

# St. John the Baptist STONE

## Sunday 10th January

### EPIPHANY

Dear Friends,

Wisdom is the theme for this [Sunday's service](#) for Epiphany. There is an accompanying [video for children](#) featuring the story of the [Not-So-Wise Man](#).

Please Note: There is no in Church Services until further notice. Please see below.

Canon *Phil Groves*

Associate Rector in the Wychert Vale Benefice

Phone 01296 748 390

#### **The Blessing UK**

Two weeks ago David Robinson shared with us the music of Lynda Randle an American Gospel singer as he had found this to be a blessing to him when we could not be in church together in recent times.

I hope you will also find the following link is a blessing to you. The song is familiar to anyone who remembers watching the Makaton blessing on the screen in church. This version is sung by members of 65 churches and Christian movements from around the UK. They came together online last year to sing a blessing over our land and now that we are back in a lockdown with the virus spreading again it seems appropriate to share this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtlI3mNj5U&list=RDPUtlI3mNj5U&index=1>

Further suggestions of links, songs, scriptures, and poems etc that are a particular blessing or source of spiritual nourishment to us at this time can be sent to [pewsheets@stonedintonhartwell.com](mailto:pewsheets@stonedintonhartwell.com)

#### **Meetings coming up this month - all meetings are online**

Mon 11th - 7:30pm	SJB Fabric committee
Weds 13th - 8:00pm	PCC meeting
Weds 20th - 7:30pm	Finance committee
Weds 27th - 7:30pm	SJB committee

**BELONG - BELIEVE - BUILD - WITH CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE**

#### **A big thankyou for the socks**

Revd Sue Smith has sent a big thank you again for the socks (for the prisoners). There has been the sense in the conversations she has had that it is very comforting to know people outside are thinking about them at this time particularly when things are so hard for everyone, everywhere. The men are very mindful of that and they are grateful for this kind gesture.

#### **A prayer from our Methodist friends**

As we are not able to join our Methodist friends at the chapel this year for their Covenant Service let us join them in the prayer from their news sheet today. We have a special connection through this prayer anyway as it is based on one we used in our own church at Christmas



*for those who must be apart from their families*

- ***we ask your blessing Lord***

*for those who are alone, worried and frightened*

- ***we ask your blessing Lord***

*for those grieving the loss of a loved one*

- ***we ask your blessing Lord***

*for those in every capacity who are caring for the sick, in hospitals or at home*

- ***we ask your blessing Lord***

*for those who are serving the hungry and homeless*

- ***we ask your blessing Lord***

*for those who work to keep vital services functioning and to stock and staff our essential shops and businesses*

- ***we ask your blessing Lord***

*for scientists who are working to bring safe vaccines*

- ***we ask your blessing Lord***

*for those who have lost hope and are struggling with depression*

- ***We ask your blessing Lord***

*And for ourselves: keep us strong and faithful in our trust in You:*

- ***Bless us lord***

**BELONG - BELIEVE - BUILD - WITH CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE**

**We regret to inform you, have made the decision to close our church buildings for in person worship until there is a significant change in the circumstances.**

There will however be ways to worship together:

Please join us for worship tomorrow at 10.30am.

We are meeting on Zoom for a simple service. The service sheet is available to download from our website.

Join Zoom by clicking here <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84997669169> or phone 0203 901 7895

Please see the following letter below:

**Letter to PCC and all members of our congregations  
in St John the Baptist, Stone and SS Peter and Paul, Dinton.**

Dear Friends,

The Standing Committee met yesterday to discuss the new context of the frightening rates of Covid in the nation, locally and in our congregations. We prayed for wisdom and we prayed for Joanna and David Robinson who have Covid. We ask you to pray as well.

There are members of our Standing Committee who have advocated for in person services and who have argued that people need to be able to make their own decisions. There are members who noted the numbers attending and wanted to respect the commitment of our people to meeting together and meeting God. There are members who have long advocated that any risk is too big a risk, if not for those who come, for others who may subsequently be infected.

The Bishops of our diocese made a new context clear to us in a letter when they said:

‘The new variant of the virus spreads more rapidly. There have been examples of transmission in churches locally, even where the previously recommended measures were all observed.’

We have taken advice from doctors close to the frontline, and a data analyst working for Bucks who attends a church in our benefice. The statistics are frightening and the NHS close to being overwhelmed.

We have made the decision to close our church buildings for in person worship until there is a significant change in the circumstances.

We recognise just how devastating this will be for some people and we agreed to contact as many people as possible as quickly as possible.

### *Exile*

We are now a church in exile from our building. When the Temple was destroyed in Jerusalem and the people scattered some thought it was the end. It was not. The result of exile was the rediscovery of what was important. Up to that point the Scriptures were not ordered and public worship was irregular. In exile the people of God valued their Bible and met in new ways establishing synagogues that have empowered the community ever since.

We are able to learn a new way and discover the heart of the good news of Jesus. Here are verses set for Epiphany:

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples,

but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. (Isaiah 60:1-2)

### *Worshipping together*

Please join us for worship at 10.30am.

We are meeting on Zoom for a simple service. The service sheet is available to download from our website.

- Join Zoom by clicking here <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84997669169>
- or phone 0203 901 7895

You can expect a simple service with participation.