

**The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale
Morning Prayer
Sunday 24th January 2021 | Epiphany 3**

Hymn
(requested by Lindsay & Carolyn Gray)

**Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
he whose word cannot be broken
formed thee for his own abode;
on the Rock of Ages founded,
what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
thou may'st smile at all thy foes.**

**See the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters,
and all fear of want remove;
who can faint while such a river
ever flows their thirst t'assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord, the giver,
never fails from age to age.**

**Savior, if of Zion's city
I, thro' grace, a member am,
let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in thy name;
fading is the worldling's pleasure,
all his boasted pomp and show;
solid joys and lasting treasure
none but Zion's children know.**

The Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; 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.

First Reading (Genesis 14. 17-20)

A reading from the book of Genesis.

After Abram's return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, Blessèd be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessèd be God

Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

(Psalm 128)

R/ How abundant is your goodness, O Lord.

Blessed are those who fear the Lord, and walk in his ways. You shall eat the fruit of the toil .of your hands; it shall go well with you, and happy shall you be.**R**

Your wife within your house shall be like a fruitful vine, your children round your table, like fresh olive branches.
R

Thus, shall the one be blest who fears the Lord. The Lord from out of Zion bless you, that you may see Jerusalem in prosperity all the days of your life. May you see your children's children and may there be peace upon Israel. **R**

Second Reading

(Revelation 19, 6-10)

A reading from the book of Revelation.

I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder peals, crying out, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure' – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, Write this: Blessèd are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, These are true words of God.' Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The Gospel

(John 2: 2-11)

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give praise to his name.

God has proclaimed the just reward:

'Life for all men, alleluia!'

Alleluia! Alleluia!...

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Listen to the gospel of Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

**Come, let us praise the living God,
joyfully sing to our Saviour.**

Alleluia! Alleluia!...

The Homily

Fr Martyn

Over the past 10 months we have become used to planning things only to have to change them. This has been true of holidays, with many breaks cancelled or postponed as our lives have gone on hold. It has been a great inconvenience for those who have had to chase organisations for the money already paid to be refunded. In some cases, people are still trying to get their money back, much to their frustration. What is true of holidays is also true of weddings. Weddings these days can be expensive events with large gatherings of people and much money spent. In faiths such as Hinduism, Islam and Judaism there are many hundreds of guests that require feeding. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that such events have been impossible. Sometimes weddings have gone ahead but they have been few and far between and with greatly reduced numbers. I presided a wedding last August in St Peter's and although it wasn't what the bride and groom had planned it was a lovely occasion.

Our Gospel today tells of a Jewish wedding in Cana of Galilee and Mary the mother of Jesus was a guest. As it was no doubt one of those huge weddings, Jesus came along as well. We know the story so well, as told in John's Gospel and it was the first miracle or sign of Jesus. As was

often the case Jesus, took ordinary things and made them extraordinary. Later in his ministry he would transform a few loaves and fishes to feed thousands. The night before he died, he took bread and wine and shared himself with his followers. Bread and wine were changed for all who would become his followers in centuries to come.

At that wedding in Cana Jesus took the water and changed it so that it became wine. As I mentioned earlier hospitality was and still is a hugely important thing at a wedding. It would have been an appalling oversight for the hosts to have run out of wine. Jesus stepped in, although he didn't seem terribly keen at first, but was pushed forward by his mother. She said to those in charge, 'do whatever he tells you'. This is a great message for us today, as we are called to do whatever he tells us or calls us to do. The water became wine and not the cheap stuff on the bottom of the supermarket shelves, but the very best. This is the part that I enjoy; the calculation of just how much water became wine. John's Gospel tells us that there were 6 stone water jars each containing 20 or 30 gallons. I make that between 960 and 1,440 pints of the best quality wine and that was after they had drunk everything else provided at the wedding. I don't believe for a moment that this reading is promoting the excess drinking of alcohol. Rather Jesus is making the point that God gives us in great abundance. God pours his many blessings upon us, giving us freely of the things that we need. Not only does he bless us greatly, but he also gives us the very best that is available.

The message of this Gospel reading echoed Psalm 128 when we read that we are happy if we walk in God's ways and the Lord will bless us. Our second reading from the book of Revelation points ahead to the future. 'The marriage feast of the lamb has come, and the bride has made herself ready'. God blessed his chosen people as we read in the psalms, he blessed those at the wedding in Cana and blesses us today. God prepares a place for us in heaven where Christ is the lamb and the bride in his church.

Throughout this relationship that we have with God, he wants to constantly bless us and give us the very best. God gives us so much that it even goes beyond the very best wine. It goes to the foot of the cross of Calvary and the greatest gift of all. If God loves us so much that he gives us everything, even his life on the cross, what are we called to do in return?

Perhaps that's a good question to leave you with. What can you give the person who has given you everything?

Hymn

**Be still my soul the Lord is on thy side
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain
Leave to thy God to order and provide
In every change He faithful will remain**

**Be still my soul thy best, thy heavenly friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.**

**Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.**

**Be still, my soul, the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.**

The Intercessions

Lord Jesus, you turned water into wine to reveal your glory, transform our lives that we may reveal that glory. With hope of that transformation, we bring our prayers to you this day.

Lord Jesus, you fulfil our desires beyond imagining. Revive and transform your churches within the Benefice, renew and refresh all who minister within the group. We pray especially for June our Bishop and Carin the bishop of Uppsala, within our cycle of prayer with Lagunda Parish we pray for clergy that serve in their parish and our clergy team, may all in ministry be strengthened to reveal your glory in our world.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, when provisions are low you open up a new generosity. Give leaders of nations a renewed vision, that they may work for peace and justice for all people. Teach us to share our riches with those who are in poverty or debt; strength the charities that work to alleviate this suffering.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, you shared in the joy of a wedding. Bless all who are married and those preparing for marriage, for all that are discovering newness of their love for each other. We remember those in difficult marriages, that have problems with debt and job security; those with problems of trust or betrayal. We pray all who seek to support marriage and family life.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, you responded to need wherever you found it. Bring your transforming love to bear on all who feel exhausted or drained in their suffering. We remember all who are ill at this time at home or in hospital..... and any known to us who need our prayers. May your love and healing touch be upon them and all who care for them.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, on the third day you rose for our salvation. Gather to yourself all who have died this week....., remembering also our loved ones departed and all whose anniversaries occur at this time. Comfort those who mourn their passing. Bring us to share with them in the wedding banquet of your Kingdom.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In a moment of silence, we bring our own personal prayers...

**Merciful Father accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

Hymn

(requested by Ann Bryant)

**Lord, for the years
your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.**

**Lord, for that word,
the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.**

**Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and
nation:
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.**

**Lord, for our world
when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.**

**Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.**



Prayers for the sick this week

Elizabeth Thomas
Kath Loughor
Eunice Wood
Catherine Brynach
Margaret Price
Stephen Gray
Brendan
Shirley Gwilliam

Betty Hicks
Colin Bailey
Sophie Sabit
Helen
Kevin Hurst
Orla Elizabeth O'Grady
Lorna Powell

Hymn Requests

If you have any hymn requests for our Zoom worship please send them to one of the clergy team. We will do our best to put requests into our services over the next few weeks.

Bible Study Group

If you would like a link to our Bible Study Group which meets on Wednesdays 6-7pm every 2 weeks starting on 20th of January, please email Rev Angela at angelacooper03@gmail.com.

It is a very friendly informal group and is open to all.

Children's Saturday Club

Just a reminder that we are still running a Children's club on Zoom every Saturday at 10am during term time.

If you would like to join or know a family that might want to join please email Rev Angela at angelacooper03@gmail.com