

March Team St John, St Mary, St Peter, St Wendreda

2nd Sunday of Advent 7th December 2025

Team Rector: Rev Andrew Smith 01354 572117

andrew.marchurch@gmail.com

Church Services

St Peter's Sundays 8am & 11am; Wednesdays 10am

St Mary's Sundays 9.15am; St Wendreda's Sundays 11am

St John's Sundays 9.30am; Tuesdays 10am

Meditation

'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' So we are told that this is the strap line of John the Baptist's message. And, we are told that many come out to see and hear him, and were baptized by him in the River Jordan *"confessing their sins"*.

It is probably true that we make a strong association between the call to repentance and the confession of our sins. At every communion service, and at most other services there will be a section of the service where we are invited to make our confession. We use a variety of forms of words in our confessions in our churches throughout the various seasons; I think we notice the words more when they change them, but the different confession prayers do have different flavours and emphases as well as a common agenda.

Many of our services place the confession early on in our service. This is a clearing out of the junk in our lives so we can focus on God. This is acknowledging that we come to worship with the baggage of the last hours, days or weeks. We want to start afresh, and we want to move things forward, so we acknowledge our failures and shortcomings. However, traditional Anglican services tended to put the confession much later in the service – after the gospel reading, after the sermon. This gives a different message; rather than feeling the need to clean up ourselves before we encounter God, we recognise that in the light of Christ we have things to admit to, and a desire to do better in the future. Of course, there is a historical reason why the reformers (including Thomas Cranmer who compiled the Book of Common Prayer) chose to alter where the confession was placed. The practice then, as it was for many Roman Catholics until quite recently, was that people would go for individual confession to a priest shortly before coming to Mass. The reformers wished to remove any sense that we needed an intermediary in order to be forgiven and to emphasise our direct personal relationship with

God. So, they played down or abolished private confession and encouraged corporate confession, and that it was the very relationship with Christ which invited us, as a response, to confess our sins.

At this point, may I draw to your attention that virtually all of our confessions are phrased as "We" not "I". When we confess, we are both acknowledging our own mistakes, selfishness and wrongdoing, but we are also acknowledging we are part of structures that do not value and build up the humanity of others. Sin is always both personal and structural. In various ways our variety of confessions do invite us to consider the things we have deliberately or even maliciously done; the things we have turned a blind eye to or passed by on the other side; and those through negligence or carelessness. This is not to downgrade or find excuses for sins, still less to create a hierarchy of wrongs, but assist us not to fall into self-delusion.

It is probably also true that the older confessions feel more severe; emphasising our own inadequacy and unworthiness. This does then also magnify God's great generosity and mercy in his forgiving, redeeming and restoring us. Hopefully, this huge gift means that we then respond with greater seriousness and commitment. Sometimes, within the text of confessions, and sometimes in the words of introduction to confession, we are reminded of God's merciful, loving and generous nature. Confession is, or should be, always focussed on making things better, of living Christ's risen life, of knowing that light has come into the world, of knowing that God remains with us. God does not wish to cast us out, but rather, with timeless patience, desires to live with him in companionship.

But back to John the Baptist; his call to "Repent" certainly lead to many "confessing their sins" but he was also meaning more. Remember, we have this account of John's message and ministry taking place both before Jesus started his ministry and before the church existed. John's baptism is not the Church's baptism. Rather it was challenging John's Jewish hearers to start afresh – almost insultingly, to act as if they needed to join the people of God. That their birth, their lineage from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon, did not make them part of God's people - Israel. They had to undergo the humiliation of rites inflicted on non-Jews who wished to be included in God's chosen people Israel. "Repent" was more about a change of direction, a change of priorities, and a new start and quite a revolution.

We talk about "confession of sins" but we also talk about "confessions of faith." Repentance is about turning to face a new direction, and that new direction is articulated by our confessions of faith. So, I leave you with the

third of our great creeds, the one we are using in our advent worship, and invite you to turn towards it in heart, mind, soul and strength.

We proclaim the Church's faith in Jesus Christ. We believe and declare that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both divine and human. God, of the being of the Father, the only Son from before time began; human from the being of his mother, born in the world; fully God and fully human; human in both mind and body. As God he is equal to the Father, as human he is less than the Father. Although he is both divine and human, he is not two beings but one Christ. One, not by turning God into flesh, but by taking humanity into God; truly one, not by mixing humanity with Godhead, but by being one person. For as mind and body form one human being so the one Christ is both divine and human. The Word became flesh and lived among us; we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Prayers

Our Lord says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Even so come Lord Jesus !

O Wisdom, Breath of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation; come and make us friends of God. Come Lord Jesus !

O Lord of lords and Leader of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him your law on Sinai, come and save us with your mighty arm. Come Lord Jesus !

O Root of Jesse, standing as a signal to the nations, before you all kings are silent, to you nations will give homage; come and save us, delay no longer. Come Lord Jesus !

O Key of David, and ruler of the house of Israel, when you open no one can close, when you close no one can open; come and proclaim liberty to the captives and set free the oppressed. Come Lord Jesus !

O Rising Sun, Splendour of eternal light and Sun of justice, come and give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death. Come Lord Jesus!

O King of the nations, the Ruler they long for, the Cornerstone binding all together; come and save the people you fashioned from the dust of the earth. Come Lord Jesus !

O Emmanuel, our King and our Lawgiver, the anointed of the nations and their Saviour; come and save us, O Lord our God. Come Lord Jesus !

The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come!' Come Lord Jesus !

Lord you are the one who is to come. Come Lord Jesus !

Come, O Lord, do not delay; give new courage to your people who trust in your love. By your coming, raise us to the joy of your kingdom, where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

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

NEXT WEEKEND

St Peter's Christmas Tree Festival

Friday 12th – Sunday 14th December

Refreshments and Trees

Open Fri 12th 12noon-8pm,

with Mulled wine and music Friday 6-8pm

Sat 13th 9.30am-5pm Sun 14th 12noon-3pm

ends with **CHRISTINGLE** Sunday 14th 3pm

All Welcome

HELP assembling **CHRISTINGLES** Sat 9am please

Individuals or Organisation invited to enter a tree

and sign up to help please in the many ways needed

Donations for Contents of Hampers welcomed

St Mary's Coffee Morning *All Welcome*

Saturday 20th December at Roger's 10am-12noon

NEXT Sunday 14th December 4.30pm St John's

G&S concert

All Welcome

Thanks for the First Thursday *Christmas Meal*

St John's Church Activities

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

9.15-11.15 St John's Tots;

Tuesday

10am Midweek Communion Service

Study Group 11-12 Next Jan 13th

Study Group 7pm-8.30pm; Film The Chosen

Wednesdays Community Hub in Hall 12-2

Thursday 1st Thursday Social Group (see above)

Friday Choir Practice in Church

Next Christian Aid Lunch is on Wednesday 10th

December 2025 at 12 noon at St Peter's Hall.

Regular Church Activities at St Peter's

Tuesday

10am-12noon Knit and Natter;

1st St Peter's MU 2.30-4pm 3rd Deanery MU

Wednesday

10am Midweek Communion Service

1st Study Group 7.30-9pm Next Jan 7th

THIS WEEK 2nd Wed Christian Aid Lunch Hall 12-1pm

Thanks to all who supported

St John's Christmas Fair

CAROL SERVICES

Sunday 21st December

3pm St Mary's 4.30pm St John's

6.30pm St Peter's

Carol & Christmas Services; Readers—see lists.

CHRISTMAS EVE Wed 24th December

10am St Peter's; Holy Communion

1-3pm St John's; Messy Church Nativity

4pm St Peter's; Crib and Carol Service

9pm St John's; Midnight in Bethlehem! Communion

11.30pm St Peter's; Midnight Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY Thurs 25th December

Communion Services at usual Sunday times

8am St Peter's 11am St Peter's

9.15am St Mary's 9.30am St John's

2nd Sunday Advent 7th December

**Welcome to St John the Evangelist,
St Peter & St Mary Churches
in the March Team**

Regular Sunday Services

St John 9.30am Sung Communion

TODAY First Sunday of each Month

9.30am Wholeness Service with Laying on of Hands

Next MESSY CHURCH Christmas Eve 1-3pm

St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion

St Peter 8am Holy Communion

11am Sung Communion

*Last Sunday **Sunday Club 11am***

TUESDAY St John's; 10am Holy Communion

WEDNESDAY St Peter's; 10am Holy Communion

Zoom services

Sunday 5.15pm Team Service

Thursday 8.30am Morning Prayer

Team Rector: Rev Andrew Smith 01354 572117

andrew.marchurch@gmail.com

All enquiries about Weddings Baptisms etc to Andrew

Baptisms; 12.30 St Peter; 2pm or later St John St Mary

Team Leader in Mission Ruth Clay 07905950849

RevRuth.marchchurches@outlook.com

Clergy; Jane Rees 463284, Anthony Chandler 652894,

Jenny Webb 650855, Mother Jane Dicker 661099

Readers; Hannah Taylor 661712, Stewart Piper

FUNERALS

Tues 16th 2.30pm Fenland; Michael Darling

Wed 17th 12.30pm Fenland; Betty Hart

Fri 19th 10.15am St Peter's; Audrey Batterbee

Mon 22nd 11.30am St Peter's; Michelle Cooper

Fri 9th Jan 11am St Wendreda; Ted Thomas

Next Week, December 14th, Advent 3

Isaiah 35 v1-15, Matthew 11 v2-11

3pm Christingle at St Peter's

Thanks to the Choir and those who supported the

Advent Carol Service. **NEXT Choral Evensong**

for Epiphany, Sunday 11th January 4pm St John's

Today St Mary's Christmas Lunch 1pm

Sunday 7th December 1pm in the Parish Room

Every day in Advent 5.15pm; short service of

Compline on zoom. Please contact Rev Jane for link

Christmas Edition of WINDOWS Magazine

is now available. Thanks to Allan and contributors.

If anyone is interested in **CONFIRMATION**

please let Andrew know.

Sunday 19th April 4pm at St Peter's

ADVENT WREATH SONG

O, one for all God's people

In every age and day,

We are watching for his coming

We believe and we obey.

And, two is for the prophets

And for the light they bring

They are candles on the darkness

All alight for Christ the King

The holly and the ivy

Are dancing in a ring,

Round the advent purple candles

And the white and shining King.

Minister: People of God; be glad

All: **Your God delights in you, giving you joy
for sadness and turning the dark to light.**

Minister: Therefore, be strong in hope;

All: **for your God comes to save.**

Minster: You are God's children.

All: **Lord make us one as we walk with Christ
today and for ever. Amen.**

Prayers, Collects, for this week

Your kingdom is at hand, O God of justice and peace; you made John the Baptist its herald to announce the coming of your Christ, who baptises with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Give us a spirit of repentance to make us worthy of the kingdom. Let complacency yield to conviction, that in our day justice will flourish and conflict give way to the peace you bestow in Christ. Grant this through him whose coming is certain, whose day draws near: your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Old Testament, Isaiah 11 v1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on

the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Gospel of Matthew 3 v1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." ' Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Prayer after Communion

God of the keen blade, which cuts the roots of arrogant power: you raise voices of promise in the dry lands of our desire; children of faith from the stones of the earth; make us ready to receive the Spirit and fire of love, wild and fierce and free; through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. Amen

WINTER WONDERLAND

at St John's 5-8pm

Wed 17th, Thurs 18th Fri 19th December

Twinkling lights & Beautiful Decorations

Santa's Grotto £3 per child

Illuminated Walk £3 adult, £2 child

Festive Music & Carol Singing.

Christmas Craft Stalls & Activities Refreshments

NEW Years Mind Books

Please include names of those they would like remembered in prayers in 2026.

Leading Intercessions: workshop early 2026.
Please contact Revd Jenny if you are interested.