



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 34: Sunday 13th December 2020

The Third Sunday in Advent



Dear Friends,

As we move towards the celebration of Christmas, plans are in place for the re-opening of our church buildings for worship.

At Aldershot, we will be meeting on Dec. 13th at 10.30 a.m., on Dec.20th at 4.00 p.m. for our Carol Service, and on Christmas Day at 9.30 a.m. Weekly morning services will then restart on Jan. 3rd when we will gather at 10.30 a.m. for our Covenant Service.

At North Camp, we will be meeting on Dec. 20th at 6.00 p.m. for our Carol Service, on Christmas Eve at 4.00 p.m. for our Christingle Service, and on Christmas Day at 10.30 a.m. Booking is required for each of these three services. Links to the on-line booking system can be found in the latest edition of the North Camp E-News. If you would like to attend one of these services, but are unable to book on-line, please ring me on 01252 548215 and, provided spaces are still available, I will book you in for the service or services that you would like to attend. In the new year, services at North Camp will be held fortnightly. The first two dates are January 10th (Covenant Service) and January 24th.

At both Aldershot and North Camp, the Carol services, including traditional carols and readings, will be available on-line from the same time as they are being held in church. Those watching on-line will therefore be able to watch the service at the same time as it is being held in church. The service will also be available to watch later.

Yours in His service,

Chris Blake

Worship Reflection

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.' (Psalm 126 v 2)

Hymn (StF 165 verse 3)

John the Baptist, by his preaching
and by water poured,
brought to those who heard his teaching
news of hope restored:
'Keep your vision strong and steady,
and be ready for the Lord'.

Prayer Lord God, in these Advent days, open our ears, our hearts and our minds so that we may hear your voice and respond with our lives. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Bible Reading (John 1: 6-8, 19-28)

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"', as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Reflection

When I was at school, I played the clarinet in the Swindon Youth Military Band. I spent most of that time as the 'third' or 'second' clarinet.



Occasionally I found myself playing the 'first clarinet' part but (fortunately for the audience) I was never asked to play the 'solo' clarinet part. The task of those playing the second and third clarinet parts was to provide the accompaniment so enabling people to focus on the soloist. The soloist was very important, but the other clarinets prepared the way for them to shine.

John the Baptist is not the soloist – but he came to prepare the way, to point others to Jesus and to encourage them to listen to the message that



Jesus would bring. John doesn't want people to listen to him, but rather he wants people to listen to Jesus. As John said, *"Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal"*.

If the Gospels were a film, and John the Baptist was nominated for an Oscar, it would be in the category of 'Best Supporting Actor'. Like John the Baptist, our task as the followers of Jesus is not to seek the limelight of the soloist, but to play our part in pointing others to Jesus.

Prayers of Intercession

This week let us pray especially:

- For those planning the complex details of the vaccination scheme.
- For the work of Foodbanks in Rushmoor and around the country.

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. Amen

Hymn (StF 182)

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings!

Final Prayer Help us Lord to point to you so that others may find you. Amen.

Digital Christmas Card.

This is to remind you that you are invited to record yourself, and others in your household, saying 'Happy Christmas everyone' Send your recordings (landscape orientation and with a few seconds before and after you speak to allow for editing) to chris.blake@methodist.org.uk no later than 18th December.



Farnborough Foodbank

In this most unusual year, it is important that we remember those in our own community who are facing real difficulties this Christmas.



One good way to do this would be to support the Farnborough Foodbank. If you visit their website at <https://farnborough.foodbank.org.uk> you will find a 'Donate' button which will take you to their 'Just Giving' page where a financial gift can be given. If you would like to donate food, details of what they currently need (and equally don't need) can be found from their website by clicking the 'Give Help' button and then the 'Donate food' button'. Details of where to donate food items are also shown on that page.

Glimpses of God's Glory



This week's contribution is a little different in that it comes from Australia!

We send greetings to your congregations from Melbourne.



For many years we have travelled to the UK for holidays, work and visiting our English relatives, the Hobbs, and have often accompanied Helen and Barry to church in Ash and Aldershot.

After a long winter lockdown, when Covid cases rose steeply, Melbourne has emerged into a glorious spring. The roses are blooming, the sun is shining and at last we are able to visit the country and the seaside. For twenty days we have had no new cases, but we are still being cautious. Our church is still meeting by zoom and we are still unable to meet in person. As the European winter approaches, we often think of our family and friends in the UK. Our experience is that lockdown does work, although it is not easy. Take heart. Good things will return. We send God's blessing to you all.
Barbara and Graeme Davison