

The Abbey Parish Newsletter

10th January, 2021 Baptism of the Lord

Full details of times of Services are posted in the Abbey and the other churches in the parish

Confessions: By request after 1205 Masses in Ashburton

Facebook page: search for Buckfast Abbey Parish

Liturgical Calendar:

Monday	St. Aelred
Tuesday	St. Benet Biscop
Wednesday	St. Hilary of Poitiers
Thursday	Feria
Friday	Ss. Maurus & Placid
Saturday	Feria

"Oremus pro invicem"

Please pray for those who are sick:
Geraldine Thompson Pat Hedges
Margaret McAvoy Fred Cooke
John Goulden

If you or someone you know would like to be included here, please contact Fr. Francis

Live-streaming of daily Mass and the Divine Office continues. You can view online in any of these places: www.buckfast.org.uk/live
[Youtube.com/c/BuckfastAbbey](https://www.youtube.com/c/BuckfastAbbey)
Facebook: @buckfastabbeyofficialsite

Phone line for prayer: call 01364 72768

Parish Priest:
Fr. Francis Straw;
01364 645526;
parish@buckfast.org.uk

Please pray for those whose anniversary occurs at this time:

Sarah Shaw; Eric Siepmann; Stan Cocks; Amanda Audley; Laura Strickland; Baroness von Hugel; Lucy Floyd; Ernest Tristram; Henry Coventry; Ena Hurlley; Cornelius McManus; Laurence Sims; Henry Colcutt; John Woodward; Julia Mayze; Katie Bragg; Bessie Boyce; Elizabeth Chudleigh; Alice Medd; Violet Winstanley; Peter Gompertz; Gladys Stuart; Br. Gerard Graham; James Hearn; Ben Wilkins; Dame Christine Lowings OSB; Mary Godden; Alban Ayley; Cynthia Robinson; Anne Rowe; Henry Voisey; Francis Hodgson;

May they rest in peace

Last weekend's collections

	Gift Aided	Online
Buckfastleigh 5 p.m. Sat	£13.00	£5.00
Abbey 9 a.m.	£23.00	£17.31
Abbey 10:30 a.m.	£73.00	£126.37
Ashburton 10:30am	£5.00	£6.92
South Brent 9 a.m.	£10.00	£24.62
<i>Added value through gift aid</i>	£43.81	£30.50

If you are self-isolating and need help getting food or medicine, please give Fr. Francis a call.

Holy Mass with a Congregation

During this lockdown, Holy Mass with a congregation is permitted to continue. So daily Masses in our church in Ashburton will carry on Monday to Saturday and all Sunday Masses (including the 5 p.m. Mass on Saturdays in Buckfastleigh) will continue as before.

The Bishop's Conference has written to all Parish Priests regarding the continuation of Holy Mass with a Congregation. They have emphasised the critical importance of Mass-goers rigorously observing those practises which reduce the possibility of transmission of the coronavirus. This is because of the increased infectiousness of the new strain of the virus and the potential for damage to the reputation of the Church if we were found to have caused the virus to spread by being less than scrupulous in our prevention measures. Such a tragedy could well move the Government to close our Churches once again.

So let's remind ourselves of what we have to do:

- Anyone who has, or feels they may have symptoms of, COVID-19 must not attend Church
- Anyone who is in a bubble with someone who is isolating must not attend Church
- You must not mingle with people who are not part of your bubble in the environs of any Church, for instance in the car park, before a Church Service
- You must apply alcohol based hand sanitiser as you enter and leave the Church
- You must not mingle with people who are not part of your bubble inside the Church, even for a short chat.
- You should leave the Church promptly once the service ends and not mingle with people who are not part of your bubble as you leave or in the environs of the Church
- The law requires you to wear a face covering inside the Church unless you are exempt. You should take account of the distress you may cause to others if you do not wear a face covering. If you do not wear a face covering, you must maintain a distance of at least 2 metres (and preferably as far as possible) from anyone not in your bubble.

Those who very kindly prepare the Church and the sacred vessels for Mass are reminded of the importance of hand sanitising and wearing surgical gloves when touching the sacred vessels. They should also, please, avoid physical contact with hosts when placing them in the ciborium.

As Bishop Mark has commented, we must all be getting thoroughly weary with all these rules and regulations, to say nothing of the limits on human contact, which makes us all so sad and dispirited. I am truly sorry if this reminder has further stirred up those emotions. As we make these little sacrifices for the sake of meeting the Lord in the Eucharist, let's offer them to Him, hoping that in some way they ease His suffering for us on the Cross. May He save us from these trying times and help us to discover always the joy of God woven through every moment of our life.

The children returned to school on Monday, and most of them stayed at home on Tuesday! Over the course of the remainder of the week, we had between thirty and thirty-five children in school each day. Not surprisingly, it has been a bit of a scramble for the teachers to amend their plans for the learning for the week. However, the school already has learning programmes online, which the children can access from home, so the transfer from school to home learning was able to start immediately. I am sure the system will become more refined over the coming days. The school has also been able to offer IT devices to those children who need them so that, eventually, all the children at home will be able to access the same learning as the children in school. There was a certain irony on Friday, when the school had no internet due to a technical fault, that the children at home would have been able to learn online whilst those in school were working with old fashioned pens and paper!

We have been able to further reduce the risk of transmission of Covid in school by creating a "staffroom" for the staff of each bubble or group of children, so that the different teams of staff do not meet at all during the day and are being encouraged not to use any communal areas if possible. I think Lorraine in the Post Office was a little surprised when I arrived at the counter with four jars of coffee and four boxes of teabags to buy, but you do need to get your priorities right when equipping staffrooms.



Sadly, it seems we are facing even more difficult times over the coming weeks but there is a saying that you can wait for the storm to pass or you can learn to dance in the rain (albeit in a socially distanced way). I, for one, am off to see if I can find my wellies and will be practising a few moves before venturing into the storm. I am sure there will be many others, in particular, those post-vaccination "oldies", who have been through tough times before, who are already "wellied up" and ready to go!

On Friday 8 January, following some questions about why our churches remain open, Bishop John Sherrington, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, issued the following letter explaining the position and role of our churches during the current lockdown:

We are aware that questions are being asked as to why churches remain open during this National Lockdown. We are also aware that many local authorities are calling for places of worship to close. We wish to respond to these concerns. Churches are allowed to open for prayer and communal worship at this time according to the provision of the most recent national legislation and Government guidance. This decision is based on two factors: the recognition that our churches are safe, and that the service they offer is essential.

The safety of our churches has been affirmed by Public Health England (PHE) in its current advice to the Government. This is publicly recognised to be the result of the great efforts made by many people in the implementation of procedures mandated by PHE and thereby establishing the necessary conditions within churches for their safe use. Our churches are making a significant contribution to the personal resilience and inner strength of people which is much needed at this time. Many are hubs from which essential support is offered especially to those most in need, extending well beyond the faith communities which use them. This includes the regular provision of food; the care of the homeless; and being a place of peace and reflection (which is safe) for many whose living conditions are very limited. This will become more appreciated as the programme of vaccination increases. The vital link between prayer and action is important to maintain this service. At this phase of the pandemic, which is causing alarm and fear, our churches will exercise their role with increased diligence to ensure continuing safety and service.

We recognise the higher levels of fear and anxiety which the new strain of the virus has prompted and we have a very proper awareness of the care which must be exercised by everyone, under the guidance of PHE health professionals. We recognise, too, that isolation is having a profound detrimental effect on people and that the role of churches in easing that isolation in ways which are safe and supportive has been recognised as a positive and beneficial contribution to the common good. We pray for the dedicated work of the NHS and continue to provide spiritual support to staff and patients through the network of chaplains working both in the hospitals and the community.

Marriage Matters: Reflections on the Sunday readings.

You are my Beloved

How we each adapt to and accept the many differences in each other is a remarkable insight into the Spirit of God deeply seeded within us. It is this which calls us to say to one another: you are my chosen one in whom my heart delights! Let us celebrate with joy God's love for us and for all marriages.

Hee, hee!

A man goes to the doctor with a lettuce in his ear and asks 'is it serious.' The doctor takes a deep breath and replies 'Yes, this is just the tip of the iceberg!'

A famous Viking explorer returns home from a voyage and found his name missing from the Town register. His wife insisted on complaining to the civic official who apologises profusely saying, "I must have taken Leif off my census."

Out of the mouths or babes:

A mother took her three-year-old daughter to the church Carol service for the first time. The church lights were lowered, and then the choir came down the aisle, carrying lighted candles. All was quiet until the little one started to sing in a loud voice, "Happy Birthday to you, happy birthday to you..."

A Sunday School teacher asked her class, "Does anyone here know what we mean by sins of omission?" A little girl spoke up: "Aren't those the sins we should have committed, but didn't?"