



THE HOLYFORD HERALD

News from the Holyford Mission Community

Serving the Parishes of St Lawrence, Southleigh, St Winifred, Branscombe, St Giles, Northleigh, St Michael, Musbury and St Andrew, Colyton with St Michael, Colyford.



Website: www.holyford.org Facebook: @holyfordmission
Issue 32: Epiphany Sunday, 3rd January 2021

The Rector's Ramblings...

On Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, marking the occasion when the kings visited the Holy Family, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. You can join us to celebrate this feast day in church, over our telephone service, online, and/or DIY at home! How? I hear you ask... well, by performing an old Epiphany ceremony. This Epiphany tradition is the blessing of houses and marking of the door/lintel with chalk. The initials of the Three Kings are chalked above or on the door, along with the date. The custom has been practiced by Christians of all different denominations for many centuries and, last year in Colyton, we blessed and chalked the West Door of St Andrew's. The broad idea is to remind us of God's presence and love in our homes, and that he always seeks to bless and protect us.

I have included in the weekly email attachments the instructions for the blessing and chalking of the home and door so that, if you wish, you can read more about it and do it yourselves at home (or at work) to mark the Feast of the Epiphany. You can do it at any point from now until the end of the Christmas season—which, despite the fact that the supermarkets are now already selling hot cross buns—is 2nd February! Use a piece of your own chalk, or pick up a piece of blessed chalk (in envelopes to keep them Covid-safe) from St Andrew's, Colyton or St Winifred's, Branscombe.

If you can, it would be lovely to see photos of chalked doors posted on our Facebook page, @holyfordmission.

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As you may be aware, in accordance with the Government's Tier 3 specifications (and for Tier 4) public worship can continue in churches and buildings can remain open. Holding services in church is deemed safe across the four Tiers as currently defined by the Government. The main concern about the spread of the infection generally is for people who have close contact with others for extended periods of time. The reason why the Government and Bishops have agreed that churches can remain open for public worship is because this is regarded as a relatively low-risk activity; the possibility of transmitting the disease is, to an extent, mitigated against in the context of church services because of the measures in place and our ability to spread out and distance appropriately. There has also been an acknowledgement of the need to maintain both a degree of physical, spiritual and mental well-being, which is another reason why we continue cautiously and with care, to hold services in church and keep the buildings open at present.

The present time is not a time for fear or giving up, but it is a time for caution.

Do not feel pressured about church. If you feel unsure about coming to church to worship, then please stay at home for now. If you feel it is important to be in church, you are welcome. We remain a community of Christians wherever we are, and this current situation will not last for ever. All who are living and working in our communities are remembered and prayed for each week in church. Our online and telephone services continue for those unable to join us for services in church. Please let me know if there are people/situations you would like us to pray about.

God bless you and all whom you love and pray for as we cross the threshold into a new year.

Fr Steven.

Evening Prayer, Tuesdays to Fridays

These will resume on Tuesday 12th January, 5pm at St Michael's, Colyford. Please see the pew sheets for locations of other services—owing to the darker nights and colder weather, it has been decided to continue these services in Colyton and Colyford during the winter months, and return to the villages (Musbury, Branscombe and Northleigh) when things warm up and get lighter in March.

Holyford Bible Study Group: Thursdays via Zoom

These will resume on Thursday 14th January. The topic will be the First Letter of John. All our welcome to join us: please contact Charles Hill for the Zoom details Charles.hill465@btinternet.com.

Fr Steven will be taking his Christmas holiday

... from Monday 4th January to Saturday 9th January. (NB: his usual day of rest is usually Monday.)



Mission Community Contacts

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Some Music

This week's offering is one for Epiphany: *Three Kings from Persian Lands Afar* by Peter Cornelius sung by the choristers of Kings College Chapel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thu3vgz5y28>

Prayer for this week

On New Year's Day we celebrated the Feast of the Naming and Circumcision at the Eucharist in St Andrew's Church, Colyton.

It may seem an odd thing to mark on New Year's Day, but really it is all about reminding us that God came to us wholly and completely in his incarnation—it wasn't a token gesture, God doesn't simply empathise with us, but shows his infinite love and compassion by becoming fully human. The circumcision is about Jesus honouring the agreement between Abraham and God (Genesis 17).

We learn through scripture and tradition that God in Jesus was both faithful to the Old Covenant, and also brings us into a new relationship, a New Covenant through his life and sacrifice on the cross. The Old is fulfilled in the New.

At New Year we often make resolutions. Quite a few of my Methodist friends have reminded me of their Covenant Service which is often held at New Year. It is very useful and has been included in some Anglican and Roman Catholic liturgy and prayer books too; here is the text of the prayer if you wish to use it during this first week of January.

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'

The Methodist Covenant Prayer

More about the Methodist Covenant Service and background can be found here:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/what-is-distinctive-about-methodism/a-covenant-with-god/the-covenant-service/>

Happy New Year!