

## Prayers for 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 from Jan Teale

Greetings and all good wishes for 2021!

Who would have thought that we would still be in this awful and frightening situation now? Apart from the advent (thankfully!) of the Covid vaccinations, it feels as if we are back to square one. We certainly need something to lift our spirits and keep us going. For me, at this time of year, the 'something' is the story of the Baptism of Christ. It has always been one of my favourites and in the 24 years I have been a Licensed Reader I've had the pleasure of preaching or leading a Family Service on this subject many times. But not this year, I'm afraid.

Most vivid in my memory is the baptism of an adult cousin of mine in a freezing stream half way up Mount Snowdon! It was a wonderful event and apart from the lack of the presence of the dove, it felt very true to Jesus's baptism. That must be nearly thirty years ago now but I still feel it and remember it clearly. That's what happens, I think, when God does something very special. I'm sure He will do something very special for us to end this pandemic but, of course, we have to be patient.

You may know that our Bishops Pete and Sophie keep us well informed and uplifted by the messages clergy and licensed lay ministers receive weekly from them ( known as Ad Clerums). Today, as we face another lockdown and the closure of our beloved church in Whiston, I would like to share with you some of what they have said this week and to use it as a prayer.

After urging us to pray for the NHS, front line services and parents and carers of children, Bishop Pete says let us pray: ' There is hope. The vaccination programme is under way and, as Christians, we have a deeper hope in God that comforts us beyond fear itself. As we have been remembering this Christmas Season, even in the midst of our darkest fears, that Hope brings Light'. Amen

And we pray for the recently departed Brian Webb and for all who are ill or may be sad and lonely, especially those who have lost family and friends recently and for whom life will never be the same again. We pray also for those whose anniversaries occur this week: Eileen Newman, David Griffiths, Ernest Mellor, Gladys V Oxspring and Joseph Charles Hodgson. Amen