

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY 25TH JANUARY

EPIPHANY 3

WARBOROUGH – 8:00AM HOLY COMMUNION BCP

STADHAMPTON - 4:30PM CLUSTER EVENSONG

SUNDAY 1ST FEBRUARY

CANDLEMAS

STADHAMPTON - 9:30AM FAMILY SERVICE

WARBOROUGH – 11:00AM PARISH EUCHARIST

SUNDAY 8TH FEBRUARY

2ND BEFORE LENT

STADHAMPTON - 9:30AM HOLY COMMUNION

WARBOROUGH – 11:00AM MORNING WORSHIP

WARBOROUGH – 6:00PM HOLY COMMUNION BCP

NEXT WEEK'S BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 9.1–4

1 Corinthians 1.10–18

Matthew 4.12–23

NOTICES

Evensong Service



St John the Baptist

Stadhampton

25th January at 4:30pm

All welcome!

The Team Vicar interviews will take place on Monday 2nd February. Everyone is welcome to attend a service at St Laurence, Warborough at 10:30am with refreshments afterwards. This is an opportunity to meet the candidates and pray for a successful process!



*Newington, Stadhampton with Chiselhampton,
Warborough and Shillingford*

PEWS NEWS

St Laurence Church, Warborough

SUNDAY 25TH JANUARY

EPIPHANY 3

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

God of all mercy, your Son proclaimed good news to the poor, release to the captives, and freedom to the oppressed: anoint us with your Holy Spirit and set all your people free to praise you in Christ our Lord.

Amen

BIBLE READINGS

Acts 9.1–22

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' ⁵He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' ¹¹The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, ¹²and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his

sight.’ ¹³But Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.’ ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.’ ¹⁷So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’ ²¹All who heard him were amazed and said, ‘Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?’ ²²Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

Matthew 19.27–30

Then Peter said in reply, ‘Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?’ ²⁸Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Amen.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

Let us pray to God, who calls us out of darkness into light, and who binds us together as one body in Christ.

God of mercy and truth, you met Saul on the road and transformed him, not in isolation, but within a community of faith. We pray for your Church in every place: that we may be open to your transforming work, and courageous enough to welcome those whose stories differ from our own. Help us to be a community that listens, forgives, and believes in the power of your grace to change lives. Lord Jesus, you called Saul into a life of service that would build up your Church. We pray for Christian communities of every tradition, that where there has been division, there may be humility; where there is fear, there may be trust; and where there are old wounds, there may be healing. Make us one body, united in love and in witness, so that the world may recognise your presence among us.

Gracious God, we remember Ananias, who risked obedience, overcame fear, and reached out in faith. We pray for all who are called to walk alongside others — teachers, pastors, mentors, friends, and carers. Give them wisdom, courage, and compassion, that they may recognise your work in those entrusted to their care.

Loving God, we pray for all who, like Saul, are on difficult or confusing journeys: those whose beliefs are being challenged, those who feel lost or uncertain, and those who fear they have gone too far to be welcomed back. Surround them with people who will offer kindness, patience, and hope, and help them to know that your grace is always greater than our past.

God of new beginnings, help us to be a place where transformation is met with encouragement, not suspicion; where mistakes are met with grace; and where each person is valued as part of your story. Teach us to see one another as you see us — beloved, called, and capable of growth.

Faithful God, we commend to your care those who have gone before us, trusting that the light which met Saul on the road now shines eternally for all your saints. Comfort those who grieve, and strengthen them with the hope of resurrection. God of light and transformation, you call us by name, turn us towards your truth, and place us within a community of love and purpose.

Amen

Views from the Pews: Jen's Lens

This week in the Northern Hemisphere calendar has a rather depressing reputation. It began with "Blue Monday", so called because it is deemed the most depressing day of the year. According to general wisdom (otherwise known as Google), Blue Monday earns its title thanks to the dreary weather of January, the persistent darkness of the season compounded by rain clouds overhead, the pinch of lingering holiday debt, and already-broken New Year's resolutions. It's quite the list, and probably deserving of its name. But if this really is the worst day of the year, then perhaps the only way from here is up.

I love the readings this week. Both Isaiah and Matthew include the line, *"the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."* It's a phrase that has stayed with me as the days have very gradually begun to lengthen again. The change is subtle, almost imperceptible at first, but I notice it most clearly in relation to my animals - even the smallest increase in light makes a difference when I'm trudging through winter mud with horses and spaniels. It may not be the dramatic, blinding light that Saul encountered on the road to Damascus, nor even the "great light" Isaiah proclaims, but these small increments of light are enough to foster hope in the depths of winter.

That idea is captured beautifully in *The Lord of the Rings*, when Sam reminds Frodo, *"Even darkness must pass. A new day will come. And when the sun shines it will shine out the clearer."* It's a line that echoes the heart of this week's readings: darkness is real, but it is not the final word. Light comes - sometimes suddenly, sometimes slowly - and it changes how we see everything.

All of this feels particularly relevant when we think about New Year's resolutions, many of which may already feel a little frayed. I came across a challenging quote from Jean-Paul Sartre, who wrote, *"I have led a toothless life. I have never bitten into anything. I was waiting. I was reserving myself for later on and I have just noticed that my teeth have gone."* It's a stark reminder of how easy it is to wait for the right moment, the right conditions, or the right version of ourselves before we begin to live differently. A similar challenge appears in *Dead Poets Society*, where the students are urged to *"seize the day"*, not recklessly, but intentionally, to recognise that life is happening now and not at some imagined point in the future. Perhaps Blue Monday, of all days, offers a surprisingly good moment to pause and ask: what would need to happen this year for us to consider it a success? What patterns,

thoughts, or habits from last year are we not prepared to carry forward?

The good news, of course, is that we do not face these questions alone. The light Isaiah and Matthew speak of is not only a metaphor, but a person: Christ, the light of the world. God's light is not dependent on our success, our resolutions, or our clarity of purpose. It is constant, faithful, and always available to us: to walk alongside us, to steady us when we falter, and for us to turn to when the way ahead feels uncertain.

So perhaps this week's invitation is not to overhaul everything at once, but simply to take one small step into the light: to try something new, to let go of something that no longer serves us, or to turn a little more deliberately towards God in prayer and trust. As the light slowly returns, may we have the courage to walk forward - not alone, but with God at our side - attentive to the light he gives us, one step at a time.

I wish you all a wonderful week ahead!

Jen

Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Day Party!



St John the Baptist, Stadhampton

17th February at 6pm

Come along for yummy pancakes!