

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

GRAFHAM

Third Sunday of Epiphany

24th January 2021

Our service this Sunday at 10.45am is
Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer

The order of service is available on our website standrewsgrafham.org.uk but if you would like us to send you a copy please email office@standrewsgrafham.org.uk by 6pm on Saturday.

Opening Hymn

Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesu, Lord, to thee we raise,
manifested by the star,
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem:
anthems be to thee addressed
God in Man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding-guest
in thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine,
changing water into wine:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in Man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole
palsied limbs and fainting soul;
manifest in valiant fight,
quelling all the devil's might;
manifest in gracious will,
ever bringing good from ill:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in Man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
mirrored in thy holy word;
may we imitate thee now,
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we like to thee may be
at thy great Epiphany;
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in Man made manifest.

*Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885),
and Compilers of 'Rejoice and Sing'.
Sung by St Martin's voices*

Collect

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

First lesson: Revelation 19:6-10

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out, 'Hallelujah!
For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready;
to her it has been granted to be clothed
with fine linen, bright and pure'—
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

Gospel: John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine

gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. 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 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.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Reflection

When you see a road sign, do you pay attention to the grey metal post, the shape of the metal fastened to it and the colour of the lettering – or to the message it is conveying? I sincerely hope it is the latter! If a sign draws attention to itself it has failed in its purpose. And it is a bit like that with the story from St John's Gospel this morning. It is easy to get distracted by such things as calculations about the quantity of wine or side-tracked by the richness of allusions, symbols and significant images, that we miss the main point. St John tells us that the turning of water into wine is the first of the signs – John doesn't call them miracles - that Jesus did. This whole event points to who Jesus is, to the glory of God manifested in him. Only God could change water into wine. This is another epiphany moment – a moment of revelation. It is numerically the first of seven signs in John's gospel. It is also the premier sign in that it provides the key to understanding all that follows. In it we see very first experience of God's grace that we are told about in the Prologue to the Gospel, 'From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.'

The details in the story are there to reinforce that crucial realisation and so it's worth exploring them providing we don't lose sight of the main point. There are actually two weddings happening here – the one in Cana which we heard about, and the one the story points to, the wedding of heaven and earth which is just beginning. Jesus uses the image of a wedding in his parables to describe the Kingdom and God's relationship with his people. Jesus himself is referred to as the bridegroom by John the Baptist. Our reading from Revelation shows the fulfilment of this cosmic wedding. Just today we invite our families and friends to weddings, so we are part of the family that is invited to the ultimate celebration of love and joy. It will be characterised by everybody joining in the praise and rejoicing in a combined voice which is overwhelming, 'like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals'.

Unlike earthly weddings, this is a celebration that never ends and it is beginning now. When water is changed into wine at Cana it symbolises a new creation. These jars are full to the brim, ready to overflow. The quantity is way beyond anybody's imagining. This shows us that God's generosity knows no bounds. Like the stone jars, we too can be filled with new life. Moreover, this is the best wine – no plonk here! God doesn't hold anything back. Normally at weddings at this time, what people were offered to eat and drink reflected their importance and status. At Cana everybody shares in the best. God's grace and generosity is indiscriminate and available to all.

We experience God's grace and goodness all the time in our daily lives but we need to attune ourselves to recognising and acknowledging it. When we take something for

granted, we are often blind to how much other people lack. When we realise that all that we have is a gift, perhaps it makes us more generous ourselves? God's generosity held that small community in Cana together. Running out of wine was not only a social disaster but could have caused long term damage to relationships within the community. Our generosity with his gifts has the potential to restore and rebuild relationships locally, nationally and globally.

Cana was an insignificant village and its actual location is disputed. The wedding would have been important to those involved but scarcely noticed elsewhere. Jesus' presence there reminds us that he shares in the ordinary events of our lives. The servants may have been a bit puzzled by Jesus instructions but they carried them out which reminds us that God works in and through ordinary people living ordinary lives. Jesus' glory was revealed in unexpected circumstances and it still is, if we are willing to see it as St John tells us the disciples did. As we see ever more clearly then perhaps we will come to live as if we were at a perpetual wedding and our lives will be characterised by thanksgiving, praise and joy. Then we will reveal God's glory to others.

Hymn

Rejoice, the Lord is King,
your Lord and King adore;
mortals, give thanks and sing,
and triumph evermore:
*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
rejoice, again I say, rejoice.*

Jesus the Saviour, reigns,
the God of truth and love;
when he had purged our stains,
he took his seat above:
Chorus.

His kingdom cannot fail;
he rules o'er earth and heaven;
the keys of death and hell
are to our Jesus given:
Chorus.

He sits at God's right hand
till all his foes submit,
and bow to his command,
and fall beneath his feet:
Chorus.

Rejoice in glorious hope;
Jesus the judge shall come,
and take his servants up
to their eternal home.
*We soon shall hear the archangel's voice
the trump of God shall sound: rejoice!*

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788) and John Taylor (1750-1826)
sung by St Martin's Voices*

Notices

Cranleigh foodbank

continues to need our support. If you are shopping in Cranleigh donations can be made in Sainsburys and the Co-op. Alternatively you can either deliver items to me at Bramley Mill or I can collect them from you at any point in the month. I will then deliver them to the foodbank towards the end of each month.

A message from Tim Bullivant, our PCC Treasurer

If, during the current lockdown restrictions, you feel you would like to make a donation to the Church, you can do so by bank transfer direct to the PCC account :-

Account name - Parochial Church Council of Grafham

Sort code - 60-06-19

Account number – 62569007

If you have not already signed a Gift Aid Declaration and would like to do so please contact Tim (bullivant.tim@gmail.com or 01483 893417).

Please share these mailings with anyone who you think might find them helpful. If they would like to receive them direct they are welcome to email office@standrewsgrafham.org.uk and we will add them to the mailing list.

With love and prayers

Camilla

Contact details:

The Revd Camilla White, Priest in Charge
camillawhite@waitrose.com or 01483 892645

Jill Parrott, Parish Administrator office@standrewsgrafham.org.uk

Website: standrewsgrafham.org.uk