

# The Benefice of Benenden & Sandhurst

*Our Mission: "To know and love Jesus and make his love known to all"*

## Our Worship: Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January The Baptism of Christ

**Collect:** 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.

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January – The Baptism of Christ

*Readings: Readings: Acts 19.1-7, Mark 1.4-11*

10am

#### ONLINE HOLY COMMUNION

led by Revd Ylva Blid-Mackenzie & Revd David Commander

Link to service here: <https://youtu.be/PUi7zgP62hk>

**Followed by online coffee morning via Zoom:** Link here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3971102878?pwd=UkpkY2R2Z1lXbmJqNUdzdzB2RVZUUT09>

Meeting ID: 397 110 2878 Passcode: 658989

*NB Links to services (also available to watch as recordings) are always detailed on the St George's and St Nicholas church websites, Facebook pages and A Church Near You:*

**Websites:**

<http://www.benendenchurch.org/>

<https://stnicholassandhurst.org/>

**Facebook Pages:**

@StGeorgesBenenden

@StNicholasSandhurst

**A Church Near You:**

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

### THE WEEK AHEAD

*The church is open for private prayer but we regret there is no communal worship for the next few weeks. Sunday services will be available via YouTube at 10am every Sunday (and available to watch afterwards). YouTube service links and links to Zoom coffee mornings will be posted each Saturday evening.*

### Sunday Next: 17<sup>th</sup> January – The Second Sunday of Epiphany

10am

#### ONLINE HOLY COMMUNION

**Readings: Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January**

**Acts 19.1-7**

**Paul in Ephesus**

<sup>19</sup>While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the inland regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. <sup>2</sup>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.' <sup>3</sup>Then he said, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They answered, 'Into John's baptism.' <sup>4</sup>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.' <sup>5</sup>On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied— <sup>7</sup>altogether there were about twelve of them.

**Mark 1.4-11**

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

**The Baptism of Jesus**

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

**Daily Scripture and Reflection is posted on our church websites  
and Facebook pages every day of the week.**

**PLEASE ALSO KEEP AN EYE ON THESE WEBSITES AND FACEBOOK PAGES FOR THE LATEST  
INFORMATION REGARDING OUR CHURCH SERVICES**

**Websites:** <http://www.benendenchurch.org/>  
<https://stnicholassandhurst.org/>

**Facebook Pages:** @StGeorgesBenenden @StNicholasSandhurst

**A Church Near You:** <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

## **Covid Update: Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January**

### **Our churches remain open for individual private prayer; but communal worship will move on-line.**

The Prime Minister made an announcement on the 4<sup>th</sup> January regarding England going into lockdown until at least mid-February but, surprisingly, places of worship being able to stay open for public worship as well as individual private prayer.

I have been in discussion with the Churchwardens of both parishes about this, and we - regrettably - have significant reservations about remaining open for public worship with the new, virulent strain of the Covid virus; these are as follows:

- The majority of our congregations are in a vulnerable category either through age or because of other underlying health conditions
- We are close to receiving the vaccine (probably over the course of the next 2-3 months)
- We have a duty of care for our congregations, for those "on duty" at services, for our parishioners, for our families and for ourselves
- The Ministry Leadership Team have reservations, for personal reasons, about their availability to lead/preach at live services; we therefore have a much depleted team to call upon
- We feel it is more sensible to reduce the risks for everyone by having on-line services rather than live public worship.

These reservations have been put to the two Standing Committees who have agreed, with heavy hearts, that with immediate effect we suspend public worship in the three churches in the benefice until the lockdown it ended. (We will review this mid-February; with the *possibility* of commencing public worship again from the end of February.) Bishop Rose and Archdeacon Andrew have been informed of this decision.

However:

- We will record a service and make it available, on-line, every Sunday morning (and reintroduce the time of fellowship, with coffee, on Zoom after the service)
- The parish churches remain open for individual private prayer seven days a week
- St. George's church will be heated for two one-hour periods every day (10-11am and 2-3pm) so that the church is more comfortable if people wish to make use of the space for private prayer. Revd Ylva and I will diary some of our time to be at St. George's Church and at the Mission Church if you wish to meet and talk

As this situation is going on far longer than any of us had imaged:

- We will look at arranging a form of on-line, weekly Bible Study; a sort of "on-line Home Group". This will be available, on Zoom, to anyone who wishes to join in for Christian fellowship in this way. Watch this space!
- We will also review and update the on-line resources that are available on the church websites.

I know this will be of considerable disappointment to some. We are not taking this action lightly. Please remember that there will also be others who hold passionately to the view, "It's about time services in church stopped!" The virus is serious; the country is in lockdown to try and break the spread of the virus. We need, as the local church, to be part of helping with that break so that – along with the vaccine – we can all get back to a more normal life sooner rather than later.

Please continue to look after yourself. If you want to talk, please pick up the phone and call.  
God bless. Revd David

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