

Dear Friends

Welcome to 2018! A new year is a very special thing, isn't it? It's unspoiled, full of possibilities. Perhaps the excesses of Christmas have inspired us to eat more healthily, do more exercise, or get the household finances back in order. And these are usually good things, as far as they go.

The message of Jesus is also one of new starts, of the incredibly generous and undeserved gift of forgiveness, of being treated as righteous by God rather than the failures we often are. When God forgives us, although he knows everything we have ever thought, said or done, he treats us as completely blank sheets, unspoiled and full of possibilities. And he continues to treat us that way, however often we muck things up again! A New Year's resolution comes round only once a year, but God's offer of forgiveness is available every minute of every day.

But while the world in which we live and work has only just moved into the new year, the Church's year ticked over five weeks ago, at the start of Advent. Because our message is not primarily about us, about who we are and what we can be. It all begins with God, with who God is, and what he has done for us. It begins with his offer, made first of all in a baby in Bethlehem, to do all it took to put things right for us, whether we accept it or not. And it ends, not with us being the best we can be, but with the world praising God for who he is.

At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2.10-11)

So, as Jill reminded us last Sunday, let's not be in too great a hurry to rush on from Christmas, because it is there, by that lowly manger, that we find our own true meaning.

With blessings

Matt

January Worship

Morning Prayer takes place at 9 am on Mondays Tuesdays, and Thursdays at St Mark's Church
Holy Communion takes place on Wednesdays 9.30 am at St Andrew's Church

Sunday 7 January Epiphany

"The Good News is for all nations"
Isa 60.1-6; Matt 2.1-12

9.00 am Breakfast@9 (St Andrew's)
10.30 am Holy Communion (St Andrew's)
9.00 am Holy Communion (St Mark's)
10.00 am Together@10 (St Mark's)
6.00 pm Prayer Meeting (St Mark's)

Sunday 14 January Epiphany 1

"What does it mean to hear God calling us?"
1 Sam 3.1-10; John 1.43-51

9.00 am Breakfast@9 (St Andrew's)
10.30 am Holy Communion (St Andrew's)
9.00 am Holy Communion (St Mark's)
10.00 am Together@10 (St Mark's)

Sunday 21 January Epiphany 3

"At a feast with Jesus"
Rev 19.6-10; John 2.1-11

9.00 am Breakfast@9 (St Andrew's)
10.30 am Holy Communion (St Andrew's)
10.30 am Morning Worship (St Mark's)
4.00 pm Confirmation Service (St Mark's)

Sunday 28 January Epiphany 4

"The authority of Jesus over all nations
including demons"
Psalm 111; Mark 1.21-28

9.00 am Breakfast@9 (St Andrew's)
10.30 am Holy Communion (St Andrew's)
10.30 am Holy Communion (St Mark's)