

ARCH Group's aim: "To show love for God and You"

Sunday 28th December
First Sunday of Christmas

Today's Collect

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Today's Post Communion

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your Church to live as one family, united in love and obedience, and bring us all at last to our home in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Next Week Services: Sunday 4th January

8:30am	Rous Lench Village Hall	Holy Communion
9:30pm	Harvington	Morning Service
11:00am	Church Lench	Holy Communion
6:30pm	Harvington	Holy Communion

Please don't forget to donate to 'Helping Hands' trust.
This charity provides care packages and services to individuals facing homelessness and hardship in the Worcestershire area.

Prayer of Intercession

O God, creator and preserver of all mankind, we pray for people of every race, and in every kind of need: make your ways known on earth, your saving power among nations. We pray for the bereaved, the injured, the traumatised and the dispossessed that they may be granted the courage and the strength to rebuild their lives and that some good may come of this tragedy for its victims as well as for those who strive to help them.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Help us to accept that we will probably never know why these catastrophic events happen. Guide us to understand what our own roles might be in helping to alleviate this suffering, be they great or small, and help us to accept those roles, however limited they may seem to us.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Strengthen your church, Lord, that we may all unite in prayer as well as in practical help for those who are suffering for all reasons. We pray for courage, wisdom and guidance to stand up for our faith when it is challenged.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who suffer in mind or body and for those who care for them. We pray for the sick; for those who mourn; for those without faith, hope or love. Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We remember before God those who have died and light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ, which eternally shines and brings hope.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

This Week's First Reading:*Isaiah 63.7-9.*

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast

love.⁸ For he said, 'Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely'; and he became their saviour⁹ in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

This weeks Psalm: 148,

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

4 Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for he commanded and they were created.

6 He established them for ever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

Continued: *This weeks Psalm 148,*

8 fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

9 Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

10 Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

12 Young men and women alike, old and young together!

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the LORD!

This Week's Second Reading: *Hebrews 2.10-end,*

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,¹² saying,

‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.’¹³ And again, ‘I will put my trust in him.’ And again, ‘Here am I and the children whom God has given me.’

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death,

Continued: *Hebrews 2.10-end.*

that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

This Week's Gospel Reading: *Matthew 2.13-end.*

13 Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing

and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.’¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.’ ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, ‘He will be called a Nazorean.’

Next Week’s First Readings: *Isaiah 60.1-9*,.

⁶⁰ Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ² For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.³ Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses’ arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from

Next Week's First reading Continued: *Isaiah 60.1-9.*

Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD. ⁷ All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall be acceptable on my altar, and I will glorify my glorious house.

⁸ Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows?

⁹ For the coastlands shall wait for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from far away, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has glorified you.

Next Week's Psalm Reading: 72. 10-15,

10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

11 May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service.

12 For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.

13 He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.

14 From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.

15 Long may he live! May gold of Sheba be given to him.
May prayer be made for him continually,
and blessings invoked for him all day long.

Next Week's Second Reading: *Ephesians 3.1 -12.*

³ This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— ² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵ In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶ that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰ so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Next Week's Gospel Reading: *Matthew 2.1-12.*

² In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ³ When King

him homage.’³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him;⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ “And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.”’

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure- chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

