

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March**  
Fourth Sunday of Lent

**Today's Collect**

Merciful Lord, absolve your people from their offences, that through your bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins which by our frailty we have committed; grant this, heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Next Week Services: Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

9:30am	Harvington	Holy Communion
10:00am	Norton & Lenchwick	Holy Communion
11:00am	Abbots Morton	Morning Prayer
11:00am	Church Lench	Morning Prayer
3:30pm	Harvington VH	Messy Church

Mid-week Eucharist: 11:00am Wednesdays at St James', Harvington



**Upcoming Events**

- 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> March      Lent Lunch - The Lenches Club.  
Fri 27<sup>th</sup> March      'EggHeads' Easter Quiz! – Abbots Morton VH  
   - £6 per person, Provide your own drinks.  
Sun 29<sup>th</sup> March      Scratch Performance of Stainer's Crucifixion – free to attend  
– This charity event is looking for singers! 2:30pm rehearsal for 4pm  
same day performance. Please contact Mark Blackwell at  
[markblackwell96@gmail.com](mailto:markblackwell96@gmail.com) if your interested.

**ALL WELCOME!**

**This Week's First Reading: 1 Samuel 16.1-13.**

<sup>1</sup>The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."<sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." The Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'" <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate." <sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him.

1 Samuel 16.1-13 continued:

They asked, “Do you come in peace?”<sup>5</sup> Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord.”<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, “The Lord has not chosen this one either.”<sup>9</sup> Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, “Nor has the Lord chosen this one.”

<sup>10</sup> Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The Lord has not chosen these.”<sup>11</sup> So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.”<sup>12</sup> So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.”<sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

### **This Week’s Second Reading: *Ephesians 5.8-14*,**

<sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light<sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)<sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord.<sup>11</sup> Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.<sup>12</sup> It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.<sup>13</sup> But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.<sup>14</sup> This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

### **This Week’s Gospel Reading: *John 9*.**

<sup>1</sup> As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.<sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

<sup>3</sup> “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be shown in him.”<sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.<sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”<sup>6</sup> After saying this, he spit on the ground, mixed mud with saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes.<sup>7</sup> “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam”(this word means “Sent”).

John 9 continued:

So the man went, and came home seeing. <sup>8</sup> Those who knew of him asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup> Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." <sup>10</sup> "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. <sup>11</sup> He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." <sup>12</sup> "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said. <sup>13</sup> So they took the man to the Pharisees. <sup>14</sup> The day Jesus made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. <sup>15</sup> Therefore the Pharisees also asked the man how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. <sup>17</sup> They turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet." <sup>18</sup> They didn't believe this so sent for the man's parents. <sup>19</sup> "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" <sup>20</sup> "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind." <sup>21</sup> But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> That was why his parents said this. <sup>24</sup> A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." <sup>25</sup> He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" <sup>26</sup> Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" <sup>27</sup> He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you ask again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" <sup>28</sup> Then they insulted him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! <sup>29</sup> We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." <sup>30</sup> The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God doesn't listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. <sup>32</sup> Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." <sup>34</sup> To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out. <sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" <sup>36</sup> "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." <sup>37</sup> Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." <sup>38</sup> Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "For judgement I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now you claim to see, your guilt remains."

**Next Weeks Readings:** *Ezekiel 37.1-14, Psalm 130, Romans 8.6-11, John 11.1-45.*

## **Prayer of Intercession**

God of love, mother of us all, we give thanks for the life that you have brought to birth in us. We pray today for all those who are being brought to life. We pray for unborn babies, for expectant parents, for excited and fearful grandparents, for good families and loving relatives. We pray also for all those whose experience of new life is unexpected, troubling, or traumatic: We pray for refugees, for victims, and for all those who fear for the health and future of their children. We recognise in you the mystery of life, and your willingness to recommit yourself to your children in the midst of all our failings and faults.

Lord in your Mercy Hear our prayer

We pray for all those who struggle with the responsibilities of childcare, for those who find their own deepest fears and doubts reflected back at them in the lives of those whom they have brought into being. We pray for adopted parents, for stepparents, for foster carers, social workers, and all those who work in the juvenile care system.

Lord in your Mercy Hear our prayer

We thank you for our bodies, and we thank you for those who care for them helping us keep healthy and intervening when we face illness. With each passing year, we grow ever more aware of our own mortality, and we are grateful for our own continuing lives. So we pray today for those who are reaching the end of their lives, for those who are very old, and for those who are very ill. Give comfort and assurance in place of fear and doubt and hold in your eternal embrace all those who long for your loving touch.

Lord in your Mercy Hear our prayer

We thank you for this body, which is your gathered congregation drawn together in this place, and at this time. We pray for one another, with all our diverse needs and cares and joys and sorrows. May we experience your love for us as we discover our mutual love for one another. Help us to understand one another's needs, and to be active in carrying one another's burdens.

Lord in your Mercy Hear our prayer. Amen.