

Sunday Worship at Home 27th December 2020 Christmas 1 John the Apostle & Evangelist

Opening Prayers:

O Lord open our lips

And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Father of all, whose family of earth and heaven is one: we give thanks for the witness of John, help us to be true witnesses to your love, and to follow all the saints in ways of holiness, today and always. **Amen**

Invitation to confession:

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. In his light, let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

God our Father, you sent your Son full of grace and truth:
forgive our failure to receive him.

Lord have mercy

Jesus our Saviour, you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:
forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

Christ have mercy.

Spirit of love, your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts

Lord have mercy

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself, that you may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, and may you be cleansed from all your sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect (Special Prayer for the day)

Merciful Lord, cast your bright beams of light upon the church: that being enlightened by the teaching of your blessed apostle and evangelist St John, we may so walk in the light of your truth that we may at last attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ your incarnate Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

Gospel Reading: John 21. 19b - end (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me." Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" So the rumour spread in the community^[c] that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection on the Gospel

Today, the Christian church honours John, the one who proclaimed the Word made flesh through Jesus Christ, born in a stable in Bethlehem. John was one of the sons of Zebedee, who along with James and Peter, men with varying gifts and talents, followed Jesus throughout his ministry. They were together at the Transfiguration and in the garden where Jesus prayed before his arrest. John was there at the end, when others had run away, he stood at the foot of the cross with Mary and watched in sorrow as Jesus died. John was there again as a witness to the resurrection when “He saw, and believed”.

John was a witness to the Word, he proclaimed the Word and he lived and died witnessing to the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, who loved him and whom he loved. We too, through our faith, are disciples and evangelists like John, and we too are loved by God. At the end of this difficult dark year, and without any certainty of the path ahead, let the events of Christmas encourage us, that through our fellowship with God and one another, we will recognise that the light that came into the world will continue to dispel darkness and bring love, hope and healing into our lives. Amen

The Creed

We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

Be still and Pray: Include the needs of the world and your family and community, the NHS and the government. The health and commitment of Queen Elizabeth. Those who suffer illness or discrimination of any kind, the homeless and those suffering loss of jobs.

Pray for a better year ahead, not only here but throughout the world. Remember to give thanks for all your blessings and all that is good in the world.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.....

Blessing:

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you
and remain with you today and always.

Amen

Reverend Irene

