BENEFICE OF
ARICONIUM

15th November
2nd Sunday before Advent

Collect
Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Old Testament	**Zephaniah 1**. 7, 12-end.
New Testament	**1 Thessalonians 5.** 1-11.
Gospel	**Matthew 25**. 14-30.

The day of the Lord is a theme which is really a reworking of the theory found in the Old Testament. At the heart of this theory was a desire for revenge and a deep hatred for other nations which oppressed Israel. There is also a veiled criticism of God who seemed to have lost interest in Israel despite the promises he made to Abraham, Moses and other heroes of the Faith, which were always at the back of Paul's mind. A Gentile Christian had no such over-blown conviction of belonging to any specially divine race. Gentile mythologies also had gods meeting humans and using them as pawns in their Olympian power-struggles. Of course Gentile Christians would be proud of their original heritage and know of national achievements in warfare or in more peaceful areas. A convert from some major Greek town would know the name of the patron god or goddess associated with it and in whose honour great festivals would be regular social events. The patron goddess of Athens, for instance, was Athena, goddess of wisdom and curiously, of warfare also. In Greek lands there would be significant competitions in the Arts as well as Athletics and chariot-racing. Sophocles, the great Greek author who wrote "Oedipus Rex" won prizes at the great drama competitions for playwrights which were part of the festivities at Athens. Gentile Christians brought a weight of cultural experiences known from childhood, which would they must exchange for a world-wide vision centred upon Jesus and the reality of the Holy Spirit's presence which had no equivalent in pagan religions. Of course, we have an idea of the content of teaching they received in the Epistles of Paul. But other teachers would have different views about the direction of the Faith for their geographical areas. In today's reading Paul warns of the day of the Lord and its bitter consequences to those outside the slowly developing Faith of firstgeneration Christianity. But also in this Epistle we see the growing realisation that the day of the Lord was becoming more and more remote, because first-generation Christians were in reality dying before it appeared. In consequence Paul comes to accept that we must look beyond this Earth and pass through death to gain entry to Heaven. *Brian*

Services next Sunday 22nd November – Christ The King

Weston-under-Penyard	Parish Communion	9.30 a.m.
The Lea	Children's Church	10.00 a.m.
Hope Mansell	Mattins 1662 BCP	9.30 a.m.
Aston Ingham	Parish Communion	10.30 a.m.
Linton	Holy Communion	11.00 a.m.
Upton Bishop	Mattins 1662 BCP	11.00 a.m.

Forthcoming Services & Events

WESTON. Christmas Bingo Friday November 27th Doors open 6.45pm for Eyes down at 7.30 pm @ Weston Village Hall. Tea/Coffee & cake at half time.

LEA Christmas Floral Workshop. Sat 28th Nov 10-3pm All materials provided. Tea/Coffee and sweet treat. £35 per person. Marion 01989750808

Bible Book Club on Sunday 15th November we will be discussing Book 3 of Psalms, Psalms 73 -89. The collection of Psalms which make up Book 3 discuss the Temple and God's enthronement and so make an appropriate follow up to Leviticus.

Please be aware that if you have any events you would like to advertise here, do please contact Debs directly (details below) and she will be pleased to include them.

Please pray for all who are sick, Annette Howell *(WuP),*
Please pray for all who have died, James Boxall *(Lea),* Doreen Windridge *(WuP),* Ann Holt *(WuP),* Geoff Phelps *(WuP),*

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