

# St John's

## Prayers:

Lord, grant us a glimpse of your glory: open our eyes to your coming to us, that we may know you are always with us. Lord, as you abide in us, and we abide in you, may we show traces of your glory in our lives.

We pray for the healing of those who are **sick**: Peggy Aris, Scott Bradley, Susan Khazoom, Ruth Gillespie, Susan Jones, Bridie O'Shea and Barbara Shotlander.

We also remember with thanksgiving those who have recently **died**: Lolita Alvira and Valerie Hall. We pray for their families at this sad time.

Show us your mercy O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

## Contacts

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The Parish Office is closed.

**Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer at home. Join them [here](#).**

# St John's Church

## Pew Sheet

### 6th December 2020

## Welcome!

The Government has allowed places of worship to open for services and individual prayer.

## Physical Services

Sunday 9.30am - Parish Communion with Holy Baptism.  
Wednesday 10.30am - Holy Communion.

## Online Service

Our weekly online service is available [here](#).

**"Prepare the way of the Lord  
Make his paths straight."  
Mark 1:3**

## **ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT**

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

**[www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk](http://www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk)**

Please do check our website for future updates

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## The Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)

### **Collect:**

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God. Amen.

### **Readings:**

[Isaiah 40:1-11](#)

[Mark 1:1-8a](#)

### **Short Sermon from the Rector**

The perennial challenge during Advent and Christmas is to hear anew the familiar story we all know. And we really do all know the story! We have all seen the nativity countless numbers of times before. We have seen many beautiful cribs. It has become almost too familiar.

In part, this is why we have the season of Advent as these four weeks serve to prepare the way to Christmas. As Jean was saying last week, this season can provide us with the space for prayerful preparation, not only to celebrate the birth of Jesus, but also to reflect on the promise that Christ will come again in glory.

This year is a bit different, to say the least. It does not feel like the usual joyous march toward Christmas. In spite of the Government saying it is possible for five days to form a Christmas bubble, many people will not be taking part as they consider it too risky. There are also the families of those who have lost a loved one from Covid-19 this year. Christmas will be different. There is some good news, however, as we learned last week that the first vaccine has been approved for use in the UK. We long for life to return to normal.

Nearly 30 centuries ago, Isaiah wrote to God's exiled people, who were longing to return to normal, to their home. The words in today's reading are a message of comfort which speak about the Lord coming. We need to hear the words that are said about God: "*See the Lord comes with might...he will feed his flock like a shepherd and will gather the lambs in his arms*" (vs 10-11). Here we are offered a message of hope for the future.

In our Gospel reading, we read the very beginning of the Gospel of Mark. Without much prelude or fanfare, we are thrust into the action in the desert. The prophet John the Baptist proclaims in the wilderness a familiar message. At this point in history, Israel has been invaded and occupied by the Roman Empire. And now John proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Though crowds flock to John - the reading says, "*People from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him*" (v5) - John still points away from himself and toward someone greater to come. John points to a hopeful future by promising one who will come baptizing, not with mere water but with the eternal Holy Spirit.

Our Advent message is that we are called to be a people that await the coming of the Lord. We are always in waiting - through victory and defeat, triumph and loss and even through Covid-19. It is our job as the church to proclaim peace on earth, goodwill towards all, and joy to the world: our message of ultimate hope. But it is just as much our job to be visible in the wilderness, naming injustice, oppression, and apathy: for those suffering under the consequences of these, the message of ultimate hope must be seen in action which brings more immediate hope.

And our readings show us that waiting is not a passive action: we are to live out our hope. In waiting for the fullness of the Kingdom of God, we proclaim and live out God's message of good news to all people. We stand in the wilderness and welcome all to journey with us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday Shaun will be baptised into the Christian Church and we welcome him as he joins us on that journey, and as he publicly proclaims his faith in Christ as the source of peace, love, and hope for himself, and for our world. Together with Shaun, in celebration of his baptism and in longing anticipation of Christ's return, we commit ourselves afresh this Advent to point to something better. We point to the Christ, the one who is more powerful, more patient, and more loving than anything we can know or imagine. We point to the Christ who came, the one who is to come, and in the face of whatever darkness oppresses us, we stand firm in hope. Amen.