR, Faculty applications, Safeguarding and Quinquennial reports on the condition of the building.

But to the Churchwardens falls lots of other things: the daily tasks like rotas and signing in sheets during the pandemic, implementing decisions made by the Church Council for example on the booking and care of the Hall and the Church, for us here at St James' the staging of the Islington Proms and our musical programme, plus of course the very big project to rebuild the organ. There are staff and volunteers to be managed and questions to be asked about everything from when the heating is turned on to the work of the cleaning teams and the provision of paper towels in the toilets.

One of the Churchwardens closes up the Church every night of the week and between them they make sure everything is put away after the 10am Mass on Sundays. They act as backstops for the stream of people who come to maintain the organ, tune the piano, service the clock and the lightening conductor and the people who deep clean the carpets. They count the number of adults and children each week and they stand in when people have forgotten to read or act as interceder. They are the first line of welcome and the people responsible for good order should there be any interruptions during Mass. Those sticks at the back of the Church – one with a Crown on and the other with a Mitre – also known as the Churchwardens staves, are there for a purpose!

And, as you will hear in the oath, Churchwardens are called to encourage us in the practice of ‘true religion’! Which leads us very neatly into the Gospel set for today which tells of the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. And then we will try to ask, what has that got to do with Churchwardens... ?

### **Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia. Alleluia. John saw Jesus coming towards him, and said, This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Alleluia.

### **Gospel**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Musical Interlude; Tomorrow shall be my dancing day arr Andrew Gardner*

So what does this particular Gospel reading have to say to our modern world? On the face of it we have a rather weird scene of a man dressed in animal skins, shouting out his message way out in the wilderness. Hardly 2021 Islington!

But perhaps underneath it all there is something that could easily be found in a modern blog or a lifestyle book on the shelves of Waterstones. Because the pandemic has forced all of us to look at the way we live, the way we work, the way we relate to our friends and families and the hopes we have for the future. And if there is a common denominator it is about taking the opportunity to review our priorities. Do the same things matter now as they did in, say, 2019 for example? Can we go on consuming more and more; can we go on putting ourselves at the centre of the universe and ignoring those who have less than we do?

In the same way baptism works to another agenda, one that starts with seeing that God is both our maker and our best friend, the one who wants us to flourish and to be happy. But his way of being happy is the opposite of what seems natural and normal. On a wonderful hill side setting in Galilee Jesus sat the crowds down and said: *Blessed are those who put people before things; they are the ones who will go to heaven. Blessed are the non-aggressive; they are the ones who will inherit the earth. Blessed are the ones who get overlooked; they are the people who will get the richest reward.*

Church life has its ups and its downs like any other. But, as I said recently, it is designed to be a school of kindness where people act as role models of what caring for others before ourselves actually looks like.

And if we are looking for examples of the qualities Jesus was talking about, then we might start with our two Churchwardens! Quietly and generously they show us what Jesus-like caring looks like. And today we can say thank-you!

### **The Admission of Churchwardens**

Ordinarily the Archdeacon would ask the following three questions which Hilary and Isabel have already responded to:

Will you, as Churchwardens, seek to work with the Bishop, the Incumbent, the Parochial Church Council and all those who exercise leadership responsibility in your parish, to further the mission of God and his purposes?

Will you undertake your task as a spiritual calling, and seek, through the power of the Holy Spirit, by example and precept, to promote faith in Jesus Christ and peace and unity in his Church?

Will you care for the fabric and property of the Church, and make it your responsibility to ensure its proper upkeep and repair?

To which the new Churchwardens say:  
**I will, the Lord being my helper.**

They then receive, today as in any other year, this blessing:

God give you grace to serve him with dedication, cheerfulness and humility. May his holy and all-powerful Spirit direct your path throughout the coming year as we work to fulfil the vision God has given us through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Churchwardens then have to make this oath:  
Hilary and Isabel, before you can be admitted to office you must make this declaration:

*I Hilary, I Isabel, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I will faithfully and diligently discharge the duties of the office of Churchwarden in this parish. I will seek to represent the laity of the parish and to co-operate with our incumbent. I will try, by word and example, to encourage the parishioners in the practice of true religion, and I will seek to promote unity and peace among them.*

And this year I am able to say to them:

Hilary and Isabel, I do admit as Churchwardens you who, being duly elected to serve in the Diocese of London, have now made your declarations. May God give you grace to serve him faithfully in this office throughout the coming year.

All **Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people; that each in their vocation and ministry may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

#### **Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe that in the beginning was the Word,  
and that the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
Through him all things were made;  
without him nothing was made that has been made.  
In him is life and that life is the light for us all.  
The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us;  
we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son  
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

#### **Confession**

**All seeing God, you have searched our hearts and minds  
and have discovered our blindness and our weakness,  
our fears and our selfishness.**

**In sorrow we confess that we have sinned against you  
and disobeyed your command to love others  
as we love ourselves.**

**Forgive us for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ  
who became like us  
so that we might become like him. Amen.**

May the God of love and power forgive us and free you from all our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **Prayers of Intercession**

Lord, we thank you that through our Baptism, we are made part of your world-wide family of the Church. We thank you for the gifts you release in us when we are willing to put the needs of others before ourselves. We thank you for the kindness and the friendship that flows from those who are close to you. Help us not to be disappointed when our efforts seem not to be appreciated but to see all giving as part of your care for the world. Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those called to make special sacrifices: for those nursing the terminally ill, for those whose life-saving work is endless and who have little time with their families. We continue to pray for all those caring for Covid patients in our hospitals and for administrators working to make it possible for treat more and more patients. Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks today for Hilary and Isabel our Churchwardens and for all who are called to ministries within your Church. We pray that we may willingly work together so that your light can be seen here in our parish. We ask your blessing on the influence we have on our young people, that they may see your truth and love in us. Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

As the lockdown takes even greater effect in London we pray for all those whose family well-being and opportunities for learning, and whose careers and life chances are being disrupted as never before. We pray for a spirit of hope and courage in the face of so much disillusion. Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

In a moment of quiet we bring before you today those who especially need our prayers; Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Finally we commend into your care the souls of all who have died, praying for the souls of Vera Chambers, Geoffrey Hetherington, Nancy Barton, Jenny Bogle; Harry Holness, Mary Murphy and Nick Garsed.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of Mary the Mother of God, St James and all the saints, we commend ourselves and all those for whom we have prayed, to God's unfailing love.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### Notices

### Blessing

May Christ, who makes saints of sinners, who has transformed those we remember today, raise and strengthen us so that we may transform the world; and so may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us, now and for ever. Amen.

Music: *Carillon de Westminster* Louis Vierne

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*Music 1: Nun komm' der Heiden Helland JS Bach, Trinity College Cambridge/Richard Marlow.*

*Music 2: Tomorrow shall be my dancing day arr Gardner Christmas Carols Ancien and Modern, BBC Singers/Brian Kay; Music 3: Carillon de Westminster, James O'Donnell*

*This version © Rite Aid 2021*



May God bless every £1 we give so that St James' will be here, not just for today and for tomorrow, but for the future he wants to create.