

The Benefice of Benenden & Sandhurst

Our Mission: "To know and love Jesus and make his love known to all"

Our Worship: Sunday 17th January Second Sunday of Epiphany

Collect: Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 17th January – The Second Sunday of Epiphany

Readings: Revelation 5.1-10, John 1.43-end

10am

ONLINE HOLY COMMUNION

led by Revd David Commander & Revd Rosemary Kobus van Wengen

Link to service here: <https://youtu.be/kReaQuKs9Pk>

Followed by online coffee morning via Zoom: Link here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3971102878?pwd=UkpkY2R2Z1lXbmJqNUdhdzB2RVZUUT09>

Meeting ID: 397 110 2878 Passcode: 658989

NB Links to services (also available to watch as recordings) are always detailed on the St George's and St Nicholas church websites, Facebook pages and A Church Near You:

Websites: <http://www.benendenchurch.org/>
<https://stnicholassandhurst.org/>

Facebook Pages: @StGeorgesBenenden
@StNicholasSandhurst

A Church Near You: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

THE WEEK AHEAD

The church is open for private prayer but we regret there is no communal worship for the next few weeks. Sunday services will be available via YouTube at 10am every Sunday (and available to watch afterwards). YouTube service links and links to Zoom coffee mornings will be posted on the church websites on Saturday evening.

Sunday Next: 24th January – The Third Sunday of Epiphany

Readings: Revelation 19.6-10, John 2.1-11

10am

ONLINE HOLY COMMUNION

led by Revd David Commander & Lyn Hayes

Readings: Sunday 17th January

Revelation 5.1-10

The Scroll and the Lamb

⁵Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; ²and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?' ³And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁴And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.'

⁶Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. ⁸When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹They sing a new song:

'You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,

for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God
saints from every tribe and language and people and nation;

¹⁰ you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God,
and they will reign on earth.'

John 1.43-end

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.'

⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' ⁵⁰Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' ⁵¹And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

PASTORAL:

If you would like a chat or some prayer time in church, Revd Ylva or Revd David will be in church as follows:

at **St George's, Benenden: from 10 to 11am on
Monday 18th & Monday 25th January & Monday 2nd February.**

at **The Mission Church, Sandhurst: from 2 to 3pm on
Tuesday 19th and Tuesday 26th January & Tuesday 2nd February**

Covid Update: Wednesday 6th January

Our churches remain open for individual private prayer; but communal worship will move on-line.

The Prime Minister made an announcement on the 4th January regarding England going into lockdown until at least mid-February but, surprisingly, places of worship being able to stay open for public worship as well as individual private prayer.

I have been in discussion with the Churchwardens of both parishes about this, and we - regrettably - have significant reservations about remaining open for public worship with the new, virulent strain of the Covid virus; these are as follows:

- The majority of our congregations are in a vulnerable category either through age or because of other underlying health conditions
- We are close to receiving the vaccine (probably over the course of the next 2-3 months)
- We have a duty of care for our congregations, for those "on duty" at services, for our parishioners, for our families and for ourselves
- The Ministry Leadership Team have reservations, for personal reasons, about their availability to lead/preach at live services; we therefore have a much depleted team to call upon
- We feel it is more sensible to reduce the risks for everyone by having on-line services rather than live public worship.

These reservations have been put to the two Standing Committees who have agreed, with heavy hearts, that with immediate effect we suspend public worship in the three churches in the benefice until the lockdown is ended. (We will review this mid-February; with the *possibility* of commencing public worship again from the end of February.) Bishop Rose and Archdeacon Andrew have been informed of this decision.

However:

- We will record a service and make it available, on-line, every Sunday morning (and reintroduce the time of fellowship, with coffee, on Zoom after the service)
- The parish churches remain open for individual private prayer seven days a week
- St. George's church will be heated for two one-hour periods every day (10-11am and 2-3pm) so that the church is more comfortable if people wish to make use of the space for private prayer. Revd Ylva and I will diary some of our time to be at St. George's Church and at the Mission Church if you wish to meet and talk

As this situation is going on far longer than any of us had imaged:

- We will look at arranging a form of on-line, weekly Bible Study; a sort of "on-line Home Group". This will be available, on Zoom, to anyone who wishes to join in for Christian fellowship in this way. Watch this space!
- We will also review and update the on-line resources that are available on the church websites.

I know this will be of considerable disappointment to some. We are not taking this action lightly. Please remember that there will also be others who hold passionately to the view, "It's about time services in church stopped!" The virus is serious; the country is in lockdown to try and break the spread of the virus. We need, as the local church, to be part of helping with that break so that – along with the vaccine – we can all get back to a more normal life sooner rather than later.

Please continue to look after yourself. If you want to talk, please pick up the phone and call. God bless. Revd David

**Daily Scripture and Reflection is posted on our church websites
and Facebook pages every day of the week.**

PLEASE ALSO KEEP AN EYE ON THESE WEBSITES AND FACEBOOK PAGES FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION REGARDING OUR CHURCH SERVICES

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<https://stnicholassandhurst.org/>

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A Church Near You: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

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Priests	Revd David Commander, Rector. The Rectory, The Green, Benenden, TN17 4DL Tel: 01580 240 658 E-mail: revdavidcommander@gmail.com <i>(NB The Rector's day off is Thursday)</i> Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie, Curate Tel: 01233 820100 Mobile: 07766 711957 Email: rev.ylva@gmail.com Revd Dr Rosemary Kobus van Wengen Tel: 01580 764 857 Email: rosemaryvanwengen@gmail.com

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