

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

First Sunday of Christmas: 27th December 2020

Collect:

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love:
gather the nations to be one family, and
draw us into your holy life through the birth
of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Psalm 148

1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the
heavens; praise him in the heights!
2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his
host!
3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you
shining stars!
4 Praise him, you highest heavens, and you
waters above the heavens!
5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he
commanded and they were created.
6 He established them forever and ever; he fixed
their bounds, which cannot be passed.
7 Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea
monsters and all deeps,
8 fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind
fulfilling his command!



9 Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all
cedars!
10 Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things
and flying birds!
11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and
all rulers of the earth!
12 Young men and women alike, old and young
together!
13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his
name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth
and heaven.
14 He has raised up a horn for his people, praise
for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are
close to him. Praise the Lord!

A reading from the letter to the Galatians (4.4-7)

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (2.15-21)

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, o Christ.

Reflections from Rev Jackie:

Letting Jesus into Christmas:

Christmas is waiting:

Christmas is waiting to happen.
Outside, a vacant hillside
Lies silent, strangely empty
Of any angel's choir.

A stable waits
for bookings at the inn to multiply.
Distant kings study charts
and keep gifts in storage,
While shepherds plan their memoirs
In expectancy of unexpected fame
and keep a chapter free
for miracles.

A small velvet patch in the black night sky
stands ready to hold a new-born star,
and oppressed peoples everywhere
cling wildly to prophecy and song
and whisper the word: **Messiah.**

They've switched on the lights
In the high street,
counting off the buying days.
Like guardsmen on parade,
shops are stocked and standing by,
Revvng up the engines
Of the card machines,
and history watchers mark another year
In the slow count to 3000.

But here an old man lies
in the stairwell where he fell three days ago
and no one knows.
Here a young girl loiters
in a streetlights unholy halo
to sell the only thing she owns
that men will pay for.
And here an infant sleeps
on a sack on the hard earth floor
Where even a mother's hand
is empty,
And there are places where Christmas
Is still waiting
To happen.

Spoken Worship. Gerard Kelly 2007.

Behold I stand:

When the night is deep
with the sense of Christmas
and expectancy hangs heavy
on every breath
behold, I stand at the door and knock.

When the floor is knee deep
In discarded wrapping paper
And the new books are open at page one
And the new toys are already broken
behold I stand at the door and knock.

When the family is squashed
elbow to elbow
around the table,
and the furious rush for food is over
and the only word that can describe the feeling
Is full,
behold, I stand at the door and knock.

When Christmas is over
and the television is silent
for the first time in two days
and who sent which card to whom
Is forgotten until next year,
behold, I stand at the door

And when the nation has finished celebrating
Christmas without Christ,
A birthday without a birth
the coming of a kingdom
without a king,
when I am forgotten
despised,
rejected
crucified
behold, I stand.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

This week's hymn:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!*

Christ, by highest heaven adored:

Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the favoured one.

Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail, th'incarnate Deity:
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!*

Hail! the heaven-born
Prince of peace!

Hail! the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings

Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die:
Born to raise the son of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!*

For Our Prayers:

The Bishops are calling on every parish to join them using this prayer at home and at every act of worship for our church, that we grow in trust in God's providence and deepen our own generosity giving of ourselves and of our gifts.

**Loving God,
you are always with us,
and give us all we need to be your church
in Suffolk.**

**Help us, we pray, to give as we have received:
abundantly, generously, and joyfully,
that our worship and our service
may bear witness to your Kingdom of
unfailing love.**

**In the name of your Son
who gave himself for us,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Please pray for:

Those with chronic or long-term illness: Eric Dickerson, Rosemary, Jenny, Andrew Barfield, Kathy Steele, Andrew, Peggy, Natacha, Christine, Stephen, Samantha, Rex & Jill, Margaret Christian, Jean Dominy,

Those undergoing treatment or currently ill: Emily, Gloria Elmer, Helen Harlow, Leslie Bloomfield, Katie, Vincent Lightbody, Roger Dickerson, Vicky & Matt, Maureen Dobson, Dagmar, Lee Grigs

All who are affected by the Coronavirus in the UK and around the world: *For all who have lost their jobs due to Covid19; all who are despairing. For all who have lost their lives & livelihoods, the injured, the bereaved. For hospital and health care workers*

For our government & MPs', and local councillors: for honesty in politics, for wisdom and justice for all. For refugees across the world & diplomats and peace makers, working to end conflicts

Those who have recently died, and their families mourning their loss: Pearl Leggett, John Chapman RIP.

Call this number —> for free.

It's a lovely way to worship from home!



Notices:

Rev Canon Jutta's last Sunday: Jutta's last service at St Thomas will be *Sunday 3rd January*. This service will need to be booked into as usual, so we will do our best to accommodate as many people as possible while remaining safe. You will also be able to join the service on Zoom or livestreamed on facebook.


No Eucharist service on Wednesday 30th Dec.

No Church Opening for private prayer on Thurs 24th, Monday 28th, and Thurs 31st. Church opening will restart on Monday 4th Jan.

Alpha: Zoom Alpha starts on 7th January! It will run on Thursday evenings 7-9pm. **Please email Rev Cat to sign up.** We know the best way to get people to come is for us to invite them personally, so please, *invite your friends, family, and neighbours*, and why not give it a go yourself!

Prayer! We want our church to grow, so please join in this prayer at home: *"God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your Church, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions and power to our witness. Help your Church here in Ipswich to grow younger, to grow in numbers and to grow leaders; in spiritual commitment to you and in service to our local community. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."*

To book by phone for Sunday services, call **01473 742973** in the week before the service, leaving your name, how many you are booking for, and your phone number.

 **St Thomas Pilgrim Community** are continuing after Canon Jutta has left. They are holding their Second Commitment Service with Bishop Mike on 10th January at 4pm –either in Church or on ZOOM (tbd). Please, keep them in your prayers. For more information, see Jutta or Malcolm.

This Week:

Sunday, 27th December

10am Eucharist: in-person worship with Zoom and livestream available

Tuesday—Meditation Group livestream will resume in January –date to be confirmed

Wednesday 30th December

No Eucharist today

May God bless you and your loved ones in 2021, give you faith, hope, health, courage and peace.

Pray for members of the St Thomas Congregation

Julie & Mark Stevens; Rosemary Suggate; Shirley Vivian; Angela Waldridge; Brian & Joy Ward; Audrey West; Natacha & Amber Wilcox; Pat and Jan Wright



Birthdays this week:

28th: Lilly Waller, **31st:** Caren Elwis

Contacts:

Priest in charge: Canon Jutta Brueck m:07958 360564

Email: jutta.brueck@cofesuffolk.org

Jutta's days off are: Fridays & Saturdays

Assistant Curate: Revd Cat Connolly m: 07530 412988

Email: revcatconnolly@gmail.com

Cat's day off: Mondays

Lay Evangelist: Malcolm Gibbs m:07906 665530

Director of Music: Simon Clark BA (Hons) FLCM ARCO

m: 07961 859344 Email: sussexsi@aol.com

Church wardens: Roger Elmer m:07810 274586

Stephen Marginson 01473 258791

If you would like to chat, you could also ring:

Mary Bullass 625135 Gloria Elmer 745590

Rev Jackie 07962 172639 Revd Pat 464748

Church website:

<http://stthomasipswich.org.uk/>

Sunday Worship & other Worship resources on the Church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasipswich/>