

# BENEFICE OF ARICONIUM

18<sup>th</sup> January  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany

## Collect

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

## Readings

Old Testament            Isaiah 49. 1-7.  
New Testament            1 Corinthians 1. 1-9.  
Gospel                        John 1. 29-42.

In the Jewish society bathing was a social and a religious requirement. Indeed, it was said that "It is forbidden to live in a city in which there is no public bath-house". The Prophet Jeremiah described God as "The well of living waters" (Jeremiah ch.2 v13) and thus water becomes the symbolic means whereby mankind is drawn to him as to the essential sustainer of human life. Water also had a further spiritual significance because the washing of hands and the drinking vessels before and after a meal, were regarded as the outward demonstration of inward purity. Even when seeking a divorce, the papers had to be obtained from a town located near a water feature and Synagogue buildings were constructed as near as possible to water. While celebrating the Jewish New Year, a special festival on the first or second day was the occasion when the symbolic casting of sins into water took place. Its origins lie in the words of the prophet Micah at Chapter 7v.19, "Thou will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.". Perhaps the Gospel accounts of what happened at the Jordan borrowed from this feature of New Year celebrations. References to the Jordan, frequent in the Old Testament, in the New Testament come only from the location where John baptised, though John's Gospel refers to the area known as Transjordan, nowadays part of the country of Jordan. The Gospel authors find John a challenge. In much the same way as the history Editors of the Old Testament, who felt obliged to include some documents originating from the long-gone Northern kingdom, in the Histories, Mark and therefore the others, feel obliged to include the Baptiser. Who might be the followers of John? Mark offers only somewhat muted suggestions. He records that people came from Jerusalem as well as the country around it. Note, he does not mention if they were men only or any more information, but Matthew and Luke elaborate extensively on his account. Such a wide cross-section (both men and women therefore?) underlines John's missionary success. John the Baptizer was a man of courage unafraid to challenge powerful despots. Yet the way John's reputation is so belittled by John's Gospel, is a clear indication that residual memories of the

Baptist's spiritual impact were still a significant challenge to Christians some sixty years after his execution.  
*Brian*

## Services next Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany

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

## Forthcoming Services & Events

**LINTON. Bible Book Club** Bible Book club is an informal monthly book club reading through the Bible one book at a time. The next Bible Book Club will be on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February at Wrens Nest. In February we will be discussing the three letters of John. Each session is stand alone and starts with refreshments at 10.30am, everyone welcome. Contact Charlotte for more information.

**LINTON. Lent Discussion Group** Following a very enjoyable Lent discussion group last year based on Hamilton there will be meetings on Friday evenings in February and March, starting on 20<sup>th</sup> February. This year we will be using the book A Beautiful Friendship: A Lent course based on the film Casablanca. We will be looking at themes of sacrifice, repentance, suffering, loss and hope using clips from the film as a basis for the discussion. Everyone welcome, contact Charlotte if you want more details.

**WESTON:** The new season of Bible Studies will recommence at Penyard Rise, HR9-7PH on 22nd January 2026 at 2.30 pm. 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, Mary Salmon (*WuP*)

**Please pray** for all who have died, Stephanie Watts (*HM*), Joy Kinsman (*WuP*)

Rev David Howell: 07903 790049 email: [revdavidhowell@icloud.com](mailto:revdavidhowell@icloud.com)

Rev Ewan Gillings: 07568 515628 email: [revgillings@gmail.com](mailto:revgillings@gmail.com)

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

[debsparishsecretary@outlook.com](mailto:debsparishsecretary@outlook.com)

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