

**The Revd Martine Crabtree**  
**St George's Vicarage**  
**23 C Broadway**  
**Lupset**  
**Wakefield,**  
**WF2 8AA**  
[martinecrabtree@aol.com](mailto:martinecrabtree@aol.com)  
**Tel: 01924 787801**

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I have been praying for you all during this difficult start to the New Year. We were delighted to hear the news of the new vaccines. I think we were all hoping that we would hear news that things would start to return to normal. It seems that we must be patient for a little longer. We are starting to hear of people having the vaccine. Let us keep praying for everyone at this time.

We have taken the difficult decision to suspend public worship during this time of national lockdown. We have spent a lot of time in prayer and considered the facts. This was not an easy decision to make and was taken after a good deal of prayer and discussion. While we believe that our precautions were adequate to lower the risk of the spread of the old variant of Covid, many of us were concerned that we did not know if they were adequate for the new, more transmissible variant of Covid. We will continue to listen to guidance and hope to open our churches for Sunday services when things improve.

Funerals will continue to be celebrated in church, in accordance with public health guidelines. We will also continue to pray for each other, the parishes of Thornes and Lupset, and for the nation, and the world. Services will continue to be streamed on Facebook, and we will continue to send out the Sunday sheets and other reading and prayer materials for you to worship at home.

Daily Hope, a free national telephone line, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of the phone. The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind; to provide comfort and spiritual nourishment.

I would like to thank everyone who continues to support the church financially. Bills still have to be paid. I would also like to thank those who have sent donations to the Foodbank and to the Christmas Cheer project. We were able to help many people.

Some of us have lost loved ones during this pandemic. Many of us have been sad to have missed the opportunity to pay our respects at funerals due to the restriction on numbers. St James' Church family have sadly said goodbye to a significant number of our members. We are hoping to pay tribute to them all in our magazine. We had a love filled funeral service for long serving member Keith Aisbett this month. May Keith rest in peace and rise in glory. I know that many of you would have wished to have been there. I promise you that we will have memorial services when the time comes to allow larger numbers.

***Loving God, thank you for all those who have shaped our lives, but whom we no longer see. Help us to remember them well, and trust that they are at peace with you. Amen***

Please call me or a member of the ministry team if you want to chat or ask for prayer. We are always happy to talk to you.

With love and prayers,

*Martine*

Revd Martine Crabtree

## Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (Epiphany 2)

Eternal Lord,  
our beginning and our end:  
bring us with the whole creation  
to your glory, hidden through past ages  
and made known  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen**

### **Bible reading: John 1:43-51 (NRSV)**

<sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

<sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." <sup>46</sup> Nathanael

said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup> When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup> Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." <sup>49</sup> Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, <sup>[a]</sup> you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

### **A short reflection by The Revd Martine Crabtree:**

You are known by God and God loves you! The bible tells us that we are "made in the image of God" (Gen 1:26-27). Psalm 139 says: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well." God loves you and calls you to put faith in him and follow just as he called Phillip and Nathanael. During this difficult time when many of us feel the pain of separation from family, friends, church, and each other, let us hang on to the strength of God's word. Come and see Jesus, who is here to meet you and hear the cries of your heart. Let us keep praying for each other at this time. Love and prayers, Martine

### **Hymn:**

O Love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

O light that follow'st all my way,  
I yield my flick'ring torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be.

### **Final Prayer:**

God of glory,  
you nourish us with your Word  
who is the bread of life:  
fill us with your Holy Spirit  
that through us the light of your glory  
may shine in all the world.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **The Blessing:**

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

## Sunday 24th January 2021 – (Epiphany 3)

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 reading: John 2:1-11**

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells

you.” <sup>6</sup> Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” <sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

### **A short reflection by The Revd Joan Viles:**

The story of Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana is a familiar one and I don't now if you will agree with me, but I find when a thing becomes familiar it loses its significance. At the time this happened the provision of good wine at a wedding was of paramount importance. It was what was expected of the couple, that they provide plenty of wine and food for the guests. If it had become known that they were in danger of running out they would have lost face and, instead of the wedding being remembered as a joyous occasion, it would have left bad memories. Jesus would know that. He wasn't ready for even his mother to see the full potential of what he could do at this time, but he had compassion for the couple; he helped them out of a very bad situation. Not only did he help them but he provided the very best of wines. For me the message is simple. Jesus loves and cares about us in every aspect of our lives. He knows when we are in sticky situations and He has compassion for us when we get it wrong. He is always ready to help us. Jesus truly is our Saviour.

### **Hymn:**

All Heaven declares  
the glory of the risen Lord.  
Who can compare  
With the beauty of the Lord?  
Forever You will be  
The Lamb upon the throne.  
I gladly bow the knee  
and worship You alone.

I will proclaim  
the glory of the risen Lord.  
Who once was slain  
to reconcile us to God.  
Forever You will be  
the Lamb upon the throne  
I gladly bow the knee  
and worship You alone.

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### **Final 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.**

### **The blessing**

May God the Son, who turned water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana, transform your lives and make glad your hearts. and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen**

## Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (Candlemas)

Lord Jesus Christ,  
light of the nations and glory of Israel:  
make your home among us,  
and present us pure and holy  
to your heavenly Father,  
your God, and our God. **Amen.**

### Luke 2:22-40 (NRSV)

<sup>22</sup> 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 <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup> and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>27</sup> 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,

<sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, <sup>29</sup> “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” <sup>33</sup> And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup> 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 <sup>35</sup> so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” <sup>36</sup> 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, <sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

### **A short reflection by The Revd Martine Crabtree:**

Anna and Simeon went to look at a new baby- and saw the love and the power of God staring back at them. Simeon and Anna speak to us at a time when we need more than ever to be worshipping faithfully. Like them, we are called to bear faithful witness to God’s glory and to share his love with those people we encounter day by day. We just can’t do that unless, like Anna and Simeon, we have our hearts open to hear and receive the Gospel in every aspect of our lives. We will miss lighting candles and worshipping together in church this Sunday. Maybe you would like to light a candle to celebrate Candlemas in your home. It is a time to think about spreading light, as the days begin to lengthen, and the snowdrops begin to show themselves, we can use this time to pray and grow stronger in our faith and hope in God.

### Hymn:

Purify my heart,  
Let Me be as gold and precious silver.  
Purify My Heart,  
let me be as gold, pure gold.

*Refiner’s fire, My heart’s one desire  
is to be holy; set apart for you, Lord.  
I choose to be holy;  
set apart for you, my master,  
ready to do Your will.*

Purify my heart,  
cleans me from within  
and make me holy.  
Purify my heart,  
cleans me from my sin, deep within.

Refiner’s Fire, ....

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### Final Prayer:

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,  
who lived to welcome the Messiah:  
may we, who have received these gifts beyond  
words, prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he  
comes to bring us to eternal life; for he is alive and  
reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### The Blessing:

Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, who was wounded  
for our sins, that you may bear in your life the love  
and joy and peace which are the marks of Jesus in  
his disciples; and the blessing of God almighty, the  
Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you  
and remain with you always. **Amen.**

