

St Martin of Tours

Epsom

St Stephen on the Downs

Langley Vale

The parish of  
St Martin of Tours  
with St Stephen-on-the-Downs

Weekly Newsletter  
Registered Charity Number: 1134149

## Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – Third Sunday before Advent

Dear Friends,

We are now in the 'Kingdom season' of the Church year. This takes us from All Saints to Advent and is a time in which we think about death and new life, tragedy and glory. Today, we have our service of memorial for the many that we love, who have continued their journey of faith from this life to the next. It is hard to imagine 'heaven' as a reality, in so far as we can understand it, but Jesus urged people to understand that the Kingdom of Heaven begins here, in our earthly lives; death and new life, tragedy and glory, are part of our earthly lives – we experience the Kingdom of God in all of it. The new life beyond mortality is found in our hope that death and tragedy will not feature in it – but rather, eternal rest in our Lord and God.

**Nick Parish**

### **THIS WEEK**

#### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November – Third Sunday before Advent**

- 9.30am – Morning Prayer at St Stephen's – led by Ruth Foxcroft
- 10.00am – Holy Communion at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish
- 6.30pm – Annual Memorial Service at St Martin's – (in Church and live streamed) led by Nick Parish  
Names can be added at the back of the church before the service.



#### **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November**

- 10.00am – Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel – led by Rosemary Donovan

### **FUTURE SERVICES**

#### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November – Remembrance Sunday**

- 8.00am - Holy Communion at St Martin's, – led by Nick Parish
- 9.30am – Morning Prayer at St Stephen's – led by John Padwick
- 10.00am – Choral Morning Prayer at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish
- 6.30pm – Holy Communion at St Martin's – (in Church and live streamed) led by Nick Parish

## DISCIPLESHIP /STUDY/ WORSHIP MEETINGS

### Churches Together in Epsom Monthly prayer meetings:

Following a well-attended social gathering, 'in person' at the Old Moat Café, we decided to alternately locate the monthly prayer meetings to 'Zoom online' or 'in person'. We were able to pray at the end of our social gathering at the Old Moat Café and received a positive response. The Old Moat Café has a covered outdoor area which should prove a Covid-safe environment. The gatherings will start at 9.15 on zoom and at 10 am for the 'in person' meetings. Dates of our monthly prayer meetings for Autumn 2021 are:

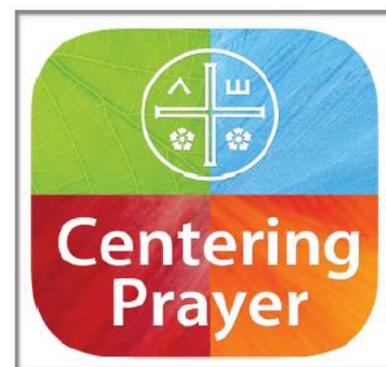


- Friday November 12<sup>th</sup>: 9.15-9.45am on Zoom
- Friday December 10<sup>th</sup>: 10-11am at Old Moat Café

Old Moat Garden Centre Café is in Horton Lane, Epsom

[Find Us — The Old Moat Garden Centre & Cafe](#)

OUR  
CENTERING PRAYER  
TASTER DAY  
IS NEXT SATURDAY  
From 10.30am to 4.15pm



We have had good response to this event at St Martin's and particularly from Non-Parishioners. Fr Thomas Keating is, of course, a well-known YouTube personality with a worldwide following and this has proved attractive for our Taster Day.

As John Padwick explained last Sunday, there is no conflict between Centering Prayer and Contemplative Prayer. Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer where the individual creates a personal space in which to commune with God. It is the "Go to your room" which Jesus advocated.

If, however, you would like to know more before making a decision to attend the Taster Day, please speak with one of the organisers - Lynne Scholefield, John Padwick, Judith Mitchell, Jean Ward, Jean Wright.

When you have decided, you can sign up and pay at the in Church station or through the code on the leaflets or at the Church Office. Please just confirm your booking with Judith Mitchell at [stmcenteringprayer@gmail.com](mailto:stmcenteringprayer@gmail.com)

The cost for the entire day is £ 5.50 which includes refreshments and take home literature. Lunch is DYO but our neighbours at The Olde King's Head are offering a soup and sarnie special for £ 7.50 - either in the pub or as takeaway. You can book this with Judith too.

We look forward to being together on this day - whilst finding how to be alone with God.

## STEWARDSHIP

### Giving to St Martin's and St Stephen on the Downs

For general and stewardship giving you can give online giving via the Charities Aid Foundation. Donations can be either a one-off donation or a regular donation using direct debit. To make a donation either:

1. Click on the following link:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/13377>

OR

2. Use your Smart Phone and Scan the QR Code below

There is also a "Donate" button on our website.



### Cheques to St Martin's

If give a cheque donation to St Martin's Church, please can it payable to:  
'The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epsom'

### Donation Station

If you wish to give via contactless payment, please us the donation station in Church. You can give a pre-set amount or choose one. You can also gift aid your donation.

## OTHER NOTICES

### Ron Smith – CORRECTION OF FUNERAL TIME

The funeral of Ron Smith, who passed away in September, will take place in St Martin's on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November at **12.30pm**.

### Money Raised at the Garden Party to support the Church in Cameroon

The garden party hosted by David and Nancy Candlin in 2019 raised about £1,000 with the intention to bring a priest over to the UK from Cameroon. This hasn't proved possible, and the money is still in the PCC accounts.

The PCC proposes that it should be designated 'for the purpose of connecting with the church overseas'. Before we do this, we want to consult the congregation, who gave the money in the first instance, and seek your agreement. If you are happy for the money raised at the garden party to be designated "for the purpose of connecting with the church overseas", you need to take no further action. However, if you have concerns or queries regarding this proposal, please contact the Churchwardens no later than Advent Sunday, the 28 November.

### Beacon Teas

The Beacon Teas have resumed and are held in St Martin's Church on the second Sunday in each month between 3.00p.m. and 5.00p.m. The next one will take place on **14<sup>th</sup> November**. We look forward to seeing anyone who would like some companionship, sandwiches and cake. You can decide which of these is the most important! If anyone is willing to donate the occasional home-made cake we would be most grateful.

***Mary Gilbert and Elaine Snook, Pastoral Team***

## Beacon Lunch

A festive lunch will be held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> December in Church House at 12.00pm for 12.30pm. All are welcome. If you think you are likely to join us it would be helpful if you would sign the list at the back of the Church before the 5<sup>th</sup> of December to help us to cater effectively.

***Elaine Snook and Mary Gilbert***

## MISSION FOR THE MONTH

### HOME MISSION

Through the Roof

Through the Roof is a Christian disability charity that changes the life of disabled people around the world. Through the Roof wants to see everyone valued equally, fully belonging and able to contribute their gifts and skills. They accomplish this in 3 ways, Faith, Freedom and Friendship.

***Meg Topley***

### ABROAD MISSION

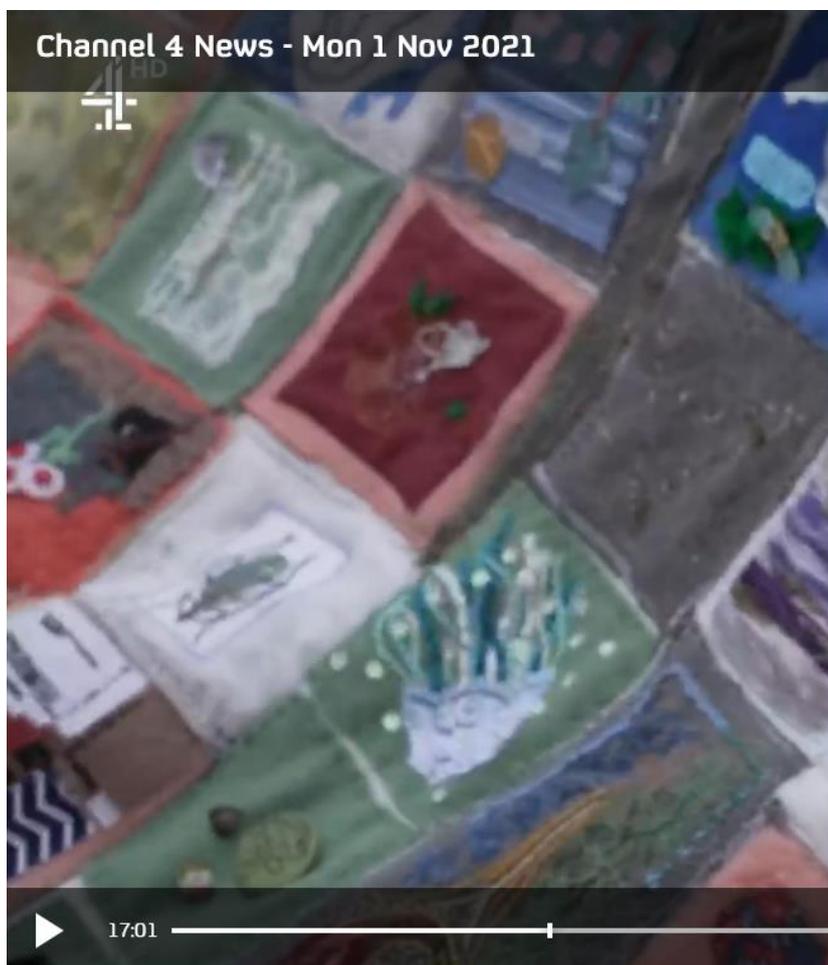
Mercy Ships Charity thanks St Martins Church for their continuing support. The new hospital ship, Global Mercy, having had a free passage through the Suez Canal thanks to the Egyptian President, is now being further equipped and staffed in Antwerp, Belgium. It plans to sail to Senegal in the Spring of 2022 to continue dispensing medical treatment there.

A new church information pack, full of the latest information will be displayed in the back of St Martins Church soon. Do have a look at it.

***Peter and Julia White***

### Coat of Hopes

This is to let the parish know that the patch that was at the Eco Fair (and which Debra Lodge invited people to stitch as they came into church) is now stitched onto the coat and has made it to Glasgow - as featured in Channel 4 news on 1st November, around 17 minutes into the evening news programme. You catch a glimpse of it in the bottom left hand corner. Well done, everyone - we have sent our love, prayers and encouragement to the delegates at Glasgow! You can read more at [www.coatofhopes.uk](http://www.coatofhopes.uk)



## EVENTS AND MUSIC

### IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM THE EVENTS TEAM

With the number of Covid cases and continuing precautions needed, we have to cancel the Christmas Fair, due to be held on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November, also the Epiphany party in the New Year for the same reasons. The Beetle Drive was great fun for those who took part but there were only 10 of us. We would like to get some idea of your feelings about events in the near future so please fill in the anonymous questionnaire attached to this newsletter or pick up and complete a paper one from the back of church. The paper forms can be put in the labelled box or you can email your answers to one of the Events Team. We have some ideas for 2022 but would much appreciate your views so we can plan accordingly. Many thanks! **Events Team** – **Alyson Aronson, Mary Holloway-Neville, Cathy Morris, Nancy Bluett**

### CHRISTMAS CARDS – ON SALE NOW

Christmas is coming!! I have set up my display of Christmas cards, candles and Advent Calendars. Please buy now while I have good stocks. Once I have sold out of a particular design, I may not be able to get any more. Everything will be on sale between now and Christmas.



Payment may be made in a variety of ways:

- Cheque: made payable to “The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epsom” (please either hand in to the office or place in the wall safe in church)
- Donation Station: contactless payments – please use the “Cards” button
- Cash: via the wall safe in church.

Every packet sold helps the church. Thank you for your custom.

**Mary Holloway-Neville**

### St Martin’s Music Recitals – Next one 20<sup>th</sup> November

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November at 4.30pm we present the dynamic Oxbridge Organ Duo in a thrilling programme designed to entertain all the family.

<http://www.oxbridgeorganduo.com/media.html>

Don’t miss this opportunity to hear our recently refurbished Norman and Beard pipe organ played in tandem by Julian Collins and Benedict Lewis-Smith.

Programme:

Variations on Veni Creator Spiritus – David Briggs

Fancy – Thomas Tomkins

Duet – Samuel Wesley

Wave – Ad Wammes

Berceuse and Finale from Firebird – Stravinsky

Payment for the admission for attending a recital as part of Music @ St Martin’s can be made by either :

1. Using the Donation Station in Church and select “Giving at a Recital at St Martin’s”
2. Put the following link into your web browser:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/14629>

OR

3. Use your Smart Phone and Scan the QR Code



# THE NATIVITY JOURNEY

A PLAY FOR ALL THE FAMILY

15 - 20 DECEMBER 2021

BOOK  
NOW!



## Come and enjoy the real Christmas story at Wintershall

Walk with Mary, Joseph and the donkey on the winding, steep road to Bethlehem. Register for the census and journey with other travellers, Roman soldiers and shepherds as you enter the stable to watch the miracle unfold.

The Wintershall Nativity Journey is an unforgettable experience, bringing the true meaning of Christmas to life for the whole family.

### Performance Times:

Thursday 16th December	5pm
Saturday 18th December	2pm & 5pm
Sunday 19th December	2pm & 5pm
Monday 20th December	11am, 2pm & 5pm

### Prices:

16th December	Adult £20, Child £10 and Family £55
18th, 19th, 20th December	Adult £25, Child £12 and Family £65

Each performance lasts approximately 90 minutes.

*Please note that some scenes are performed outside and some inside Holly Barn theatre, your visit includes a 10 minute walk up a steep hill. Limited disabled parking is available for those who need it most next to Holly Barn Theatre but this must be pre-booked by emailing [admin@wintershall.org.uk](mailto:admin@wintershall.org.uk).*

Holly Barn, Bramley, Guildford GU5 0LR.



Book tickets **now** on  
our website:  
[www.wintershall.org.uk](http://www.wintershall.org.uk)  
or by calling  
01483 892167



# FESTIVE KNITTING APPEAL



After the success of our Easter Chick Knitting Appeal, Age Concern Epsom & Ewell are running a Festive Knitting Appeal for Christmas 2021.

Help Age Concern Epsom & Ewell to raise vital funds by dusting off those knitting needles and creating one or more of these amazing knitted Christmas Pudding chocolate orange covers.

Age Concern Epsom & Ewell will be selling these knitted creations to raise vital funds for our charity throughout December.

For more information about this appeal or to receive your FREE knitting pattern, please email [charlotte.hornblow@ageconcernepsom.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.hornblow@ageconcernepsom.org.uk)

Thank you for your support

All knitted creations should be sent to

Age Concern Epsom & Ewell,  
The Old Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom,  
Surrey, KT18 5AG



## Latest message from Food Bank

We are collecting for our Christmas Appeal.

It's been a whirlwind of a year for us so far! We know December is a time when people who cannot afford food and basics need us more than ever. Last December we supported a whopping 1,570 people in need with food, essentials and seasonal support. So far in 2021 our numbers are not as high, but with the fuel price hikes and Universal Credit cuts the number of people needing us is rising again. We have helped more than 7,100 people so far this year with food, sundries and support.

Can you help us? We are fundraising for:

🎄 Christmas meat vouchers. Once again we are working with local butchers, we want to give our clients vouchers to enable them to choose their meat for Christmas.

🎄 Funds for seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables to add to our Christmas meat voucher and goodie bags.

🎄 Energy top up funds for our clients' gas/electricity to cook their Christmas dinner.

🎁 Gift cards of £10 each for parents to choose a present for their children from Argos, Wilkos, Superdrug, Boots, or TK Maxx.

You can donate funds here via our website, make a small donation by text (details below), or contact us if you want to make a BACs transfer.

We are also collecting donations from this list for our Christmas goodie bags:

Christmas selection boxes

Christmas napkins, tablecloths, tea towels

Christmas puddings

Savoury snacks

Tinned ham

Christmas biscuits

Festive chocolate, sweets and treats

Mince pies

Packet stuffing

Packet trifle mix



Please make sure items do not contain alcohol as we are unable to give these out. Please donate by Friday 3rd December in time for us to pack the bags ready for our clients.

You can donate at the usual supermarket points, or bring donations to our car park (please wear a mask);

Epsom & Ewell Foodbank

Generation Resource Centre

Behind West Ewell Primary School)

Ruxley Lane, Ewell

KT19 0JG

Donation drop off times: Monday to Friday 9am – 2pm.

\* Please make sure all donations are sealed, in date and do not contain alcohol

\*Donations can also be made if you prefer by texting any amount between £1 and £20 Christmas Gift followed by your chosen amount to 70450. If you wish to donate a larger amount please e-mail us.

Any questions? We are always happy to chat. Call us on 0208 786 8221 or email

[foodbank@generation.org.uk](mailto:foodbank@generation.org.uk)

## CONTACT US

### *Parish Office:*

**Church House, Church Street, Epsom,**

**KT17 4PX Phone: 01372 722567**

**E-mail: [stmartinsepsom@btconnect.com](mailto:stmartinsepsom@btconnect.com)**

**Website: [www.stmartinsepsom.org](http://www.stmartinsepsom.org)**

**Opening hours are Mondays, Wednesday, Thursdays & Fridays  
9.30am to 12.30pm**

**The Revd Nick Parish – Vicar – 01372 743336**

**Email: [vicar@stmartinsepsom.org](mailto:vicar@stmartinsepsom.org)**

**The Revd Canon Adrian Esdaile - Priest in Retirement - 01372 723770**

**Email: [esdaileadrian@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:esdaileadrian@yahoo.co.uk)**

***(available for Contemplative Prayer, Counsel,  
Spiritual Direction and the Healing Ministry)***

## COLLECT

Almighty Father,  
whose will is to restore all  
things  
in your beloved Son, the King  
of all:  
govern the hearts and minds of  
those in authority,  
and bring the families of the  
nations,  
divided and torn apart by the  
ravages of sin,  
to be subject to his just and  
gentle rule;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

## FIRST READING

### Jonah 3:1-5. 10

*A reading from the book of  
Jonah.*

The word of the LORD came to Jonah, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

## PSALM Psalm 62:6-14

**R** *God alone is my rock and my salvation.*

For God alone my soul in  
silence waits;

truly, my hope is in him.  
He alone is my rock and my  
salvation,  
my stronghold, so that I shall  
not be shaken.  
In God is my safety and my  
honour;  
God is my strong rock and my  
refuge. **R**

Put your trust in him always,  
O people,  
pour out your hearts before  
him, for God is our refuge.  
Those of high degree are but  
a fleeting breath,  
even those of low estate  
cannot be trusted.  
On the scales they are lighter  
than a breath,  
all of them together. **R**

Put no trust in extortion;  
in robbery take no empty pride;  
though wealth increase, set not  
your heart upon it.  
God has spoken once, twice  
have I heard it,  
that power belongs to God.  
Steadfast love is yours, O Lord,  
for you repay everyone  
according to his deeds. **R**

## SECOND READING

### Hebrews 9:24-28

*A reading from the letter to the  
Hebrews.*

Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the

sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgement, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

## GOSPEL Mark 1:14-20

*Hear the gospel of our Lord  
Jesus Christ according to Mark.*

After John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

## POST COMMUNION

God of peace,  
whose Son Jesus Christ  
proclaimed the kingdom  
and restored the broken to  
wholeness of life:  
look with compassion on the  
anguish of the world,  
and by your healing power  
make whole both people and  
nations;  
through our Lord and Saviour  
Jesus Christ.

# Sunday Homily

## THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT

7 NOVEMBER 2021

YEAR B

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me...’  
And immediately they left their nets and followed him.”

Mark 1:17-18

### Illustration

Many of us will be familiar with the business of moving house. Perhaps the reason was a change of job, financial necessity or the need for more or less space. Moving is always a stressful time, but it can be exciting looking forward to new spaces and new opportunities. Equally, however, we may be leaving behind a much-loved home which holds precious memories. We cannot keep the old and the new; we have to make our choice.

### Gospel Teaching

According to today’s passage from Mark’s Gospel, John the Baptist has just died, and as his work comes to an end so Jesus’ ministry begins. But this very clear positioning in time, plain for anyone to see, is echoed by Jesus’ words, “The time is fulfilled...” Jesus looks beyond the march of purely human history to God’s timing, which has now come or “is fulfilled”. So as he walks by the Sea of Galilee he carries a sense of divine destiny and calls certain fishermen to “follow” him in his mission.

Since Jesus and the fishermen were all local boys, it seems likely they already knew each other, though the passage does not actually say so. Perhaps Mark expresses it as he does to emphasise the authority of Jesus’ call and the immediacy and willingness of the men’s obedience. But to appreciate the significance of this response we must consider not only what they are taking on but what they were prepared to leave behind.

Since the Sea of Galilee was well known for its fish, which were sold far beyond the local region, these fishermen probably had a stake in prosperous family firms, yet they were prepared to abandon them to follow Jesus. Mark tells us that the brothers Simon and Andrew leave their nets and so turn their backs on a major business investment. Meanwhile James and John respond in a similar way, leaving their “father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men”. For them Jesus represents a cause for which it is worth disrupting both business and family. How Zebedee felt about his sons’ departure we are not told, but could the presence of only “hired hands” with him suggest that all his hopes for the continuation of his

business within the family had rested on James and John? Their decision must surely have created waves, if not rocked the boat!

What was it, then, that Jesus was calling these new disciples to do? The expressions “fish for people” and the traditional “fishers of men” fit in with the narrative, but both have a rather uncomfortable feel of entrapment in English. The meaning, however, is plain: they were to join Jesus in calling others into the kingdom of God. Theirs would be an evangelistic role, drawing women and men to Christ and his kingdom in a way that firmly established the faith and the Church and enabled it to hold fast and develop over the last two thousand years.

## Application

While those fishermen were called to a unique foundational ministry, some Christians today are called to devote their lives to evangelism, and all believers should be ready to give account of their faith to whoever may take an interest. But we should not be too surprised if God calls us into areas that we never imagined: serving the Church in some capacity in a country other than our own, for example. Or we may sense that God wants us to use our professional or trade skills in new ways, perhaps teaching the underprivileged, or setting up a community project.

No matter what the challenge may be, the question is how we will respond. The first disciples had to make decisions which would to some extent loosen the ties that had secured their lives thus far – the “network” of family and business. In the same way, our response to God involves the same decisions over family and money and probably other factors as well. In spite of Mark’s picture of this move as a quick and impulsive one, we must doubt that it really was; more likely it was the product of extended heart-searching, a heart-searching that we too may have to experience at some point in our Christian lives.

One thing we can be sure of is that the fishermen of Galilee would have been amazed at where their decision took them in later years, and although some of them had a very tough death they certainly had exciting and eventful lives, and the knowledge that their work took place within God’s time. Are we ready for the challenge?

**MONDAY**  
**8 NOVEMBER**

Wisdom 1:1-7  
or Titus 1:1-9  
Psalm 139:1-9  
or 24:1-6  
Luke 17:1-6

**TUESDAY**  
**9 NOVEMBER**

Wisdom 2:23 – 3:9  
or Titus 2:1-8, 11-14  
Psalm 34:1-6  
or 37:3-5, 30-32  
Luke 17:7-10

**WEDNESDAY**  
**10 NOVEMBER**

Wisdom 6:1-11  
or Titus 3:1-7  
Psalm 82 or 23  
Luke 17:11-19

**THURSDAY**  
**11 NOVEMBER**

Wisdom 7:22 – 8:1  
or Philemon 7-20  
Psalm 119:89-96  
or 146:4-end  
Luke 17:20-25

**FRIDAY**  
**12 NOVEMBER**

Wisdom 13:1-9  
or 2 John 4-9  
Psalm 19:1-4  
or 119:1-8  
Luke 17:26-end

**SATURDAY**  
**13 NOVEMBER**

Wisdom 18:14-16;  
19:6-9 or 3 John 5-8  
Psalm 105:1-5, 35-42 or 112  
Luke 18:1-8

**REFLECTION**

**H**ow do the disciples react when they hear the things Jesus says about living in the kingdom of God and what the future holds for them? It must all sound a bit daunting and, if they're honest, not at all what they thought following Jesus would be like, as they set off with him from Galilee. He talks to them about their responsibilities:



- They must watch over his other followers and do nothing that would cause them to stray from his teachings.
- They must go on forgiving someone when they say sorry no matter how many times it happens.
- They must accept that they won't get special treatment just for doing what God wants them to do.
- And finally, they are going to face some sort of cataclysmic event in the "days of the Son of Man" but they don't know when that will be.

After all that they need to see Jesus healing lepers, restoring them to their family and friends. And they need to know that God hears their prayers and will help them.

We need to know that, too, as we journey on in faith with thanksgiving.

**PRAYER**

God, our refuge and strength,  
we ask you to teach us to watch, forgive and accept,  
and to know that you hear our prayers and are on our side.  
We ask these things through Christ our Lord.

## PART II – QUESTIONS OF HEALING

LIVE  
the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU  
THROUGH THE WEEK

**W**hat do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asks the blind man in Luke's Gospel (18:35-43 – Mark names him Bartimaeus). And in John's Gospel (5:6), at the pool named Beth-zatha (or Bethesda) in Jerusalem, Jesus again asks a question of someone apparently seeking healing. This time it's "Do you want to be made well?" When we're praying for healing it might help us to reflect on these questions.

Edited by  
Caroline Hodgson  
and  
Heather Smith

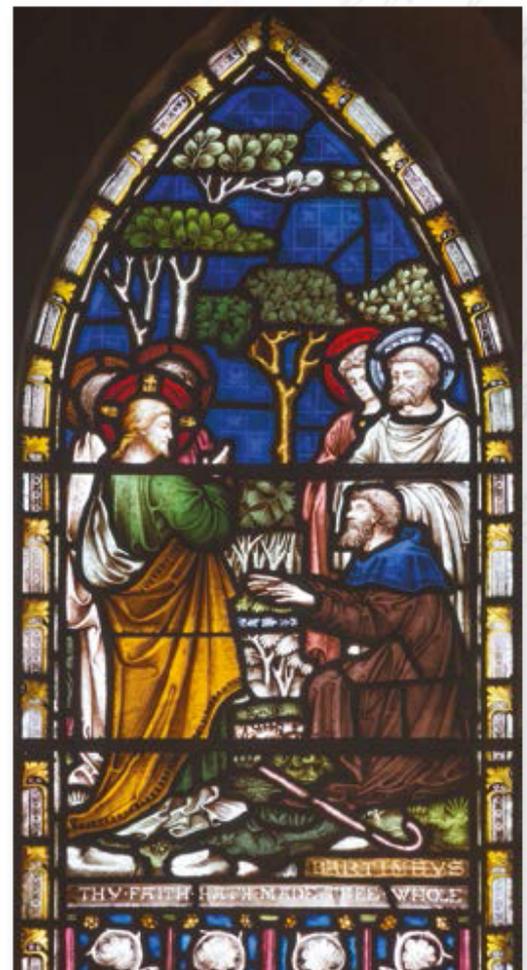
What do we want Jesus to do for us? Perhaps we think it's obvious, but we need to remember that God is interested in the whole of our being and Jesus offers his peace, love and joy – a healing which may not necessarily mean a cure for whatever medical condition troubles us or the people for whom we pray.

Do we want to get well? When Bartimaeus and the man at Bethesda are healed their worlds change in many ways. They have greater independence and can make wider choices. They have new roles and responsibilities in their families and in the wider community.

When we think about change like that in our own lives it might feel quite scary – perhaps it would be safer to stay in the security of the familiar even with the hurt and pain that goes with it.

There are also questions about healing that we might want to ask Jesus. Like the man with leprosy in Mark (1:40), who says to Jesus "If you choose, you can make me clean," we might question whether Jesus really can and does care for us. Then we need to hear Jesus affirming "I will" – "Of course I want to heal you and make you whole."

And if our faith is shaky we have the heartfelt prayer of the father whose son suffers violent convulsions: "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). When we pray for healing we're praying to a loving God who understands us and it's safe to trust God to work only for our "shalom" – wholeness and healing in the richest sense.



Jesus and Bartimaeus, St Mary Abbot's Church, Kensington, London. Renata Sedmakova / Shutterstock.com

Third week  
before Advent

Monday 8 November to  
Saturday 13 November  
2021

# A sudden storm



Lord Jesus, you made no promises of security when you called fishermen to follow you. Give us the courage to take risks in our lives in order to follow you more closely and to work with you to proclaim the good news of God. Amen.

## Keeping Christ in Christmas Part 1 – Christmas crackers

by Heather Cooke

“Christmas! Are you crackers?” I can almost hear you protesting as you read this. “It’s only early November,” you say, “and we’re not celebrating Christmas quite yet!”

But look around you – in the shops, in the windows of homes – and you’ll see that the world out there is already in Christmas countdown mode. In the supermarkets, stock has been moved to make way for “Xmas”

wrap, “Xmas” decorations, festive selection boxes and other goodies.

So perhaps, if you can’t beat them, we should join them.

Over the next eight weeks we’ll be looking at ways to prepare spiritually for Christmas, and remember the reason for the season, with the help of a line from a carol or hymn. The first step is a very simple one: whenever you see the abbreviation Xmas this week, mentally replace the X with “Christ” and remember that X is the sign of a kiss, a token of love.

“Love came down at Christmas”. 🙏

Katharine Smith *reflects on* Mark 1:14-20

**W**e are fishers, the rhythm of our lives governed by the sun and the moon, the seasons, the tides and the winds. We work when we’re most likely to haul in a good catch. At quieter times we mend nets and repair boats. It’s all relatively safe – we know there are dangers: unexpected storms and hidden undercurrents, but in this world can life ever be completely risk free?

So why are we suddenly restless, dissatisfied, unable to settle to our daily routine? This man Jesus has overturned our lives as quickly as our boats could capsize in a sudden storm. He’s from this

neighbourhood but he’s different, as if he came from a foreign land, and he talks about the kingdom of God as if that were his home, where he belongs. He proclaims good news and somehow you know that it really is good news, not something that will end in disappointment.

What is it about him that has stirred us up so that here we are out on the road alongside him, our safe, predictable lives left behind as we set off into who knows what? It’s hard to put into words, but when he calls you the tide turns, life turns upside down and nothing will be the same again. 🙏

## Books of the Old Testament – *Numbers*

by Gillian Cooper

God’s people regularly complain about the food and water or lack of it, wishing themselves back in Egypt where even slaves were fed. They are ready to believe stories of giants, but not ready to be the people God needs. So God decides they will travel round the wilderness for another forty years till they can grow into a mature people.

While the people are maddeningly insecure, whiny and disobedient, God is sometimes angry, often grieved, always faithful. Abraham was promised his descendants would have a land, and a land they will have, despite their behaviour.

The key passage is 14:13-24, where Moses persuades God that “Project People of God” is still worth pursuing. By the end of the book they are ready to cross the Jordan for the next stage of their great adventure. Reassuringly, God’s plans cannot be derailed by human stupidity and sin.

Do not miss chapters 22 to 24, with their wonderful talking donkey and a prophet who cannot do as he is told. And chapter 21 tells of the magical bronze snake that later becomes a metaphor for the crucifixion of Christ. 🙏

“Without waiting, begin at once to obey him with the best heart you have. Any obedience is better than none.”

John Henry Newman (1801-1890), Roman Catholic cardinal, theologian and poet



Sunday 7 November 2021  
 Mark 12:38-44  
 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time



# IN THE GOSPEL TODAY

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

## BE GENEROUS!

Who will give to charity?

Follow the tracks to find out whether the rich man or the poor widow is going to give money to charity today.



Jesus warns us against putting on a show and thinking we look good while really being mean and nasty. We are living as God asks when we are generous and we trust God, like the poor widow who gives all she has to the Temple.

## Follow God's law

Jacob's mum is very busy. Jacob wants to help. Circle the ways that he can be very generous with his time and help his mum.



## How much money?

The rich man has dropped his bag of money! Some coins have rolled away around the page. Count them and write the number in the box.



## I can share

We can be generous to people in many ways.

Draw yourself sharing your sweets with a friend.



## A PRAYER TO SAY

Dear Jesus, please help me not to care too much about what people think of me. Help me to care more about how loving and generous I am, so that I grow to be like you. Amen.

Answers: Ten coins - fifteen including the ones on the puzzle!