

Bridges Group News
Date: 14th January 2023
Sunday: Epiphany 2



News for the pews hosted by Napton

Greetings from St Lawrence Napton

Our 2 year old grandson did a lot of shouting over Christmas! Partly excitement but also enjoying new found freedom in expressing himself. He did his best to let us know what he wanted to say. He often delivered such comments with little or no clothes on! Literally, no time to be bothering about appearance or social niceties. Much more important to say what had to be said and get others to understand.

John the Baptist had a similar approach. He was determined to make himself noticed. He had an important message which came from God and needed to be clearly transmitted. REPENT and be Baptised. Someone is coming. Be ready. John was a lone voice in the wilderness, preparing the way for the Lord.

Bystanders were drawn to him first, then listened to what he had to say. He was offering an exciting and new way forward. The Messiah is imminent, follow the path to Him.

Such voices are rarely heard today from the church. We look now to the second coming of Jesus Christ in Majesty. An equally compelling message with plenty to shout about.

In Jesus name we can offer the way to salvation. Our message is well established. Our challenge is to get the Word out there.

Health Warning: Please keep your clothes on!

With love & in prayer, Sue Watkins

Rectory reflection from Rev Andy

Like many of us, I have been appalled by the recent revelations about the treatment of sub-postmasters who have been subjected to an entirely unwarranted campaign of vindictive and unjustified prosecutions by their employer. As someone who has both been a Fujitsu employee (the supplier of the faulty software) and a longtime trade union representative, I was livid about how ordinary people's lives had been destroyed (sometimes literally) by a system that failed to listen to them and who let them down at so many levels from managers to directors, and ministers. I was pleased to see that Post Office chief executive Paula Vennells has handed back her CBE after a huge petition was signed by well over a million people, but much remains to be done, both to clear individuals names, pay proper compensation, and bring those responsible to account. Justice is a major theme in the New Testament, and Jesus often spoke against the powerful oppressing the powerless, and how in Gods Kingdom such relationships will be turned upside down. I was moved by the response of some of those caught up in this injustice when they spoke of how they could not let their lives be overwhelmed by the anger they felt, and the reaction to the ITV drama demonstrates how the media can have a powerful voice for good, even if they don't use it as often as they should! This case reminds us of the failings of both our society and individuals, when power, money, and privilege can blind us to simple compassion and empathy but lets pray that the tidal wave of outrage these revelations have brought about can both right historic wrongs, and raise awareness of other injustices in our nation and our world.

Prayer

Lord, you to teach us to seek justice and to defend the oppressed. We ask that when the scale of human injustice seeks to overwhelm us, your spirit will be the encouragement we need to keep to speaking out against it. Today, we ask for breakthrough for all those facing situations of injustice. May they know a sense of hope that only you can bring. Amen

Looking ahead...

- Priors Hardwick PCC 15th January at 7pm
- Building Managers Meeting 22nd January
- Lower Shuckburgh PCC 30th January at 7pm
- Pastoral Group Meeting 5th February
- Stockton PCC 8th February at 4pm
- Steering Group Meeting 12th February at 7pm
- Wormleighton PCC 15th February at 7.30pm
- Napton PCC 19th February at 7pm

| Services this Sunday: 14th January, Epiphany 2 | Services next Sunday: 21st January, Epiphany 3 |
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| <p>10.30am Holy Communion CP at Priors Marston 10.30am Morning Worship at Napton 10.30am Holy Communion in the Methodist Tradition in Stockton 5.00pm Evensong in Priors Hardwick</p> <p>Bible readings for the week are: Genesis 1:1-5, Mark 1:4-11</p> | <p>9.00am Holy Communion at Priors Hardwick 10.30am Morning Worship at Priors Marston 10.30am Holy Communion at Napton 4.00pm Messy Church at Stockton</p> <p>Bible readings for the week are: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, John 1:43-end</p> |

(For more details of events and diary dates, see our website: www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk or the parish magazines)

Next Week's Bridges Group News will be hosted by Priors Marston.