

Connected

Sunday 10th January 2021
1st Sunday of Epiphany

Verse For The Year

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realised that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

(Acts 4: 13)

Sermon Snippets

Acts 1: 1-9

Before last year's first lockdown we were exploring Acts 4:13, our 'Verse for the Year' (shown above), where we saw Peter and John, both "ordinary men", but transformed because "they had been with Jesus". This year we're continuing with that verse because a) we didn't get the time to fully explore it, and b) "being with Jesus" makes such a difference to our lives!

We're starting at the beginning of Acts where the disciples realised how important Jesus was (v6 - they asked him about restoring his kingdom) . . . but they hadn't quite appreciated how important *they* were in kingdom work. They ask Jesus "when are you going to restore the kingdom?" but he replies "but you will receive power . . . ". Jesus was bringing in his kingdom but was using his followers to achieve that in his power.

Just think what can happen with lives lived out in Jesus' presence, in his strength and under his guidance. As we face up to another challenging year are we "going it alone" or is the reality of our lives lived through our connection to God himself by his Spirit?

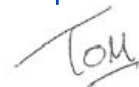
A Message from Tom

Despite the last-minute restrictions, I do hope you enjoyed something of Christmastime. For me, our services felt different, but they were in their own way equally special. The New Year has only just begun but once again we face great challenges, and it was with sadness that I emailed the following message on Thursday:

As from this Sunday our Sunday services will continue online but sadly our two churches will remain closed for "live" services. You may be aware that having a church service is a possibility during this current lockdown and I have taken advice from our Diocese and our wardens. Both acknowledge that with Covid infection rates so high, it would be unwise to hold a public gathering even with the precautions we have put in place. The Diocese have written to the wardens and to me: *"We would like to commend that you take worship online where possible"*.

As, we pray and hope, infection rates drop to lower levels, then we may be able to responsibly open churches on a Sunday again before too long.

It is with a very heavy heart that I bring you this news. Actual church gatherings are so important. However, I feel this is the most socially responsible thing we can do in the current state of the pandemic. I pray that each one of us may have a special awareness of God's presence in our homes at this time.



Watch Sunday's service

at www.ccwsm.org.uk

Go to the 'Church Life' menu and click on the 'Sunday Services' page.

Prayer Pointers

Sunday

The theme for this month will be 'Looking back and Looking Forward'. The common theme of most Christmas letters has been "What a strange year 2020 was!" Give thanks that the majority of our congregations have kept well, but continue praying for any you know who are fearful, lonely or afraid, especially those who have encountered bereavement.

Monday

Give thanks for the shoeboxes which were dispatched, hopefully in time for the children to enjoy at Christmas. Remember something you put in a shoebox, that it may have brought pleasure to the boy or girl who received it. Ask for a blessing on that unknown child.

Tuesday

Father God, as a nation we have allowed our Christian heritage to seep away, and, like draining a stagnant pond, it has revealed all the nasty things we thought were covered up! The weed-encrusted shopping trolleys, the tins and bottles, the broken relationships. Pray for spiritual renewal: "O, Breath of God come sweeping through us; revive your Church with life and power. O Breath of Life, come cleanse, renew us, and fit thy church to meet this hour".

Wednesday

Pray for all single parents - mothers in particular - who have been abandoned by those they entrusted with their lives to love and care for them faithfully as long as they lived. "Restore, O Lord, the honour of your name, in works of sovereign power come shake the earth again; that men may see and come with reverent fear to the living God, whose kingdom shall outlast the years".

Thursday

Give thanks for the exceptional wealth of musical talent in our churches; for the many who have the skill to play an instrument. Pray for each one you can think of, young and old, who contribute to our services, and ask for their continued health in 2021. Give thanks also for the technical skills of those who work the Audio/Visual equipment, especially, recently as they have enabled those shut in to take part in live and pre-recorded services through the skillful use of screens and cameras.

Friday

Pray for all those who are able to continue growing in their faith and knowledge of the Scriptures through the various Bible Reading Schemes available, which began on January 1st, and that the decline in subscribers to the two schemes (Scripture Union and Christian Witness Renewal) may be reversed. Also pray that we all, in our busy lives, may have a time slot for personal prayer and Bible reading.

Saturday

Pray for those taking any part in in our pre-recorded church services to be shown tomorrow, and for those who will be receiving their ministry, that all may be done to honour the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Notices

Private Prayer

Even though our two churches are closed for public worship, Christ Church will remain open for private prayer between 9am and 12noon, Monday to Friday. You won't need to book a time, but you will need to wrap up warm!

Latest CAP Newsletter

The December newsletter from Christians Against Poverty is now available to view on the [Christ Church website](#).

Christmas Postage Stamps

Please save your used Christmas, Special British Issue and Foreign Postage Stamps for the Bible Society. The Stamp Box will be on the Christ Church foyer table until mid January.

Bible Notes

Grateful thanks to everyone who was able to collect their January Bible Notes from Christ Church, and also for those who have helped in their distribution.

Shredded Paper

There are four bin liners full of shredded paper in the office which the recycling collectors are not taking. Does anyone have any recycling suggestions, like using it as bedding for a pet, for example? Please email your suggestions to Phil.

Are you a budding writer?

If you have something that you'd like to share with the church family, particularly words or pictures of hope to encourage people, please email Phil in the Office.

Coffee after the Service...

Hope for the New Year

In her sermon last Sunday, Angeline encouraged each of us to express what hope means to us. If you have a picture or a poem which speaks of hope, especially during this new period of lock-down, please send it in to the Office and we will be pleased to share it with the rest of the church family as an encouragement.



There are some paper flowers, like the ones shown in these photos, available for collection from the Christ Church lobby for you to use creatively to express hope for the new year.

Here's a photo taken by Nicky of a daisy growing on a path which, as she explained in last week's service, has become for her a symbol of hope.



HOPE IS:

*a rainbow after the storm
a new baby's precious form*

*in winter, the promise of spring
days which make my heart sing*

*the rising of the sun each day
sending darkness of night on its way*

*a stranger's unexpected smile
when people go the extra mile*

*a hug from a loved one or friend
God's love which knows no end*

*the cross giving us new birth
the promise of a new heaven & earth*

Pat

Hope in the form of practical help

North Somerset Council, in partnership with various other agencies, have re-launched the North Somerset Together Network. [Please click on this link](#) for information on how you can ask for help for yourself or on behalf of someone else.

Don't forget, however, if you are a member of either of our two churches and are in need of some practical assistance, you can call our own Crash Team:

Liz Cole (782886) or Jane Milsom (417776)

Another coffee, anyone?

Old Testament Wordsearch

Many thanks to Sandra & Dave for providing another puzzle for us to enjoy.

J Z A O O H S I H S R A T J C
O E T X S M R O T S S L K I Y
B R R Q Z E C H A R I A H A R
C U W U Y S P U O T R I A B U
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D B E V C A J G A D T C G D X
H A I L M C L J O N A H A N G
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N Y M U A R T A X E R X E S H
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Old Testament

ABEDNEGO	FIRE	NEHEMIAH
ARTAXERXES	FISH	NINEVEH
BABYLON	FOOD	SATAN
BELSHAZZAR	GOD	SHADRACH
BOILS	HAGGAI	STORM
CYRUS	JERUSALEM	TARSHISH
DANIEL	JOB	UZ
DREAM	JONAH	ZECHARIAH
ELIPHAZ	MESHACH	ZERUBBABEL
EZRA	NEBUCHADNEZZAR	

Contact Details

Rev. Tom Webber (709343)
(Day off - Tuesday)

Church Office (641016)
(8.30-12.30 Mon-Fri)

e: office@ccwsm.org.uk
w: www.ccwsm.org.uk
