



News from St Thomas Church: Week commencing the 31st January 2021



Listening to the news this week my ears suddenly pricked up as the name “Whalley Abbey” in Lancashire was mentioned. It’s a name woven into happy memories from my childhood. Whalley Abbey is near where I grew up and I remember visiting the Abbey with my brother and parents. It’s been in ruins since the desolution of the monasteries under King Henry VIII but in its heyday it was magnificent. A centre of learning and healing and prayer.

Today all that is left are the foundation stones and a few half built walls from the original abbey. I can remember being drawn to those ruined walls, gently touching them (this was allowed at the time!) and somehow feeling that I could still hear the prayers of the monks and the people absorbed into the stone walls.

All churches are houses of prayer. I would like to believe that the prayers we say in St Thomas Church are absorbed into the fabric of the building. I think that is why I think that even though God is everywhere, there are 'thin places' like our church where we can feel especially close to God and to those we love. Their memory being kept alive in our prayers that are absorbed into the very stones themselves. Down through the many decades, through all the twists and turns that life brings, the walls must be saturated with people's prayers.

Whalley Abbey, thankfully is going to have monks and nuns return to pray within its grounds once again. May be the long lost prayers of those monks over 500 years ago have been answered...

Churchy stuff...

Bible readings for Sunday the 31st January 2021

1st reading: Malachi 3.1-5

3 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. **2** But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; **3** he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. **4** Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

5 Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

2nd Reading: Luke 2.22-40

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

22 When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord **23** (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), **24** and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. **26** It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.

27 Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law,

28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

30

for my eyes have seen your salvation,

31

which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32

a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel.”

33 And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. **34** Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed **35** so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, **37** then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day.

38 At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

The Return to Nazareth

39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. **40** The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Collect for the Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved son was this day presented in the Temple,
in the substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.

Notices...

10.00am Morning Prayer and 7.00pm Compline services our Youtube Channel -
Worship from St Thomas - will continue Monday to Friday.

10.00am Sunday Zoom services will continue until further notice. Please do
share the zoom link with family, friends, neighbours ...in fact anyone really...

Thinking ahead...

Readings for Sunday the 7th February 2021. Something to ponder over this
coming week...

1st reading: Proverbs 8.1, 22-31

2nd reading: John 1.1-14

All my best wishes to you and yours,

Tracy.x

Revd Tracy Ward