



St Leonard's Church

First Sunday in Lent

21st February 2021

"To be a Christian presence in the community, embodying God's love in all we say and do."

Revd Sue Burchell 01295 271008

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Today's Readings:

New Testament: *Genesis 9:8-17*

God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

Gospel: *Mark 1:9-15*

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

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Thought for the Week from



In the Gospel reading today, we hear how Jesus truly realised who he was. Jesus is baptized by John, just like the others who came to John at the River Jordan. But, as he comes up from the water, Jesus hears a voice, God's voice, saying to him, 'You are my beloved Son'. Jesus then – 'immediately' Mark says – goes into the wilderness where he can explore what that means for him. We sometimes focus very quickly on the three temptations. Mark doesn't even mention them in detail. He says only that he was tempted, while he spent 40 days among the wild animals. And 'angels waited on him'. In the Bible, angels are a way of talking about the presence of God. God was with him.

What's truly amazing is that God loves us all like that! We too are God's beloved and valued sons and daughters. When we are in the wilderness – whatever that means, and whatever that feels like, in our lives – angels wait on us. God is with us. As we begin this year's Lent, think about what it means that you are God's much-loved child.

During the national lockdown, St Leonard's will be open on Sunday mornings only (except for special services).

This week:

Wednesday 10am Morning Prayer via Zoom
Saturday 10am Morning Prayer via Zoom
Sunday 10am Eucharist in church and via Zoom
11am to 12 noon Church open for individual private prayer

Grimsbury Community:

Last year, Cherwell District Council (CDC) organised a New Year Wishes event at Burchester Place Community Hall. This year it's not possible to hold an event, but CDC would like to hear of any wishes or aspirations for the community of Grimsbury. Please let Revd Sue know of any ideas, by 3rd March.

Lent 2021

The Diocese of Oxford has launched a Lent study based on the Creed, called *Come and See*, which we will be using in church during Lent.



On Sundays in Lent, we will watch a video of Bishop Steven speaking about different statements in the Creed. Information sheets will be emailed/given out each week with the newsletter to facilitate reflection on the video at home, in your own time.

You are encouraged to sign up to *Come and See* on the diocesan website <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see/> to receive daily emails during Lent and access to the videos at any time.

If anyone would like to meet as a small group via Zoom to discuss the material each week, please let Revd Sue know, and a mutually convenient time will be agreed.

An alternative (or additional) Lent study is offered as follows:

Banbury Christians Together Zoom Lent Study 2021

You are invited to join the **BIG CHURCH READ (BCR) 2021 Lent Study on Zoom** using the Archbishop of Canterbury's recommended Lent Book "*Living His Story*" by Hannah Steele.

Details of the book and study are available on the BCR website <https://thebigchurchread.co.uk/living-his-story/>

The study runs for 6 weeks from 16/17 Feb to 23/24 March and is **open to everyone**, please invite family and friends if you wish.

Two groups/days/times are available:

Group A: Tuesdays 2.00pm to 4pm or Group B Wednesdays 10am to 12noon

To register your interest for this BCT Lent Study please email David Robinson at davidt29.robinson@gmail.com and specify your preferred group whereupon Zoom details will be supplied nearer the starting dates.