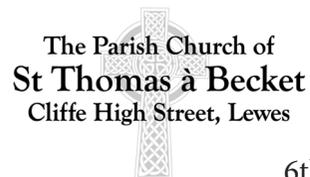




Advent candles

Traditionally at St Thomas' we have an Advent wreath with five candles: one for each Sunday of the season plus one for Christmas Day. Today's candle is purple and is lit by the priest as we recite this prayer:

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the paths of thine Only-begotten Son: that we may worthily serve thee with hearts purified by His coming: Who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen



6th December 2020
ADVENT II



The Collect

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

ROSEMARY CHAPMAN

A reminder that Rosemary Chapman's funeral is at 10.30am on Tuesday 12th December and that this is by invitation of the family, to comply with Covid restrictions still in force, limiting numbers.



PRAYERS

We pray for all those in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity at this time; including: Phil, Pam Swabey, Joan Bishop, Ken Allbon, Jean Burges, Susan Larkin and Rosemary Burnett.



MASKS

A reminder that, apart from those who are exempt, masks must be worn while in church but may be removed to receive Communion.



CHRISTMAS MUSIC

We very much hope to welcome the Lewes Singers to St Thomas' on 20th December for their Christmas recital. This very much depends, of course, on the level of Covid restrictions in place. More details to follow.



BVM CONCEPTION
On Tuesday, 8th December, we celebrate the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Holy Communion at 7am and Evening Prayer at 6pm.

COFFEE & TOILETS

While we still cannot meet in the hall for coffee, the toilets are accessible. Ask the sidesman for the key.

PCC MEETING

Due to lockdown, the next meeting has been moved to Friday 11th December at 7pm in the Hall.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Parish prayer requests may be sent by email to Fr. Herbert or via Trevor using email, telephone or through his letterbox..



Cliffe High Street, LEWES BN7 2AH

Website: www.st-thomas-lewes.org.uk

Fr Herbert's Email: AssociateVicar@st-thomas-lewes.org.uk

Tel: 01273 937678



The Gospel - St. Luke 21.25-33

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled: heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.

SERMON

COLLECT - to be said every day in Advent

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last

day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.



WE ARE all aware, without any doubt, of living in a world during a time of great unrest. For we hear of earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, storms and meteorological distresses as part of life. However, more recently we have become accustomed to hearing about the new phenomena of bushfires, rising sea levels, melting ice caps and global warming which combined bring worry and anxiety to our minds.

Well our gospel reading today from St Luke is the account of Jesus telling His disciples about the destruction of Jerusalem which is yet to happen in about 40 years hence in AD70. The signs mentioned which were associated with that seem very much a reminder of our own times.

This passage is also recorded in Mark's gospel and the passage as a whole presents us with a lot of complexity for it would seem in essence to describe both the times surrounding the fall of Jerusalem, which happened later in AD70, as well as a description of warning about the end times before Christ is to return and bring in the fulfilment of God's kingdom.

Some theologians have thought that Luke's account with its more detailed description could not have been an actual prophecy and, that with Luke writing his gospel later than St Mark, was an account from seeing the event. However,

historians are quick to tell us that none of the particular details from Josephus' documented account of the fall of Jerusalem are recorded in St Luke's account so it cannot be written from the point of after the event. However, there is no reason why St Luke could not have drawn his imaged source from times that well preceded the fall of Jerusalem.

Theologians tell us that much of the language St Luke uses harks to the Old Testament prophecies and St Mark in his account refers to the prophet Daniel when he says 'But when ye shall see the abomination of destruction spoken of by Daniel the prophet.....'

The apocalyptic descriptive language used is a revelation, a revealing of what is to come. It is clear that Jesus warned quite starkly about the coming fall of Jerusalem, echoed by the prophet Daniel in the Old Testament, and that this fall would come about which it did in AD70. The fall of Jerusalem represents the sin of Israel which had mounted up and which had come face to face with God's justice.

However, God wishes to redeem His people in Christ and ultimately that redemption arrives fully with His kingdom at Christ's return and second coming at the end of time to which this passage also harkens. So Jesus warns His disciples to be ready and tells them the parable

of the fig tree and says 'So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand'. Further in the passage Jesus tells His disciples that prayerful and watchful lives are to be followed. The redemption of God's people is heralded in by the second coming of Christ and the fulfilment of God's kingdom.

That prayerful watching and waiting is very much a calling for each of us now in the time of Advent as we joyfully anticipate Christ's (first) coming at His birth in Bethlehem at Christmastide. In this second Sunday of Advent the second candle is lit on the Advent wreath in recognition of those Old Testament prophets who long foretold and anticipated the glorious coming of Christ the Messiah.

So although our world is very troubled and perplexed with adversities at this time, such as would frighten us, let us not lose hope but as our epistle reading from Romans today tells us 'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope'. So let us journey this Advent with our prayers and watchful expectation of the Joy to come at Christmas in the Christ child who came to save us, to tell us of God's supreme love for us and of God's kingdom. Amen.

Fr Herbert.