

The week beginning 3rd SUNDAY in ADVENT: 11th – 17th December 2022

Greetings from Eileen

Dear Friends,

It's been a special week. Thank you for your prayers, and for your presence in St Mary's Church, Staindrop if you were at the Licensing and Installation Service last Sunday. Many in Gainford and Winston have mixed emotions, which I also share of concerns as well as hope.



All 4 parishes and churches share areas of our diocese areas of emphases to assure the Church's future. These have been discerned through prayer and faithful consideration of God's purposes for us.

We are invited to:

1. **Grow the Church** – to live by faith following in the ways of Christ, being unafraid to share our faith so that many would be attracted to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Challenge Poverty** – to be aware of poverty in all aspects, looking around us and beyond our personal situations to address poverty of body, mind, and spirit, and to challenge injustices that cause and exacerbate poverty.
3. **Engage with Children, Youth, and Young People** – to intentionally and diligently reach out to the younger generations, engaging with them to offset the voices and noises of their everyday experience that excludes God, and create opportunities for them to know Jesus as their personal friend, Lord, and Saviour.
4. **Care for God's Creation** – to take up God's call to restore creation, to live in ways that bless and not corrupt or destroy God's gifts in creation, and to encourage our communities to value our environment and the natural beauty around us.

We are 'a whole people of God'. I have responded to the call of Jesus The Good Shepherd to be a shepherd in our parishes, and I am grateful for the gift of many who also follow Jesus as shepherds of our people. But not all shepherds are Ordained Priests; you know this in your experience. Some have tended the pasture; some have made good the structures that keep the flock safe; others have kept watch over the flock and helped to nurture new and young members of the flock.

We have begun a new season in which God is calling you as well as me to renew and refresh our pasture and flock, and to encourage and nurture new members. God will reveal how we do this. **Please join personally in prayer to ask God what part you may have in this new season.**



On the next page are many things for prayer this week: Debs Coggrave's mission trip to Bolivia; Winston's Advent Reflections; Gainford's Warm & Welcome; Schools' Christmas/Christingle Services; Churches Together Advent Study; and many parishioners who need our particular prayer.

This Sunday 11th December: Rev'd Canon Dr Chris Knights, Bishop's Chaplain is presiding

9.30am St Andrew's, Winston – Holy Communion

10.45am St Mary's, Gainford – Holy Communion

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting.

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop



NOTICES:

Have you seen Winston's residents' Advent Calendar around the village? You can **listen to Bible readings and Reflections** from the children of Staindrop CofE Primary School and from Simon Edens, our Ordinand in Training from Cranmer Hall placed in our parishes:

<http://www.gainfordwinston.church/advent>

There's a QR code at each of our Advent Calendar locations so that everyone walking the trail can scan it to access Carols and seasonal music as well the readings and reflections.

- ❖ **Debs Coggrave, President of the Methodist Women in Britain for the North East, and parishioner of St Andrew's, Winston is on a mission trip (12th – 20th December) to Bolivia:** Please pray for her. She's recovering from a bout of cough and will have quite a journey to La Paz. We thank God for her courageous and faithful ministry, and ask for his protection, journey mercies, and blessing on her and all her mission touches.
- ❖ **Warm & Welcome needs your feedback and suggestions!** The next taster session is this Friday 16th December 10-12 noon in Gainford Village Hall. Wendy Broderick and Geoff Taylor, our leader and our churchwarden involved in this new endeavour would appreciate hearing your ideas and suggestions: Please email them on warmandwelcomegainford@gmail.com You're very welcome to the taster session.
- ❖ **Churches Together in Gainford's 2nd Advent Study Evening continues on Thursday 15th December 7pm in the Village Hall.** Come to reflect on the remaining Nine Lessons with Cressida Heath. Follow the Christmas story and go deeper into understanding of God's coming into the world.
- ❖ **CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE:** As the violent invasion of Ukraine continues, more will be homeless this Christmas. With winter's cold and dark nights extending, their resilience is tested beyond our comprehension. Those who have kept close to the situation in Ukraine have asked for our continued prayer and help. [This is a link to the video they have invited us to watch: The Refugee King](#). And here is a link for donations: <https://welcomechurches.org/giftofawelcome>
- ❖ **Gainford CofE Primary School's CHRISTINGLE service takes place at 2.15pm, Monday 19th December** in St Mary's, Gainford. I shall also be in Ingleton St John the Evangelist Church for Ingleton CofE Primary School's Christmas Service on Thursday 15th December 11am.
- ❖ **Please PRAY FOR PARISHIONERS WHO ARE RECOVERING FROM SURGERY especially Winston's St Andrew's parishioners John, Patrick, and Linda.** If you know of anyone who would need special prayer do get in touch with our churchwardens or me. Thank you.

A Prayer for all seasons:

Give us a boldness in our faith, Lord;
not an arrogance, nor a boastfulness,
but a confidence and an assurance in your love,
that shines through all we are, all we say, and
all we do.

May our lives reveal a glimpse of you
and your kingdom,
to each person we encounter.
Amen

Collect for 3rd SUNDAY in ADVENT

God for whom we watch and wait,
 you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way
 of your Son:
 give us courage to speak the truth,
 to hunger for justice,
 and to suffer for the cause of right,
 with Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
 the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
 like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly,
 and rejoice with joy and singing.
 The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
 the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
 They shall see the glory of the Lord,
 the majesty of our God.
³ Strengthen the weak hands,
 and make firm the feeble knees.
⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
 'Be strong, do not fear!
 Here is your God.
 He will come with vengeance,
 with terrible recompense.
 He will come and save you.'
⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
 and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
 and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:2-11

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him,
 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' ⁴ Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell
 John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the
 deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone
 who takes no offence at me.'

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the
 wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed
 in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What then did you go out to see?
 A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,
 "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
 who will prepare your way before you."

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the
 least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Post Communion Prayer

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly
 gifts;
 kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
 that when your Christ comes again
 we may shine as lights before his face;
 who is alive and reigns now and for ever.
 Amen

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
 and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool,
 and the thirsty ground springs of water;
 the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
 the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
⁸ A highway shall be there,
 and it shall be called the Holy Way;
 the unclean shall not travel on it,
 but it shall be for God's people;
 no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
⁹ No lion shall be there,
 nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
 they shall not be found there,
 but the redeemed shall walk there.
¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
 and come to Zion with singing;
 everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
 they shall obtain joy and gladness,
 and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.