PEW SHEET

WWW.BBC-CHURCHES.ORG.UK

Vicar: Revd Louise Holliday - revdlouiseholliday@gmail.com / 01636 704811

St Giles' Community Hall bookings: Deborah Pollard - 01636 672923

Vestry Hour in St Giles: Every Tuesday 6.00 - 7.00 pm

SUNDAY 7TH JANUARY 2024: BAPTISM OF CHRIST

JANUARY 2024 "LETTER FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM" COMES TO US FROM REVD LOUISE HOLLIDAY

Dear Friends, Happy New Year!
For many the new year brings the opportunity for a new beginning – a new you – with a commitment to resolutions to exercise more, lose weight or drink less. Apparently, according to research, gym membership sees a significant rise in the month of January. However, of those who take up membership, very few continue beyond the end of the month. The busyness of life can overwhelm and crowd out the best of intentions.

I do think that January is a good time to take stock. To look back on the events of the previous year and consider how they may help to shape how we're feeling about the year that lies ahead. What am I most thankful for? And what can I offer as an expression of my gratitude? Nurturing a sense of gratitude and taking time to appreciate the small things that bring joy are essential to our wellbeing – a good way to start and end each day. The more we notice and give thanks, the more we find to be thankful for. So, this is my new year resolution. I am so thankful for the caring, supportive community across our benefice, and I thank God that I can play my part in spreading that care and support as we reach out to the folk we live and work alongside.

This coming year may offer a lot of uncertainty in our world: a general election for us in the UK and the presidential election for the United States. The Middle East is in ferment, and we pray with heavy hearts for a way forward. The refugees from troubled parts of the world still need care and welcome. There is a lot of anxiety around because the future seems uncertain.

But as Christians, we remind ourselves that, ultimately, our security, our sense of peace is found in our relationship with Jesus. There will be challenges in this life but in this Christmas season (yes, it is still Christmastide for us until the beginning of February!) we hold on to the promises of God in the birth of Jesus. In the words from St John's Gospel - 'The Word was made flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory'.

In the coming of Jesus we are reminded that God can bring good out of evil, light out of darkness and hope amid fear. We need to remain faithful, pray and not give up that hope. It is difficult to know what to pray for, and I'm reminded, in the words of the prayer below, that we follow. God leads us and supports us.

With that knowledge, let us be forward looking and full of hope. Blessings for the New Year ahead.

A Prayer for the New Year

Lord God, you have called your servants
to ventures of which we cannot see the ending
by paths as yet untrodden,
through perils unknown.
Give us faith to go out with good courage,
not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is leading us
and your love supporting us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
from the Lutheran Book of Wors

With love and prayer, Revd Louise

THE NEXT BENEFICE BULLETIN

The deadline for the next Benefice Bulletin (covering Feb, March and April, including Easter!) will be 10th January. I look forward to receiving your entries in due course - and don't forget those photographs.
Louise Marshall,
stgilesbalderton@gmail.com

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES

Thursday 4th January
10.00 am Holy Communion, St Giles

Sunday 7th January
10.00 am Family Communion, St Giles
6.00 pm Free to Be, St Giles : Worship for All

Tuesday 9th January
10.00 am Coffee & Prayer (online)

Wednesday 10th January
7.30 pm Encounter (online)

Thursday 11th January
10.00 am Holy Communion, St Giles

Sunday 14th January
10.00 am Holy Communion, St Giles
10.00 am Family Communion, All Saints, Barnby

READINGS FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Collect
Heavenly Father, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son; may we recognise him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Genesis 1. 1-5
In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Acts 19. 1-7
While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the inland regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' They replied, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' Then he said, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They answered, 'Into John's baptism.' Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied— altogether there were about twelve of them.

Mark 1. 4-11
John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Post Communion Prayer
Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son; by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen