

DIOCESAN STRATEGY PRAYER

Living God, Jesus calls his followers to seek first your Kingdom.

Renew us as we make your love known;

Release us to share freely together in mission;

Rejuvenate us to be fruitful in your service.

Give us courage, wisdom and compassion,

That strengthened with the grace of the Holy Spirit,

We may, as the Diocese of Sheffield,

Both flourish and grow through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Anyone wishing to book weddings and baptisms, please contact the Vicar.

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We have a hearing loop; please switch your hearing aid to the 'T' setting

If you would like to speak to someone or for someone to pray with you, please speak to the Clergy.

All are welcome to share bread and wine at Communion or a blessing at the altar rail.

For the toilets, go through the Lady Chapel, across the vestry and into the St James' Room corridor

Please join us for refreshments after the 10.30a.m. service.

COLLECT for the Baptism of Christ

Heavenly Father,

at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:

may we recognize him as our Lord

and know ourselves to be your beloved children;

through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen

Old Testament Reading Isaiah Ch 43 v 1 - 7

But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. 3 For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. 4 Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honoured, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life. 5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; 6 I will say to the north,

'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth-- 7 Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

Gospel Reading Luke Ch 3 v 15 – 22

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered them all, "I baptize you with^[b] water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with^[c] the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." ¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

¹⁹ But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰ Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison. When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Joshua Ch 1 verse 8 *Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

What do you expect from reading the Bible or a sermon? Good advice, encouragement, a challenge, clear direction, teaching, rebuke, or something else? Personally, I have read portions of the Bible and

heard sermons over many years that have included all of these and more.

One thing that is common to every sermon is that the speaker hopes that there will be a response in the heart and life of the listener. That they will put into practice what they have heard.

This verse from the book of Joshua directs the reader to keep the Book of the Law, which would have been the law of Moses, [which is usually interpreted as the first 5 books of the Bible, and interestingly, this is the first chapter written following on from these books], on their lips. In other words, close by you, that you might meditate upon it day and night, and then be careful to do everything it says.

This is the hope of any preacher that the hearer might ponder what was said, meditate upon it and then act upon it. So next time you read the Bible or listen to a sermon you might like to respond as this verse directs, with the added bonus that prosperity and success will follow.

Dear Lord Jesus, open our hearts to receive your word, to ponder and meditate upon it, and to live out all that it speaks to us of.

Amen