

BENEFICE OF ARICONIUM

14th December
3rd Sunday of Advent

Collect

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Old Testament Isaiah 35. 1-10.
New Testament James 5. 7-10.
Gospel Matthew 11. 2-11.

School services in Church are an interesting experience. Parents often stand up and wave to their children to reassure them that they are there and ready to watch. 'Look at me!' is not just a childlike trait - many adults want reassurance too, in order to eliminate self-doubt.

John the Baptist (patron saint of three parishes in our benefice) was in prison and had plenty of time to reflect on his life. Had he been mistaken? Was he really the one chosen to prepare the way for the Messiah? Should he not have spoken out criticising Herod's irregular marriage? Perhaps he was not expecting to lose his life, but had he wasted it? He needed reassurance even though he was Jesus' second cousin! Jesus replied, quoting one of the greatest Old Testament prophets - one of two, or possibly three who were called Isaiah - about the blind, the deaf, together with many others, being healed. Also, about the Spirit of the Lord from Isaiah 61.

We all have doubts throughout our spiritual pilgrimage. Having tried to inspire hope at funerals over 55 years, will I be so certain when my own comes along? We all have our barren periods, but if we spend a moment to reflect, we will find that many blessings have been received, guidance given in tricky situations, prayers answered, and sins forgiven. This brings reassurance, so that we can look forward in hope.

In the words of the old hymn - 'Count your blessings.....and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.' *Martin.*

Services next Sunday 21st December – 4th Sunday of Advent

Weston-under-Penyard	Family Communion Service	11.00 a.m.
The Lea	Torchlight Carol Service @ Village Hall	4.30 p.m.
Hope Mansell	Parish Communion	9.30 a.m.
Aston Ingham	Village Praise	10.30 a.m.
Linton	Carol Service	5.30 p.m.
Upton Bishop	Parish Communion	10.30 a.m.
Christmas Eve Services		
Weston-under-Penyard	Midnight Mass	11.30 p.m.
The Lea	Midnight Mass	11.30 p.m.
Hope Mansell	Carol Service	4.00 p.m.
Linton	Crib Service	4.00 p.m.
Upton Bishop	Midnight Mass	11.30 p.m.
Christmas Day Services		
Hope Mansell	Parish Communion	9.30 a.m.
Aston Ingham	Parish Communion	10.30 a.m.
Linton	Communion Service	11.00 a.m.

Forthcoming Services & Events

WESTON: The new season of Bible Studies will recommence at Penyard Rise, HR9 7PH in January 2026, date to be confirmed. Tony Mary Pitt 07534510614.

UPTON BISHOP have a BCP communion Service at 9.30 am on the first Wednesday of each month. A quiet midweek service. All welcome"

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, Margaret Minnet (AI)

Please pray for all who have died, Richard Green (WuP), Philip Margrett (HM),

Rev David Howell: 07903 790049 email: revdavidhowell@icloud.com

Rev Ewan Gillings: 07568 515628 email: revgillings@gmail.com

If you would like to receive this pew sheet via email, please email Debs

debsparishsecretary@outlook.com

Website: www.ariconium.church