

~ Notices ~

Concerts – Two further concerts are scheduled for this Autumn

27th November 7.30pm – **Regina Nathan** – ticket details to be confirmed.

11th December – **Helen Hancock** – A Christmas concert - ticket details to be confirmed.

Remembrance Sunday – 14th November

Prayers - If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

Christmas – Whilst the Christmas Tree Festival cannot proceed this year (although we need to start planning for Christmas 2022 – it is too important to lose) we need to start planning and preparing for Christmas celebrations for 2021. A Carol service of some kind will be possible, whether it features a small ensemble singing, or full congregation with masks, or musicians playing instrumental versions. I am asking either for volunteers to play or for recommendations of friends/family who might play as part of a team of musicians for a 'Carols around the Christmas Tree' event.

Talks at Killaloe Cathedral – A series of talks for Advent Wednesday at 8.00pm – Cathedral Church of St Flannan

Week 1 24th November – Apostolic and catholic, Protestant and reformed?
Rev Professor Canon Patrick Comerford

Week 2 1st December – A Liturgical church
Rev Kevin O'Brien

Week 3 8th December – an Episcopal church
Ven Terry Mitchell

Week 4 15th December – An ecumenical church
Joc Sanders

Website: clareanglicans.ie

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3rd Sunday before Advent (Year B) 2021

Readings and Hymns

Collect: Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation:

stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns: *In conjunction with the online service you might like to view these hymns on YouTube - with internet links and lyrics so that you can sing along:*

- 1) O praise ye the lord
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRauK1m7Pko>
- 2) O Jesus, I have promised
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UU_cdv2ri90
- 3) O thou who camest from above
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3UYybc7Xa0>
- 4) Will you come and follow me
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAYM8pWCwWk>

Jonah 3.1-5,10

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 'Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Psalms 62.5-12

For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
On God rests my deliverance and my honour;
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.
Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us.
Those of low estate are but a breath,
those of high estate are a delusion;
in the balances they go up;
they are together lighter than a breath.
Put no confidence in extortion,
and set no vain hopes on robbery;
if riches increase, do not set your heart on them.
Once God has spoken;
twice have I heard this:
that power belongs to God,
and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord.
For you repay to all
according to their work.
Alleluia.

Hebrews 9: 24-28

For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgement, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Mark 1.14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Commentary

Jonah 3:1-5,10

Jonah is the archetypical reluctant prophet. Earlier, in 1:2, God has called him to "Go at once to Nineveh ... and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me" but he has tried to escape by sailing to the ends of the earth. God has punished him by having a large fish swallow him.

Now God commands Jonah a second time: God is not going to let him off! He now obeys: he goes to the capital of Assyria, (this being a book of exaggerations) "an exceedingly large city" (3:3). (Excavations show that it was about 5 x 2½ kilometres.) He goes into the city, but only part-way ("a day's walk", 3:4): half measures are good enough for him. The first readers probably identified "forty" with either the Flood or the Exodus. Nineveh will be "overthrown" or destroyed. In 3:5, the residents react to this oracle: they believe God (in the person of his prophet) and acknowledge their godlessness. 3:6-9 (not part of our reading) tell us the king's reaction and edict: he dons "sackcloth" and sits in "ashes" – traditional signs of mourning and repentance; he decrees three stages of repentance for all:

admission of guilt, by way of outward signs;
change in each person's attitude to others (in turning away from evil and violence);
acknowledgement of God's freedom in how he responds to repentance ("he may turn from his fierce anger", 3:9).
Then 3:10: God does change his mind: he accepts their repentance and delivers them.

Obviously this is a story, but it is one that teaches; it is a parable. It illuminates an issue of its time, the waywardness of Israel. God is central and powerful. He can favour whomever he chooses, even hated enemies of the past.

Psalm 62:5-12

This is a psalm of trust. Vv. 5-7 are the psalmist's example, which (in v. 8) he invites others to emulate. In God he finds his hope for deliverance, his reference point in life and his "refuge" from enemies. Both poverty ("low estate", v. 9) and power ("high estate") do not endure. "Extortion" (v. 10) and "robbery" are means of acquiring rank. Do not depend on wealth; it too is worth little. The bottom line is in vv. 11b and 12a: the psalmist has heard God say that power and "steadfast love" (loyalty to the covenant) belong to him: he has learnt this well ("twice"). God does reward everyone based on his or her actions.

Hebrews 9:24-28

The author continues to see Christ as the great high priest, and to contrast him with a high priest in the Temple. Heaven is the perfect, ideal "sanctuary" (9:24), while the Holy of Holies is a "mere copy" of the divine one. Christ did not enter the Holy of Holies but rather "heaven itself" to "make intercession" (7:25) for us "in the presence of God" (9:24). Unlike the Temple high priest who entered the sanctuary annually to offer animal blood for the redemption of certain sins of the people, Christ sacrificed himself "once for all" (9:26), for all people, permanently abolishing sin – when release from sin previously only lasted a year. He came "at the end of the age" of the first covenant, of the pre-Christian era. God has appointed that humans "die once" (9:27) and later be judged (at the end of the current era); likewise Christ sacrificed himself once and will later return. But his second coming will be to complete and finalize the salvation of his followers. By taking our sin on himself, he has already taken it away.

Mark 1:14-20

Mark has just told us, briefly, about Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Now he returns to Galilee. His message begins with "the time is fulfilled" (v. 15): the time appointed by God, the decisive time for God's action, has arrived. "The kingdom of God has come near": the final era of history is imminent. Numerous sayings of Jesus support Paul's view that the end is near, but Jesus did say that no human knows when he will come again, and that he will not come when expected (13:32-36). He also said that "the kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17:21), and that the kingdom has begun. Jews believed that when they individually and collectively admitted the error of their ways and returned to God's way ("repent", v. 15), the Messiah would come. We too are called to adopt God's way, to "believe in the good news". The whole of Mark is an expansion of this verse.

In vv. 16-20, the first four disciples are called: they immediately leave their previous occupations, and follow Jesus. Jesus expresses his command in their terms (v. 17). (Immediacy of response is a mark of this gospel.) These disciples owned nets (v. 19) and had employees ("hired men", v. 20), so they were people of rank. They gave up security and family ("left their father", v. 20) to devote themselves to Christ's mission.

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