



# PAROUSIA

Weekly News and Service Sheet

**13<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

**Welcome to St Mary's Church!** We are so glad you are here. Today's service is a Holy Communion Service. Due to current restrictions it will be in one kind (bread) only. Please familiarise yourself with the detailed information in this booklet.

*Christoph Lindner, Rector*

## Who do you think you are?

This is more than the title of a long-running BBC series on family history – it is a key life question for all of us. How we answer this question will have significant consequences for how we live.

Some of us may remember the hilarious scene from Monty Python's "The Life of Brian" when a group of his disciples gather in front of his house and clamour to see him. A window opens and his mother shouts, " 'e's not the Messiah, 'e's a very naughty boy!"

John the Baptist knows that he is not the Messiah. But he also knows who he is. He knows his spiritual family tree and quotes the prophet Isaiah - *I'm the one to announce the coming of the Lord!* John is significant (in fact later Jesus says (Matthew 11.11) that "among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist". But he also knows that he is not the main act – he is *not* the Messiah.

Who do *you* think you are? Do you know your spiritual family tree? You are a beloved child of God, chosen in Christ before the creation of the world (Eph. 1.4).

And no, you and I are not the Messiah - thank God for that! There was only one who could bear the sins of the world and emerge victorious from death on the third day. "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in." (From: *There is a Green hill*)

But because we are *in Christ* (one of the most frequent expressions in the New Testament letters) everything he has won for us is ours. In the midst of anxiety, stress, sickness and grief, we know that our identity, our purpose and our destiny are safe in Christ.

So let's rejoice in our spiritual family tree and then - with John the Baptist - be signposts to the main act. There is no better time to do that than Advent and Christmas. There was much in the media before the end of lockdown that Christmas will be cancelled if we can't get out, go shopping, go to pubs and restaurants, have big parties. But Christmas will not be cancelled. Our Lord Jesus has come and he will come again.

How can you be a sign-post to Jesus this Christmas?

*Christoph Lindner*

**STAY SAFE • STAY CONNECTED • STAY HOPEFUL**

## **OPENING PRAYER (From Psalm 126)**

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. **Amen.**

## **HYMN**

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh; come then and hearken, for he brings glad tidings from the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every Christian breast, and furnished for so great a guest. Yea, let us each our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee whose advent sets thy people free, whom, with the Father, we adore, and Spirit bless, for evermore.

## **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

The third candle in our crown, like John the Baptist, lights the way, preparing for Jesus, coming soon, in ancient times just like today.

Jesus, help us make way for you;  
**O come, O come Emmanuel.**

In words and acts and in our lives,  
**O come, O come Emmanuel.**

## **SUMMARY OF THE LAW**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul,

with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

## **CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION**

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry, and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## **COLLECT**

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **GOSPEL READING: John 1.6-8, 19-28**

*Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.*

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said,

'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"', as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptising if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptising.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.*

**All: Praise to you, O Christ**

## **SERMON**

## **THE CREED**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## PRAYERS

### THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

### THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord is here.

**His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation. You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour. His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death. And so we gladly thank you, with saints and angels praising you, and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your  
glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you;

this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with all the saints to feast at your table in heaven. Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**Though we are many,  
we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

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**Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

### GIVING OF COMMUNION

*At present we receive Holy Communion in one kind (bread) only.*

*We have devised a one-way system for receiving the bread and then returning to your place through the empty first pew. Please refer to the diagram on page 7 for details and familiarise yourself with your pew number. We are inviting people to come forward by pew number starting with pew No. 1. Please follow the directions of our sidesteam and keep a distance of two meters to the person in front of you. If you'd like to receive a blessing, please keep your hands at your sides as you come forward. Please walk back to your pew after you receive the wafer and consume it there.*

**Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

## HYMN

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 pow'r to save us.  
Make us your living voice.

Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.

### SENDING PRAYER

**Send us out, Lord,**  
to have faith that the waiting seeds will bear fruit.

**Send us out, Lord,**  
to trust you through our disappointments.

**Send us out, Lord,**  
to take joy in the journey,  
rather than rush towards the destination.

**Send us out, Lord,**  
to live with the tension of the now and the not yet.

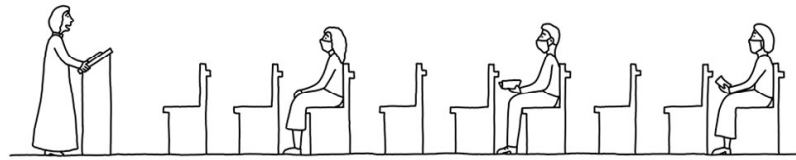
**Send us out, Lord,**  
to be patient and stand firm, because your coming is near. **Amen.**

### THE BLESSING

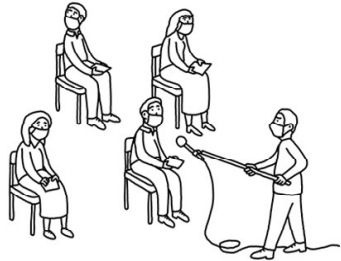
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**

# MASKS

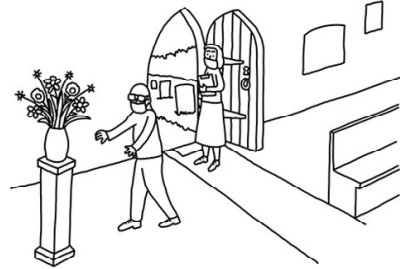
SCENES FROM THE 10AM



ASCERTAINING WHETHER ANY OF THE HUMOROUS ASIDES ARE ELICITING A SMILE



ESTABLISHING WHICH MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION IS SINGING ILLEGALLY



FINDING A PEW THROUGH MISTED-UP SPECTACLES

## THE GREAT CHRISTMAS INVITATION

This year, the good news of Christmas is even more poignant than in the past – we have all experienced how old certainties can be taken from us by a world crisis such as the COVID pandemic. Jesus came into a world in crisis and he entered our human mess to become our **Messiah!** Together with many other churches our theme for Christmas is “Comfort and Joy”. **Please invite your friends, family and neighbours to experience the good news of comfort and joy! All the latest information and links can be found at [www.denhamparish.church/christmas](http://www.denhamparish.church/christmas) but nothing beats a personal invitation.**

## ONLINE DONATIONS



If you wish to make a donation to Denham Parish Church, please scan this code with the camera or QR app on your smartphone and follow instructions.

Cartoon by Dave Walker

## SUNDAY WORSHIP: ON SITE, ONLINE AND ON THE PHONE

St Mary's Church 9.30am

Please register at [www.denhamparish.church](http://www.denhamparish.church) or by calling the church office.

Online: Sundays 10.30am

Online Coffee from 11.15am

Stream any time afterwards:

[tinyurl.com/youtube-denhamparish](https://tinyurl.com/youtube-denhamparish)

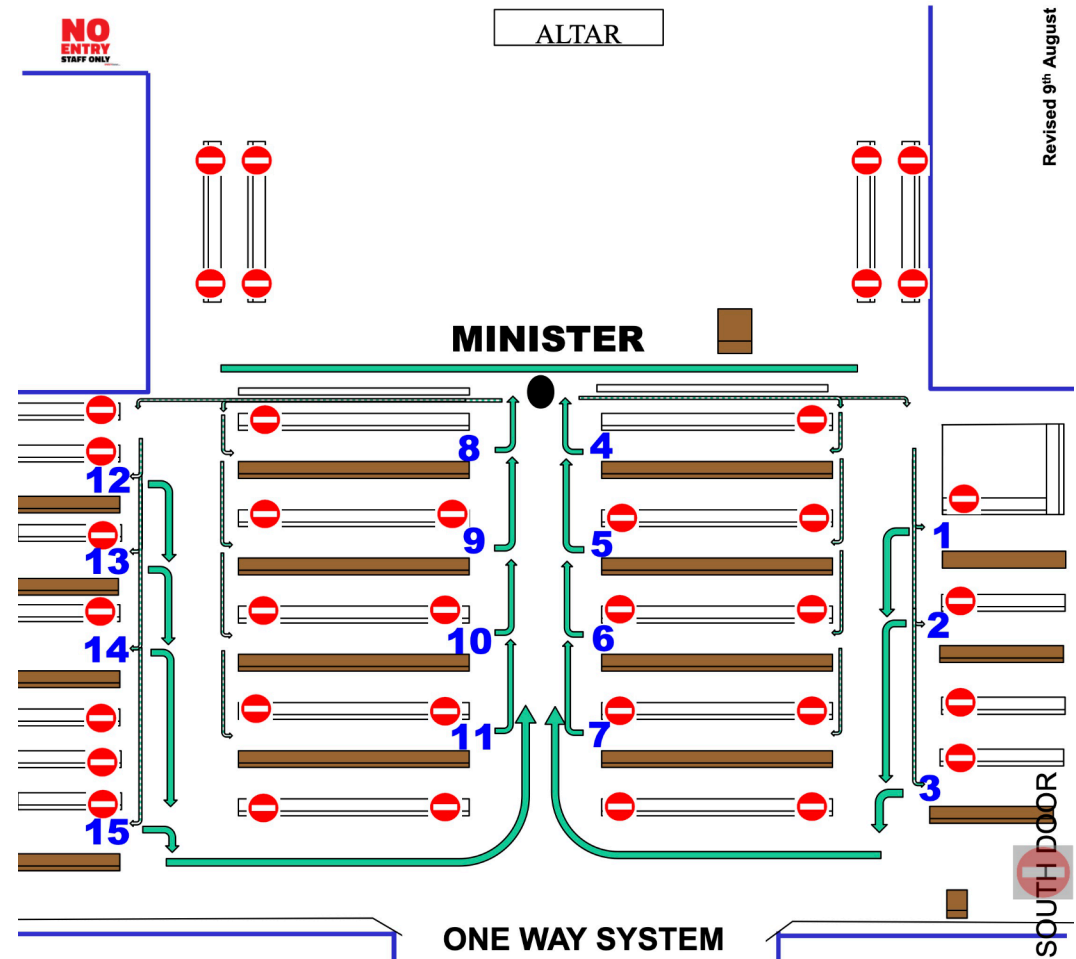
Telephone: Available any time for a week, Sun to Sat: **01895 714013**

## Let's pray together ...

- For this time of advent: for patience and for boldness in being signposts to Christ.
- For medical experts, politicians and public leaders – for wisdom, compassion and integrity.
- For those who are sick and those suffering from bereavement, especially the families of Helen Brooks, Irene McLaughlin and Harrison Cail

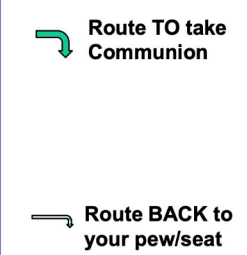
email: [office@denhamparish.church](mailto:office@denhamparish.church)

phone: 01895 832771



## HOLY COMMUNION

**ONE WAY SYSTEM**  
Starting with pew 1, follow the bolder arrows to the front. Once you have received the bread, please follow the circular route back through the empty 1<sup>st</sup> pew) to your eat and consume your bread there. Thank you



Revised 9<sup>th</sup> August

SOUTH DOOR

# Comfort and Joy



## Christmas will not be cancelled this year!

Let's rediscover the **comfort and joy** of Christmas together.

*From Tuesday 1 Dec, online*

Online Denham **Advent Calendar**

Online **Advent Prayer** Mon-Sat 6pm

*From Sunday 6 Dec, St Mary's*  
**Christmas Trail** around St Mary's Church, Denham Village

*From Monday 7 Dec, out and about*  
**"Spot the Angel"** treasure hunt around Denham (hints online!)

*From Sunday 13 Dec, St Mary's*  
**Community Christmas Trees** around St Mary's Church

*Sat 19 – Wed 23 Dec*  
*St Mary's, 3.00–3.30 pm*

**Carols around St Mary's**

Pick up your **"Christingle in a Bag"**

**Donate a new toy** for RNIB  
Sunshine House School Northwood

*Sunday 20 Dec*

*4.00 pm, online*

**Online Community Carol Service**  
for all ages!

*5.00 pm & 6.30 pm, St Mary's*

**Candle-lit Carols**

*Please register online beforehand!*

*Mon 21 to Wed 23 Dec, outdoors*  
**Carols in the Streets**

*Invite us to come and sing carols in your street! Email [rector@denhamparish.church](mailto:rector@denhamparish.church)*

*Thur 24 Dec: Christmas Eve*

*4.00 pm, online*

**Online Christingle Crib Service**

*11.30pm, online*

**Midnight Holy Communion**

*(Pre-recorded at St Mary's)*

*Fri 25 Dec: Christmas Day*

*9.30 am, St Mary's*

**Christmas Holy Communion**

*Please register online beforehand!*

*10.30 am, online*

**Christmas Family Service**

For latest updates and all online links, go to our web page or Facebook page

**[www.facebook.com/denhamparish.church](http://www.facebook.com/denhamparish.church)**

St Mary's Church Office: 01895 832771 | [office@denhamparish.church](mailto:office@denhamparish.church)

**[www.denhamparish.church/christmas](http://www.denhamparish.church/christmas)**