



St Martin of Tours Chelsfield

*St Martin's worships and serves a loving God,
reaching out to the community in the name of Jesus Christ.*

Sunday 10 January 2021

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

(THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY)

As we move once again into stricter and more stringent conditions of lockdown – Tier 4+, I am mindful of the following quote, “Dark times lie ahead of us and there will be a time when we must choose between what is easy and what is right.” Do you know who said it? No it wasn't Boris Johnson, nor the Archbishop of Canterbury – in fact it wasn't any politician or church leader. The words were uttered by Albus Dumbledore, via the pen of J K Rowling, in *Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire*.

There are indeed likely to be dark times ahead, difficult decisions too, such is the pattern of life. Today's Scriptures remind us that at the very beginning of Creation the earth was formless, empty and covered in darkness. Into this chaos God spoke light, and there was light, and God saw that it was good. So good in fact that God went on to create a perfect world, completing his work by creating humankind to manage and care for his creation.

Sadly humanity, which has a natural tendency to let God down, soon revealed its limitations and staggered from crisis to crisis until eventually God decided to intervene again with another burst of light. First the star that lit the birth of a saviour, and then the Baptism which revealed the identity of Christ as God's beloved Son, our Saviour.

At a baptism service the church presents a lighted candle as a symbol of 'the light of Christ' and we are charged with the task to 'shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father'.

As we move forward through the dark, difficult and daunting days ahead, it will not be the magic wand of a boy wizard that saves us from disaster, but the skill and judgement of medics, politicians, and the sacrifices of each one of us to do what is right. Gifts of the wisdom, grace, light and love of our creator God!

Revd John

*You are invited to spend a quiet time with these prayers,
readings and reflection.*

Prayers for the week

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

[Collect for the Baptism of Christ]

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.

[Post Communion for the Baptism of Christ]

Today's psalm

Psalm 29

The Voice of God in a Great Storm

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy splendour.

The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the Lord, over mighty waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.
The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forest bare;
and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king for ever.
May the Lord give strength to his people!
May the Lord bless his people with peace!

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Today's readings

Genesis 1:1-5

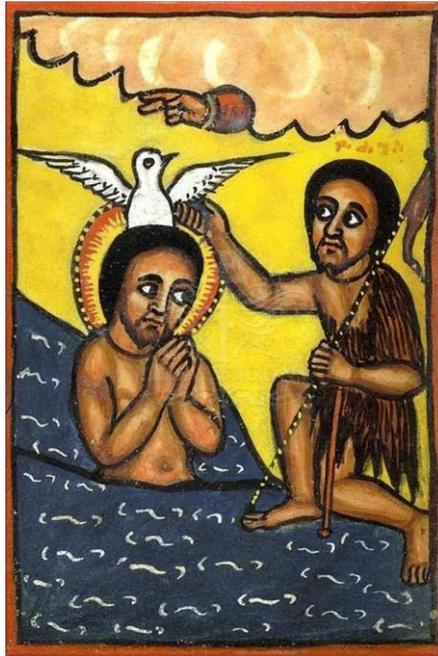
The Creation

¹ In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,
² 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. ³ Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.
⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

The Acts of the Apostles 19:1-7

Paul in Ephesus

¹ While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the inland regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples.
² 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.'
³ Then he said, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They answered, 'Into John's baptism.'
⁴ 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.'
⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
⁶ When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied—
⁷ altogether there were about twelve of them.



The Gospel according to Mark 1:4-11

The Proclamation of John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ 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. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ 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. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Prayers for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A family prayer

Loving God, you know us and all that we are facing.
We thank you that we can come to you as we are – with
all our fears and concerns, our difficulties and challenges.
Please draw close to each of us and those we remember
before you now.
Bring to us your peace and comfort.
And fill us with your Spirit that we may be bearers of your
grace and hope to others.
As a country protect us, encourage us and keep us. In
the name of your Son Jesus, we pray.
Amen.

Scriptural Comfort

'Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand'

(Isaiah 41:10)

'Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

(Philippians 4:6,7)

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.'

(John 3:16)

As we do not know how long this situation will last it is important that we look out for one another.

Please let Revd John know of anyone who is ill or in distress.

***Or if you need prayer or spiritual support,
or are lonely and just need a short chat please phone***

St Martin's is open for public worship as follows:

Sundays 10.00am Family Worship

(a Communion service or Service of the Word)

Wednesdays 9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)

- Please follow the signed instructions on notices.
- Stewards will be there to offer direction.
- There will be a one-way entry and exit system.
- You will need to register your attendance and provide contact details for tracking when you arrive — please bring your own pen to sign in with.
- Please use the hand sanitizer provided.
- Please wear a face covering if you are able.
- If you cannot wear a face covering or have another vulnerability please let a sidesman know, so that you can be directed to a more spacious area
- Please take all your belongings home with you.

Worship from St Martin's continues to be available online:

- A Sunday service on the web site
- Daily prayer on Facebook at 8.15am on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Please let Revd John know of any urgent prayer requests or of people in particular need.

Please note that to accommodate pastoral offices or with any changes to Diocesan or Government guidelines these arrangements are subject to change at any time.

For more information on St Martin's please visit our web site and Facebook page:

www.stmartinchelsfield.org.uk

www.facebook.com/ChelsfieldStMartins

Other links and resources

Daily HOPE is a national, free phoneline from the Church of England on **0800 804 8044**.

The line is available 24 hours a day and offers music, prayers and reflections, as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone.

For today's online Sunday service from the Church of England visit:
www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online

Prayer for the nation:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/call-prayer-nation>

For other Church of England resources please visit:
www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturg-and-prayer-resources

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