



Heacham Parish Church



Please note: There is a Holy Communion service in church today at 9.30am. For details of restrictions see the Notices section of this service-sheet.

Sunday Service 6th December 2020

*Adrian plays 'Hark now a rose is blooming' (Es ist ein ros entsprungen)
by Brahms*

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you; **and also with you.**

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God; the God who is the same, today, yesterday and tomorrow; the God who is with us today, during this pandemic, this Advent and always; the God who loves us.

The second Sunday of Advent - Peace

Every year we light candles as we prepare for the coming of Christ. More and more candles, more and more light, as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World.

Philippians 4: 7 says: 'The peace that passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

We light the first and second candles - the candles of hope and peace

Song: Longing for light, we wait in darkness

sung and played by Hilary, Richard G, Sue, Terry, and Karen

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your Holy people,
Light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts; shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.
Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Chorus

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Prayer of confession:

*Heavenly Father,
you call us to repent of our sins:
soften our proud and stubborn hearts.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.*

*Lord Jesus,
you declared the forgiveness of God:
teach us to forgive one another.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.*

*Holy Spirit,
you search our hearts and show us the truth:
direct us in your way of righteousness.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.*

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom which cannot be destroyed,
forgive us our sins,
open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will
and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Song: These are the days of Elijah

sung & played by Karen, Terry, Rosie, Colin, Lesley, and Hilary

These are the days of Elijah,
declaring the word of the Lord:
And these are the days of Your servant Moses,
righteousness being restored.
And though these are days of great trial,
of famine and darkness and sword,
Still, we are the voice in the desert crying,
'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!'

*Behold He comes riding on the clouds,
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call;
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee,
Out of Zion's hill salvation comes.*

These are the days of Ezekiel,
the dry bones becoming as flesh;
And these are the days of Your servant David,
rebuilding a temple of praise.
These are the days of the harvest,
the fields are as white as the world,
And we are the labourers in the vineyard,
declaring the word of the Lord!

*Behold He comes riding on the clouds,
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call;
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee,
Out of Zion's hill salvation comes.*

Bible Reading: Mark 1: 1-8 read by Jenny Ives

A Reflection, from Penny Sutton

This year most of our gospel readings come from Mark's Gospel. He wrote primarily for gentiles, mostly Greeks and Romans, who followed Jesus. His style and cultural background are, therefore, very different to that of Matthew whose gospel we used last year. Mark portrays Jesus the servant. He writes: "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Ch 10, v 45). There are few words of Jesus reported in this gospel because Mark emphasises what He did, His actions, and thus reveals God's servant.

Today we start at the very beginning of the gospel. There is no genealogy of Jesus or account of His birth. Mark is not presenting a ruler whose legitimacy would need to be established. He is presenting a servant for whom such details would be unnecessary. Instead, Mark establishes the identity of this servant by using three witnesses.

Firstly: himself - Mark writes "The gospel about Jesus Christ the Son of God". An unequivocal statement but how was he a witness? He was not a disciple. No, not one of the twelve, but he was a young man living in Jerusalem with his mother at the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. They followed Jesus and a church met in their home. He certainly would have witnessed events in Jerusalem if not further afield. To us it seems unnecessary to say the 'gospel about Jesus Christ' but not to a first century Roman. To them gospel meant good news about the emperor! So, Mark needed to state that his gospel is about Jesus Christ.

Secondly: the prophets – Mark quotes from the prophecies of Malachi and Isaiah, the scriptures of Israel. The words 'messenger' and 'voice' both refer to John the Baptist, the prophet sent by God to prepare the way for his Son. Both prophets declare that Jesus is God the Son.

Thirdly: John the Baptist – The man Jesus called 'the greatest of the prophets'. His clothing, lifestyle, and message of repentance all mirrored Elijah, the archetypal prophet. John's message and baptism of repentance were in preparation for the ministry of Jesus. All John said and all he did was designed to point to Jesus in fulfilment of ancient

prophecies. So, this is the beginning of the “good news” about Jesus Christ who is the Son of God.

You cannot present the gospel even to Gentiles without reference to Israel, God’s chosen people. To Jews of that time the arrival of John the Baptist was like someone flinging open your bedroom door in the middle of the night, switching on the light, and shouting ‘wake up’. Many had been looking for Messiah to come and rescue them from the occupying Romans, but nobody expected a prophet telling them to repent. John was a voice shouting into the dreams and nightmares of the Jewish population of Palestine. Every Passover they recited the story of the Exodus, their delivery from slavery in Egypt and journey to the promised land, where they were now living. They did not envisage a repeat performance. They did not see that they had any need.

This was a rude awakening by a man who looked like a prophet, ate like a prophet, and spoke like a prophet, ergo he must be a prophet! BUT there had not been a prophet in Israel for over 400 years. Now John appeared telling them to leave their current ‘Egypt’, the world of sin in which they were living and rebelling against God, and once again pass through the waters to freedom. They had no idea what freedom looked like because they were facing the wrong way. Time to repent and turn round. To turn from going their own way and to go God’s way.

Mark conveys the shock of this new thing which God was doing. Are we asleep today in our church, in our community, or in our personal life?

Has complacency set in? Do we see no need to change or has the pandemic woken us?

Song: On Jordan’s Bank

sung & played by Lesley, Hilary, Judith, Richard G, Sue, and Richard C

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
Come then and listen for he brings
glad tidings from the King of kings.

Then cleansed be every heart from sin,
make straight the way for God within;
Prepare we in our hearts a home,
where such a mighty guest may come.

For you are our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
Without Your grace we waste away,
like flowers that wither and decay.

To heal the sick stretch out Your hand,
make wholeness flow at Your command;
Sin's devastation now restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.

To Him who left the throne of Heaven
to save mankind, all praise be given;
To God the Father, voices raise,
and Holy Spirit, let us praise.

Prayers of Intercession, led by Ren Fargher-Smith

Gracious and loving Father, invited by you, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, we bring our intercessions. All of us hold particular individuals and events in our hearts and minds. As we pray into situations which seem so complex and so often beyond our understanding come Holy Spirit and hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have difficult decisions to make. In government, in the community, at school, in the workplace, and in our own homes. Holy Spirit, bring wisdom and guidance, that the right decisions will be made.

We pray for those suffering the consequences of bad choices. Those in prison, those burdened by guilt, those consumed by regret. Holy Spirit, help them.

We pray for those whose decisions are made for them. The unwell, the elderly, and those all over the world in places of oppression. We pray too for those who, for the sake of others, have to accept decisions they do not wish to accept. Help them to comply for the sake of others. Guard us all, Lord, from false information, damaging conspiracy theories, and dangerous ideals.

Holy Spirit, be present in all these situations.

We pray for those who are paralysed by indecision - the stressed, the fearful, and those whose circumstances keep changing beyond their control.

Holy Spirit, help them.

We pray for those who, at this very moment, are making desperate choices. Whether to flee their homes, whether to tell the truth, whether to go on living.

Loving Father, grant them the comfort of your presence, the knowledge of your love for them, and the incomparable gift of salvation through Jesus.

Holy Spirit, help them and us.

Father, we hold up those to you who we know personally and whose situations are particularly difficult. The sick, the dying, the bereaved, the confused, and the desperate for all sorts of reasons. We pray too for those who have asked for prayer. We do not know them all but honour their asking; and we pray in faith that you know all there is to know and will answer all prayers in the way that is best.

Loving Father, as we your people celebrate the season of Advent, help us to wait in quiet expectation for the coming of the Lord and in your mercy hear our prayers. **Amen**

We pray together the Lord's Prayer, led by Richard Chipps

Final Prayer

Our Lord says, 'I am coming soon.'

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

May the Lord, when he comes,

*find us watching and waiting. **Amen***

Blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory.
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you and those you love always.

Amen

As we await our coming Saviour, go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

*Adrian plays 'From heaven above to earth I come' (Vom Himmel hoch)
by J S Bach BWV 700*

Notices

In church services – Covid-19 restrictions

Two-metre distancing, hand-sanitising on entry and exit, one-way system, face coverings, contact details for track and trace. Also, as we are in Tier2, worshippers should not mix with anyone not in their own household or 'support bubble'. This is hard because, as a church family, we like to chat and help each other. To minimise the risk of spreading the virus we can only do this outside – socially distanced and applying the 'rule of six'.

Come and join for **virtual Church, Coffee and Chat - on Sunday at 11am** - this is the Zoom link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9960936343?pwd=TIerVHp3UHBzZHNTSm16QzdCNUY0Zz09> Meeting ID: 996 093 6343 Passcode: 150936

Contact Veronica at heacham.vicar@gmail.com to invite you.

HEACHAM PARISH CHURCH online service will be on YouTube from 8am on Sunday morning. Watch out for the email link from Veronica.

Morning Prayer continues Monday-Friday at 9am via Zoom.

Hosted, this week, by different people each day. If you would like to join please contact Veronica for the link at heacham.vicar@gmail.com

Podcast 'Sunday Hope'

The Diocese of Norwich has a weekly audio podcast called 'Sunday Hope'. It is available on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Overcast](#), and more.

The podcast can also be listened to from any landline telephone: call **01603 537577** (local rate) to hear the latest edition.

Daily Hope offers music, prayers, and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England; at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set-up particularly to help those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions.

Interviews are to be held this week for the replacement **Heacham Church Administrator & Bookkeeper**. Please pray for the candidates and the interview panel.

Church Contact:

Rev. Veronica Wilson tel. **01485 570697**
or email: heacham.vicar@gmail.com

Church Office tel. **01485 572539 (answerphone)**
or email: heacham.church@gmail.com



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2020 (a preview of what we have sent to the Village newsletter for December, so you know what is planned; with added notes in italics)

LIGHT UP HEACHAM with STARS

After last year's great angel festival, we would like to encourage everyone to make and/or display stars in your windows, on your fences, in your trees, in your garden, wherever you can - for all to see. **Lighting up Heacham with Stars**, to bring some joy and light in this dark time, so we can walk around the village spotting stars from mid-December onwards. In the Christmas story it was the star that the wise men followed to find Jesus...maybe you could follow the stars around the village and see where you can find Jesus?

We will be decorating the church with stars too, so if you want to make/lend a star or 2 for church could you let Liz know please (tel. 571662). The 2 schools are also going to be making some for us to display. Please do put stars in your windows, etc. and, if you can, also a nativity scene with Jesus in it... if you want a printed picture of a nativity, ask and we can print one in the office.

BIG THANK YOU to 3 chaps (Alex, John, Terry) who braved the elements to put up the star on the church tower. It is causing plenty of good comment around the village as are all the wonderful stars coming out in houses and shops bringing light to the December gloom.



Christmas Church Services - NEWS

We are planning to hold, in church, Christmas Eve Midnight Communion at 11.30pm and Christmas Morning Communion at 10am; both said services. (You will need to book a seat because numbers have to be limited due to Covid-19 regulations – details of how to book will be in next week's notices.)

Our VILLAGE CAROL SERVICE and CHRISTINGLE will both be online this year, pre-recorded and accessed via Heacham Parish Church Youtube channel.

Prayer and Remembering

At present the church building is open on **Wednesdays from 10-12 and Saturdays from 2-4** for private prayer and reflection. You can light a candle, sit and pray in the quiet, and enjoy the peace of the church building. From mid-December we will have a Christmas tree in church on which you can hang a Star with a prayer, or the name of someone you wish to remember.

We also plan to have, in the church porch, a festive display and prayer board; so even when the church is not open, anyone can come into the porch to write a prayer, or remember someone.

Bereavement Support

On **Saturday December 12th** Sue Spencer, plus another member of the Bereavement Team, will be in church **from 2pm-4pm** for people who have been bereaved at any time. You will be welcome to light a candle and/or hang a star on the prayer tree.

Churchyard

The churchyard is always open for you to walk in. We will have a nativity scene on display from mid-December in front of the church... and NOW a star on the top of the tower!

Advent and Christmas ideas & resources from the Diocese

Reflections for Advent and Christmas, by Susanna Gunner, available at <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/resource/advent-reflections/>

If you would like paper copies of these please leave a message on the church office answerphone: 01485 572539.

Digital Advent Calendar - Twenty-six varied contributors from across the Diocese (a shepherd, a teacher, a prison chaplain, for example) will offer us something to ponder each day, starting with an image or a poem or some music. Each door will leave us all with something rich to turn over prayerfully throughout the day in question. Sign up to have each day's offering sent to your email inbox - <http://eepurl.com/hiEuQv> You can also access the calendar via all the Diocesan social media channels.

For those not already signed up – DO IT. No chocolates, of course, but each day thus far has been well worth opening - very unusual and thought-provoking.

