

St. Mary's Church Cubbington



Sunday 27th June
4th Sunday after Trinity

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Dear Friends

Greetings once again from the vicarage.

I hope that you are all keeping well and able to get out and about whilst keeping safe and living within the guidelines. Isn't it strange how quickly things you would never have thought of doing before the pandemic, (like wearing a mask, standing back and giving people a little more space) after a while become so natural that you don't even think about it. I must admit, even though I watch the news each day, I'm still confused by where exactly we are with regards to what we can and can't do.

Sam's parents celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary last week. They received a beautiful card from the Queen with special instructions on the outer envelope insisting that it had to be delivered on the exact day between certain times and if not delivered, must be returned immediately to Buckingham Palace.

Well, I suppose as it is the **Royal** Mail, so they can be quite specific. Sam and her two sisters have organised an Afternoon Tea for the immediate family in a local Village Hall this weekend...That was of course when we anticipated that we would be out of lockdown. Now, because there are more family members than the allocated number of households, we are going to have to sit outside in the car park of the venue to celebrate the anniversary, so let's hope it's not raining, especially as we also have a wedding in church!

This week I've made a change to the normal Sunday lectionary readings because it meant that I would be covering the same passages as we had a couple of weeks ago. When we are having a Book of Common Prayer service in church, I use the Prayer Book lectionary as opposed to the Common Worship

lectionary and very occasionally the two lectionaries have the same readings. Last Thursday the church celebrated the birth of John the Baptist, the readings are from the prophet **Isaiah chapter 40 verses 1 – 11** and **Luke chapter 1 verses 57 – 60 and verse 80.**

John the Baptist, baptised people including Jesus, the clue is in his name. He wore a camel skin coat and ate locusts and wild honey. It reminded me of some religious plays the children were part of when they were young. Some years ago, Sam had a rather unusual looking hairy jacket. After she had finished with it, I took it for the young people who were cast as the 'young' John the Baptist costume. It has now been used several times in school as well as in church.



From that small amount of detail, we draw a certain picture of the man. He might have been chosen by God for a mission but why did he choose to dress so scruffily and eat such food? Especially when other Jewish spiritual leaders dressed with such elegance and extravagance and chose to eat the very best rich food.

We only have to look around us today to see what people choose to wear. What suits one person another wouldn't dream of being seen in. Fashion isn't a modern concept and we as individuals have the choice to wear whatever we like.

A few weeks ago, we had some old photograph albums out. Some of what I was wearing when I was very young was not too bad, but other items of clothing were at the very least

laughable, especially when our children saw them! I bet if you were to look back at the sort of fashions you have worn over the years, you too would be quite surprised if not horrified by some fashion choices.. or maybe not! Strangely, many 'fashions' tend to repeat themselves every so many years apparently.....that is what Sam tells me anyway. I am sure the real reason is that she just hates throwing anything out.

There is always the possibility that John may have been a first century trend setter, starting a new range in clothing, or he may have found the clothes suitable for his surroundings and comfortable to wear.

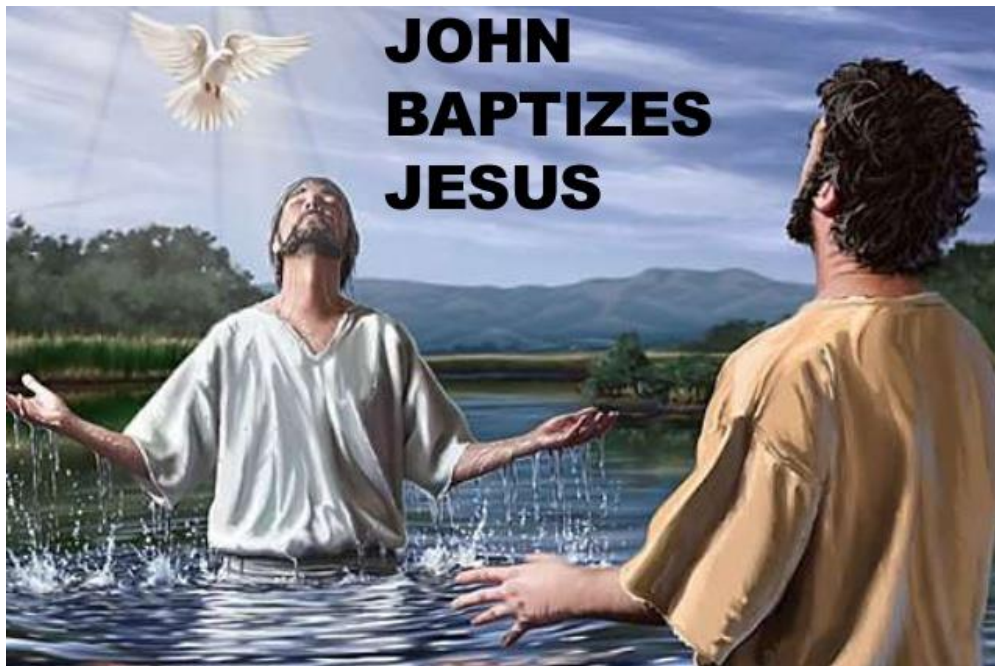
But there must be more to such an important person than clothing and food. As we read in our gospel passage it begins with his birth. Born to an elderly couple who were unable to have children, he was a true 'miracle baby'. John's father Zechariah was a priest, and it was whilst he was working in the temple that he was visited by the angel Gabriel and told that John's birth would precede the birth of Jesus in order that he could 'prepare the way'.

John was brave and innovative; he began baptising people who repented for their sins, an idea which he adapted from the Jewish practice of ritual bathing to purify oneself before worship.

In contrast with the existing prophets of the day, John was a real living, breathing prophet whose words and actions rang true matching up with the old-time religion when prophets called Israel to repent of their sins. In addition, the people loved him which is confirmed in both the bible and in ancient Roman history.

Historically, we see from our passage from Isaiah that he is prophesying the life and events of John the Baptist some 700 years before the event. With the familiar words "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make

straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3)
Malachi also writes a very similar prophesy.



It is obvious that God chose John to be the one to prepare the way for Jesus. With the limited amount of information that we have of John, we can only imagine the sort of person he actually was. The fact that he decided to baptise people, (something that we continue to do today in every church in the land) tells us he was very close to God and fully prepared to listen to Him and follow His lead. What would it take for you or me to be that close to God and to be able to walk in John's sandals, (if he ever wore them!)



St. Mary's Font

God Bless.

Revd. Graham

Sunday 27th June
Our readings are

Isaiah chapter 40 verses 1 – 11



Comfort for God's People

40 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

⁵And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

⁶A voice says, 'Cry out.' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' 'All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of field.

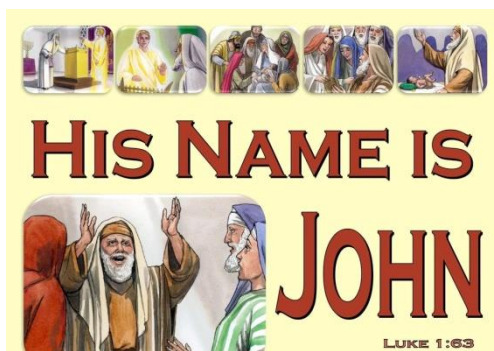
⁷The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.'

⁹You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God!'

¹⁰See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

¹¹He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.



Gospel Reading

Luke chapter 1 verses 57 – 60
and verse 80.

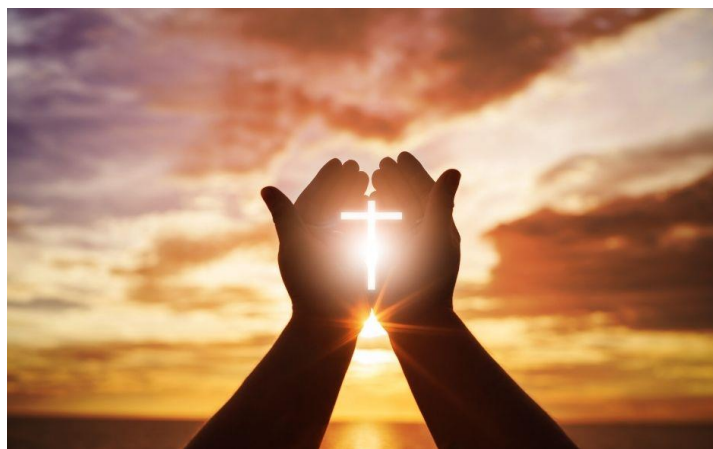
The Birth of John the Baptist

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.

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### **Collect**

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,  
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:  
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;  
that with you as our ruler and guide  
we may so pass through things temporal  
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;  
grant this, heavenly Father,  
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**Trinity 4  
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June**



**Altar Flowers and  
Church Flowers**

Yvonne and Alan **SMITH**  
In memory of Stan **ANTHONY**,  
In memory of Jeff **MARSHALL**

and in celebration of the marriage of  
Ian **TINGLING** and Helen **WALDRAM**

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Service Today 27th June

Invitation only
10.00am: All Age Service

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**Service for  
Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July**

Invitation only  
**10.00am: Common Worship  
Holy Communion**

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This coming Week



Wednesday 30th June

Many Congratulations to
Peter and Pat FLETCHER

Who celebrate their Platinum Wedding Anniversary.

Friday 2nd July

1.00pm: Interment of ashes for the
late John **BLACKMORE**

Saturday 3rd July

11.30am: Interment of ashes for the
late Peter **NEALE**