

Rectors Ramblings

Isaiah 43.1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8.14-17; Luke 3.15-17,21-22

Dear Friends,

There's been a lot of news about water this January!

Firstly, the floods that followed a cold snap at the start of the year and threaten again with more cold weather on the way. Listening to and watching the coverage about why this is happening and what can be done it seems that despite flood defences, dredging and sandbags sometimes the water can't be held back.

Then there are the incredible images of parts of Los Angeles on fire (BBC; Guardian). The LA fire department are heroically trying to battle the fire dropping tonnes of water on the blaze in an attempt to bring it under control, but the combination of dry ground and high winds is making this a very difficult task. Please take some time this week to pray for all those affected.

Finally, there's an incredible story this week of a hiker who was lost for 13 days in New South Wales but managed to survive on a muesli bar, foraging for berries and, crucially, drinking water from creeks. It is a well-known fact that a human being can only survive around three days without liquid, so the water in the Australian mountain creeks gave the lost Hadi Nazari a chance of survival.

Water that can't be held back, water fighting a dangerous fire and water for survival. In many ways the water in the story of Jesus' baptism wraps all of this week's water stories together:

As Jesus emerges from the River Jordan and his three years of ministry on the earth begin, a flood is released across humankind; an unstoppable wave of love and truth that will forever change all who come into contact with it.

We also know that Jesus' message of love, grace and transformation is ultimately the only thing that defeats the fires that rage across this world. The fires of war, hate, misinformation, segregation, prejudice, sadness, and all that afflicts us in this world – although overwhelming at times – can be put out by this life-giving water.

In this Baptism story, the man who emerges from the water offers us more than just survival. He gives us fullness, completeness and everlasting joy. Water is a vital part of this Sunday's story. At the moment of his baptism Jesus is introduced by John and then acknowledged by God as the Messiah. In my imagination the water is calm and clean, and the day is warm and sunny. Meeting God in these waters is an appealing concept.

Water has featured in our weather over the last few days of the New Year. Torrential rain, then heavy snow, and as this melts it will flow into already over-full waterways and onto saturated ground, resulting in more devastating flooding. There are multiple active flood warnings across England as I write. This water is dirty and cold; meeting God here does not sound as appealing.

Yet we cannot always choose where God meets us. Sometimes it is in the warm, clean water of life, when things are going well. At other times God meets us in the cold and dirty water of life, when we are struggling. This is the time of year when we remember how Jesus demonstrated his commitment to the ministry to which he was called. We are told that it was while Jesus was praying that the wonderful events occurred. The miraculous Baptism was not something out of the blue, but rather something to confirm what Jesus had known all along.

We know this from where Jesus went missing at the age of 12. He knew that he was in the right place when he was found in the temple. Jesus has spent two decades growing in his understanding of the service which he knew he must offer, and the sacrifice which he knew he must make. Here is the baptism experience to affirm him in his role and prepare him for the journey ahead.

As we affirm our baptism vows, we too should expect the energy of God to be present in our lives. Perhaps we too will hear that quiet voice inside which tells us that God is with us and will empower us to walk the path which he has set before us.

Have a good week, be joyful, keep the faith and keep doing the little things that make a difference to those you love and those in need.

Paul xx

Hymns - St Mary's Newick

- *God is working his purpose out (SOF 135)*
- *Come down O love Divine (SOF 1202)*
- *Hail to the Lord's Anointed (SOF 150)*
- *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (SOF 457)*

Intergenerational Opera Opportunity....with your help

Following a really successful programme last year, the Intergenerational Opera are keen to run a repeat programme this year with Newick School.

This is a five week course and in 2024 the cost of £500 was met by a single donation. This year the fee remains at £500 and we are looking for donations and pledges to cover this and allow the programme to run again.

If you are able to donate towards this fantastic opportunity for both the school and the community, please mail churchoffice@stmarysnewicks.church with your contact details and the amount you would be willing to give.

Thank you so much in advance for your kind generosity.

Services – January 2025

<p>Sunday 5th January Epiphany</p>	<p>8am - Holy Communion BCP * <i>Preacher: Reverend Paul Mundy</i></p> <p>10am - Holy Communion Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12 <i>Preacher: Rev Paul Mundy</i></p> <p>6pm - Evensong</p>
<p>Sunday 12th January Epiphany 1 First Sunday after Epiphany</p>	<p>8am - Holy Communion BCP* <i>Preacher: Fr Martin Morgan</i></p> <p>10am - Holy Communion Isaiah 43:1-7, Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 <i>Preacher: Fr Martin Morgan</i></p> <p>6pm - Worship 2 <i>Leader: Rev Paul Mundy</i></p>
<p>Sunday 19th January Second Sunday after Epiphany</p>	<p>8am - Holy Communion BCP * <i>Preacher: Fr Martin Morgan</i></p> <p>10am - Morning Praise Isaiah 62:1-5, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, John 2:1-11 <i>Preacher: Reader Jeremy Burdett</i></p> <p>9.45am - Owls Club</p>
<p>Sunday 26th January 3rd Sunday after Epiphany</p>	<p>8am - Holy Communion at St Peter's Chailey BCP* <i>Preacher: Fr Martin Morgan</i></p> <p>10am – Churches Together Holy Communion at St Mary's Newick <i>Preacher: Fr Martin Morgan</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>* Denotes standard Year C Lectionary Readings</i></p>	

Regulars at St Mary's:

Prayer Meetings for Church Services:

- Every Sunday 9.30 - 9.45am Barn Centre

Prayer Group:

- Every 1st and 3rd Monday 2pm Barn Centre

Children's Choir:

- 1st Sunday of each month 10am - 11am Barn Centre

(Email: churchoffice@stmarysnewicks.church Web: stmarysnewicks.church/youthchoir)

Owls:

Crafts, Bible story, fun and refreshments

(Email: childrenandfamilies@stmarysnewicks.church)

- Sunday 19th January 9.55am - 11am
- Sunday 16th February 9.55am - 11am

Citizens Advice:

Drop in sessions for free, confidential, impartial advice on topics including housing, benefits issues, cost of living, debt and much more:

- Wednesday 22nd January 10am - 1pm
- Wednesday 19th February 10am - 1pm
- Wednesday 19th March 10am - 1pm

Free advice line 0208 278 7893 Tues - Thurs 10am - 3pm

or email info@lewesdistrictca.org.uk



**Celebrating
Faith**

Uckfield

Deanery Celebration

A service celebrating the history
and Christian faith in our Deanery
with Bishop Will

Thursday 23 January @ 7:00pm
Holy Cross Church, Uckfield

www.celebratingfaith.co.uk





Please visit our website stmarysnewicks.church for more information on the various organisations and events and activities available to you.

If you have any news you would like to share, any photos you would like to display, or any stories about St Mary's Newick or wider afield that you think the readers may enjoy - please mail us at:

churchoffice@stmarysnewicks.church

The content deadline is 10am on Thursday so please make sure you send anything to us in time. Anything received after 10am will be included the following week if appropriate.

Thank you.