

Draft Pastoral Scheme

The Bishop of Bristol has asked the Church Commissioners to prepare a draft Pastoral Scheme in respect of pastoral proposals affecting the following benefices.

Benefices of Saint Paul, Chippenham with Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell; Kington Saint Michael; Colerne with North Wraxall; Box with Hazelbury and Ditteridge; and By Brook.

Full details of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Diocese of Bristol can be found on the Hardenhuish Church website www.harnish.org.uk

Prayer and Share

You are welcome to join us every Tuesday morning at 9.30am at St. Nicholas church. A quiet space and a time for praying and sharing together.

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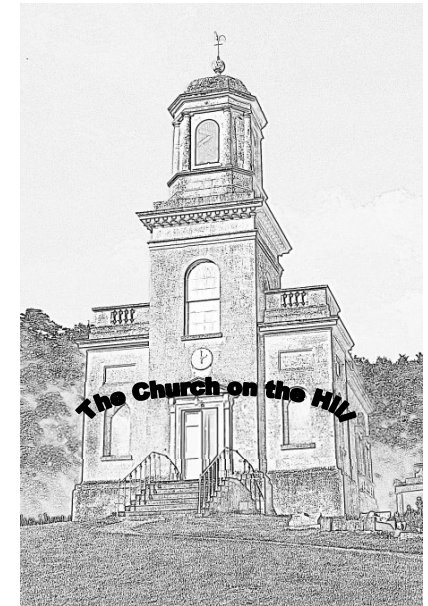
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St. Nicholas News January 2022

The Rt Rev Maurice Wood (1916-2007)

Bishop Maurice Wood prayer seems appropriate for Hardenhuish:

“Make us like a city set on a hill whose light cannot be hidden; so that men and women and children may find Christ as the light of the world, and his church as the family of the redeemed, and eternal life as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord”



Sunday	9th January	3.00pm for 3.30	Afternoon Praise with Communion
Sunday	16th January	3.00pm for 3.30	Afternoon Praise
Sunday	23rd January	3.00pm for 3.30	Afternoon Praise
Sunday	30th January	3.00pm for 3.30	Afternoon Sing Praise

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Mark 1: 14-20 “Follow Me”

All through our lives we tend to follow people. As children we follow our parents, as teenagers we may have followed pop stars or sporting heroes. As we get older we may follow friends or those who care for us.

Jesus said “Follow me”

One day, as he was walking along the lake shore, he saw Simon and Andrew, hardworking ordinary fishermen casting their nets into the lake. “Come with me” he says “I will teach you how to catch people”

At once, they left their nets and followed him.

No time to think or consider. They left everything and followed.

Further down on the lake, James and John, sons of Zebedee were in the boat mending their nets, when Jesus called again “Follow me”. They left their father in the boat and followed. This was probably a family who had fished for generations. What would happen now if the fishing didn’t continue?

How would the family manage?

We don’t seem to have answers to these questions, the fishermen just followed.

Today there are many people who do the same. They hear God calling them, perhaps to be missionaries, teachers, doctors, volunteer workers.

Sometimes they leave all and follow.

Their work may take them to other countries, or into dangerous situations.

The call can be loud and clear, at other times it may be a gentle nudge in a certain direction.

God may not have called us to be missionaries in far off lands, but he does still call us to follow him today as we journey on together.

Jesus said “The kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in his good news. The good news that God loved us so much that He sent His only Son into the world and that everyone who believes in him, should not perish but have everlasting life”

We need to come near to Jesus and learn to follow.

We can follow him in prayer, simply asking him to be part of our lives, seeking his forgiveness and committing ourselves to him.

We can follow him in worship, praising his holy name.

We can follow him in scripture, daily readings to guide us along the way to keep us on the right track.

Jesus calls us, whoever we are, He is not interested in status, but a willing and sincere heart.

“Follow me” are good words to start the new year and we couldn’t do anything better than follow Jesus.

Here are a few verses from psalm 62:

“For God alone, my soul waits for silence, for my hope is from him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress: I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my deliverance and my honour; my mighty rock, my refuge is in him.

Trust in him at all times, O people. Pour out your heart before him.

God is a refuge for us”

Whatever this year brings, good or bad, let us keep our eyes on Jesus, let us continue to follow him and not stray from the path. He is our rock and our refuge, the lamp to our feet and the light to our path.

Amen

Blessings Judith

“Uncertainty and loss of control is also the world into which Jesus was born” – Bishop Viv’s Christmas message

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, the Rt Revd Vivienne Faull, Bishop of Bristol, gave her Christmas message live on BBC Radio Bristol and BBC Radio Wiltshire. You can read it below.

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.”

Those are words of a Middle Eastern performance poet to his community. He continued: "Those who lived in the land of the shadow of death on them light has shined."

Those are words which are familiar from carol services, and the glow of candlelight and lovely singing. But these words were first heard by the people of a small nation continually squeezed by great powers. And these people were being told that rather than make an alliance with neighbours they should remember God's covenant with them that even when the darkness got deeper and deeper and they were under great threat. Even when that threat meant they would be enslaved and taken into exile. Even in the worst events, the light would not be snuffed out. The people who lived in the valley of the shadow of death on them light has shined.

Perhaps that fits where we are this Christmas. After last year's isolation and separation and the ongoing threat of death, the vaccines and the summer brought us some normality. But now in mid-winter 2021 we again face renewed uncertainty and the loss of control which has become the new normal.

But that is the world of the prophet Isaiah who affirmed the certainty of the light shining out.

That uncertainty and loss of control is also the world into which Jesus was born. A world of military occupation, of imperial control, of endemic disease, of sky-high infant mortality rates and a baby born in an outhouse. A world where the ones who saw the light shining were not those comfortable at home, nor faithful Israelites in the temple but those working through the night and living on the margins, and pagan foreigners travelling to find the truth they could live by. And by Joseph and Mary, a distinctly odd couple.

That is the message of Christmas. Jesus was born into the messiness and risk of the world not so we could escape into sentimentality or the perfection of the advertisers, but so that we can dig deep in darkest times, stick it out when we are face to face with darkness and in the shadow of death and, right there, see the first glimmer of light.

So that even when we feel we have lost the Christmas we longed for so much we discover to our surprise that we have found an even deeper comfort and joy. May God bless you with light of Christ shining in the darkness and keep you safe these pandemic days and always.