

# Glastonbury Together in prayer

A news sheet for members of Glastonbury churches during the crisis caused by Covid 19



## Good news - Mark

As we move into the new Church year we switch from the Gospel of Matthew to the Gospel of Mark for the weekly Sunday readings. Mark is the shortest of the three synoptic Gospels and starts at the beginning of Jesus ministry, not mentioning his birth and early years directly. As the shortest, and perhaps simplest, Gospel it is recommended reading for those new to Christianity. Even committed Christians who are used to listening to weekly readings but who have not read an entire Gospel would be well advised to start with the Gospel of Mark. It was written for Gentiles (non Jews) so the message is also clear for those, like most people in our time, who do not come from the Jewish faith.

Today we are mostly literate and can read the message for ourselves but in earlier times many could not read and relied on what they heard on a Sunday. Similarly before the Gospels were written down the Good News was spread by oral tradition especially from those who had witnessed the events for themselves. At that time an early second coming had been expected but when this did not happen and the eyewitnesses came to the end of their lives it became important to preserve the message for future generations. It is suggested that the Gospel of Mark comes from the preaching of St Peter. Originally called Simon, Jesus renamed him Peter a word meaning rock. He was to be the foundation of the Church and would be a reliable source for the teaching so would be a good source for the good news. It is not thought that Peter wrote the Gospel himself but that a follower wrote down Peters preaching at about the time of his death.

## Happy new year

As we move into Advent we start a new Christian year different from the secular year. Christians therefore get two chances to wish people a happy new year, once for the Church Year and once for the calendar year. At this time as well as praying for those affected by the pandemic I am sure we are all hoping and praying for a very different year for the future. A year where instead of moving into lock down we see the arrival of a vaccine and a move out of lock down. We will have lessons to learn and the new normal may be different from the old normal but work on spreading the good news of the Gospel in our community will be easier when we have better access to talk to others directly. Where relationships have been built on-line it will be time to convert them to in person friendships and welcome them into our church buildings.

## Online Advent Calendar Planned

The Anglican Benefice are planning an online advent calendar this year. The idea is that different "gifts" will be shared each day in the form of a web link to a video, a piece of music, a picture, a poem, a passage of scripture. The calendar will be shared on both the St Benedict's and St John's web sites. You will not be able to cheat as the doors on the calendar will be locked until the day arrives. You will, however, be able to catch up if you miss days. If you have any ideas of gifts to be shared please go to St Benedict's website (<https://stbens-glastonbury.uk/>) which gives details including how to make suggestions. If there are any days not yet filled your suggestion may be included. If, however, you request a particular date it will only be available on a first come first served basis. Advent Sunday, Christmas day and the first three Wednesdays have been reserved for the Vicar the Rev David McGeoch



# Carols online event

## Over the second weekend of advent

The weekend of 5th and 6th December will see the production and sharing of an online festival of carols in our region. Featuring Exeter Cathedral and London Gospel choirs the event will also have live presenters engaging with the audience. Due to restrictions the Churches Together Carol singing we have been used to in Glastonbury will not be taking place this year but this is an opportunity to join the region for a Carol festival. The event will be one hour long on two consecutive evenings starting at 7p.m. It can be accessed live on Facebook, YouTube and on a their own dedicated web site. With a YouTube offering you should be able to access the event later if you miss it but why not book the time in your diary so you can watch it live.

You can access the festival at <http://www.southwestcarols.com/> where you can also find further details. The first ever South West Carols event is advertised as a celebration of all the GOOD things that take place at this wonderful time of the year as we remember the reason for the season. It will also feature the South West's biggest ever nativity with participants from schools all over the region. It is planned that over 30 musicians together with Worship Leaders from churches all over the region will come together for a festive collaboration. To help you get into the festive spirit!



## Into the darkness

We may seem to be in a dark time at the moment both with the days becoming shorter and the current crisis. But we know that Christ is the light of the world and in that we should rejoice. In this issue we look at a modern hymn that you may not be familiar with as it is only in two hymn books. Written by Maggi Dawn at the end of the 20th century it has a message for advent. In the opening verse we hear of Jesus coming into the darkness and shadows, into this loveless place to lighten our burdens and ease our pain making a home in our hearts. Jesus is implored to come again with the refrain *“Come with your love to make us whole, come with your light to lead us on, driving the darkness far from our souls: O come Lord Jesus come.”*

In verse two we hear where Jesus should come, into our heavy hearts and the longing of our souls. Order our souls with grace and love until our hearts unite. The third verse confirms the link with Advent calling for the Holy Child Emanuel to visit again this broken place until all the earth declares his praise. *“Let your love be born in us, O come Lord Jesus come”*. Maggi Dawn, who was born in 1959, will not be well known as she is shown on [hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org) as the author of just four hymns and composer of three tunes.

## A look at the lectionary - Advent one

At the start of a new Church year you might expect that readings would come from the start of the Gospel but that is not the case. Indeed the set text from Mark comes towards the end of Jesus ministry just before the Last Supper, his passion and death. Why when we are looking forward to the coming of Christ at Christmas do we go so far into the Gospel? The answer is that we are looking towards the second coming not the first on this Sunday. The reading comes from the end of chapter 13 of Mark. At the start of that chapter one of the disciples is admiring the magnificent of the temple when Jesus tells him it will be destroyed. Shortly after four disciples ask when this will happen and he tells them of many signs that will come to pass first. Amongst these signs is that the Gospel must be preached to all nations. When we get

to the appointed reading we are told to be alert and on guard as we do not know the hour of the Lords coming. Only the Father knows the hour. Unlike the followers of Jesus in the early years we now know that we are likely to meet our own appointed day before the appointed time for the second coming. In the epistle reading from the first letter to the Corinthians we hear the same message. After a greeting to the people of Corinth and to us Paul gives grace and says that his readers do not lack spiritual gift as they wait for the coming of Christ. Jesus will keep them firm so that at the end they will be blameless. God is faithful and has called them into fellowship with Jesus Christ. After our reading there comes an appeal for unity that we see in services for Christian Unity. We must be united in mind and thought as Christ was not divided.