

Corhampton Saxon Church
The Eucharist
for the Beheading of John the Baptist
29th August
Celebrated on 30th August 2020

with
Spiritual Communion
(Order One – Eucharistic Prayer B)
In Time of Pandemic

THE BEHEADING OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

Welcome to our service of the Eucharist – our small sacrifice of thanksgiving on this the Commemoration of death of St John the Baptist - from our ancient church in Corhampton in the Meon Valley in Hampshire.

Saint John the Baptist has two feasts to himself. One, in August, celebrates his death, and one, in June, celebrates his birth. And this is as it should be, for as Christ himself said, John was the greatest of the sons of men.

The greatest, but also the most tragic. A prophet from before his birth, leaping in the womb to announce the coming of the incarnate God, his task was to proclaim the fulfilment of all prophecies – and thus his own obsolescence. And *he did it*: with unequalled courage he spread the news that he, the greatest of all men, was the least in the kingdom of heaven. His disciples, and the devil, would have preferred him to fight, to build his sect, to defeat this upstart whom he himself had baptized, to seize his place in history. But he did not – and so, rightly, he *has* his place, and he has glory in heaven.

We envy the great and the talented, and sometimes we think that they themselves are beyond envy. But when they come across someone with greater gifts, as one day most of them will, they will see for the first time what it means to feel like us. Let us pray that they, like John the Baptist, may pass that test.

CORHAMPTON CHURCH (from Historic England Listing) Corhampton Church (formerly listed as The Church) of no dedication. C1020, east end replaced, after collapse due to road works, in 1855, C13, c1600, and restoration of 1905 by Sir Thomas Jackson. Almost complete two-cell Saxon church, with restoration vestry and south porch. Flint walls with some plaster covering, stone dressings; long and short quoins and a series of thin pilasters (lesenes) linking plinth and eaves bands. The east end is brickwork and the top of the west gable has diaper brick and flint patterning (of 1905): vestry and south porch have flint walls with stone dressings of plain style. Tile roof, with very small western bell turret. Lancet, east end 'Perpendicular' window. Inside there is the original Saxon chancel arch, a Norman font, a C13 stone seat in the chancel, and a series of (now obscure) C13 wall paintings on the theme of the story of St Swithun. The roof and pulpit are Jacobean, and there is a Victorian west gallery. The communion rail is C18, with slatted balusters. There are two floor monuments, of 1788 and 1814, and Prescription panels on the west wall.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION The Prayer Book instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we may be unable receive the sacrament physically in ourselves at this time. For as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament; (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ,

and Christ with us;) From the Third Exhortation in the BCP. Making a Spiritual Communion is especially fitting when we cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion 'regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whit Sunday.' (Canon B 15 of the Church of England).

INTROIT HYMN: ON JORDAN'S BANK

- 1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings.
- 2 Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
make straight the way for God within,
prepare we in our hearts a home
where such a mighty Guest may come.
- 3 For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without thy grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.
- 4 To heal the sick stretch out thine hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth and let thy light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.
- 5 All praise, eternal Son, to thee,
whose advent doth thy people free;
whom with the Father we adore
and Holy Ghost for evermore.

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Charles Coffin (1676 – 1749)
Tr: John Chandler (1806 – 1876)

WINCHESTER NEW

Composer: Anon

From: Musikalisches Hanbuch (1690)

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THE COLLECT

*The president introduces a period of silent prayer with the words
'Let us pray' or a more specific bidding.*

Almighty God,
who called your servant John the Baptist
to be the forerunner of your Son in birth and death:
strengthen us by your grace
that, as he suffered for the truth,
so we may boldly resist corruption and vice
and receive with him the unfading crown of 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. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

A Reading from the Prophecy of Jeremiah

The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

“Ah, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.”

But the LORD said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’

You must go to everyone I send you to
and say whatever I command you.

Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.

Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth.

See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms
to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow,
to build and to plant.”

Jeremiah 1.4-10

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

And what more shall I say?

I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak,
Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets,
who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice,
and gained what was promised;
who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames,
and escaped the edge of the sword;
whose weakness was turned to strength;
and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

Women received back their dead, raised to life again.
Others were tortured and refused to be released,
so that they might gain a better resurrection.

Some faced jeers and flogging,
while still others were chained and put in prison.
They were stoned; they were sawn in two;
they were put to death by the sword.



They went about in sheepskins and goatskins,
destitute, persecuted and ill-treated –
the world was not worthy of them.

They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

These were all commended for their faith,
yet none of them received what had been promised.

God had planned something better for us
so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles,
and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame,
and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 11.32-12.2

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL HYMN Hail, harbinger of morn

- 1 Hail, harbinger of morn:
Thou that art this day born,
And heraldest the Word with clarion voice!
Ye faithful ones, in him
Behold the dawning dim
Of the bright day, and let your hearts rejoice.
- 2 John;--by that chosen name
To call him, Gabriel came
By God's appointment from his home on high:
What deeds that babe should do
To manhood when he grew,
God sent his angel forth to testify.
- 3 There is none greater, none,
Than Zechariah's son;
Than this no mightier prophet hath been born:
Of prophets he may claim
More than a prophet's fame;
Sublimar deeds than theirs his brow adorn.
- 4 'Lo, to prepare thy way,'
Did God the Father say
'Before thy face my messenger I send,
Thy coming to forerun;
As on the orient sun
Doth the bright daystar morn by morn attend.'
- 5 Praise therefore God most high;
Praise him who came to die

For us, his Son that liveth evermore;
And to the Spirit raise,
The Comforter, like praise,
While time endureth, and when time is o'er.

Hail, harbinger of morn
The Venerable Bede, 673-735
Translator: Charles Calverley, 1831-84

HAIL, HARBINGER OF MORN
Composer: W. H. Bell 1873-1946

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GOSPEL READING *Please remain standing.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

You, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways.

Luke 1.76

All **Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you

All **and also with you.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *Matthew*.

All **(+) Glory to you, O Lord.**

Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus,
and he said to his attendants,

“This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead!
That is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”

Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison
because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife,
for John had been saying to him:

“It is not lawful for you to have her.”

Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people,
because they considered him a prophet.

On Herod’s birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for them
and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath
to give her whatever she asked.

Prompted by her mother, she said,
“Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.”

The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests,
he ordered that her request be granted
and had John beheaded in the prison.

His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl,
who carried it to her mother.

John’s disciples came and took his body and buried it.
Then they went and told Jesus.

Matthew 14.1-12

(✠) This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

AFTER THE GOSPEL

May the words of the gospel
wipe away our sins.

SERMON

Today we remember the courage John the Baptist. He fearlessly condemned all that he saw as sinful in his times, preaching repentance and baptising. He vociferously attacked the unlawful marriage of Herod Antipas, the local puppet ruler for the Romans, to Herodias, who had previously been married to his half-brother. Herodias, outraged, had John imprisoned – he was challenging her new-found power. In a moment that showed his lack of judgement, Herod promised to grant the heart's desire of Salome, the daughter of Herodias.

Prompted by her vengeful mother, she asked for John's head, which was brought to her. In this way, the precursor of the Messiah, preceded his Master even through his Passion. But let us briefly think about our readings in the context of the birth of the Church.

The Letter to Hebrews reported how John and his disciples went preaching and suffering for God, but were perfected by the coming of Jesus with whom they joined. The Church was beginning to form.

John's life parallels Jesus', working towards a powerful sense of a great prophecy unfolding and a new life in God. In Luke's Gospel, we have the story of Mary meeting Elizabeth and the *in utero* recognition of their sons. We have the nativity of John and Jesus told in the same Gospel. John went about preaching, drawing disciples around him, spreading a message of redemption through faith.

We have John recognised by the authorities and that generated fear in those tenuously clinging on to power. We have, in today's Gospel, John's killing at the hands of the authorities. John's disciples went to Jesus – John in some small way handed his prophet's mantle over to Jesus – as Elijah did to Elisha.

John is sometimes compared to Elijah in the New Testament – and some Messianic Jews and others believe that John's coming was representative of, or literally was, the second coming of Elijah which would herald the coming of the Messiah.

With all the similarities with Jesus' life and ministry; his place among the Jews, his place in time, this event is much more than another prophet coming to a sticky end.

The nativity, life and death of John the Baptist can be seen as a parable - what theologians might call a Christological Parable. Even, the fate of the one who prepares the way has *that* of the coming one.

And just as on John's imprisonment, he sent his disciples to discern who Jesus was, and his Good News and so the new Church started to grow.

And as John's story, the factual Parable, reminded the early church of Jesus' story, so John should still remind us today of the message that Jesus brought, the Good News, but above all we are to go and find Jesus for ourselves and get to know Him personally.

Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In the power of the Spirit
and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father,
who is our refuge and stronghold.



Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

God our Father,
in your tender compassion
the dawn from on high has broken upon us.
Shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death
and guide our feet into the way of peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

OFFERTORY HYMN Let thine example, Holy John, Remind us

1. Let thine example, holy John, remind us,
Ere we can meetly sing thy deeds of wonder,
Hearts must be chastened, and the bonds that bind us
Broken asunder!
2. Lo! a swift angel, from the skies descending,
Tells to thy father what shall be thy naming;
All thy life's greatness to its bitter ending
Duly proclaiming.
3. But when he doubted what the angel told him
Came to him dumbness to confirm the story;
At thine appearing, healed again behold him,
Chanting thy glory!
4. Oh! what a splendour and a revelation
Came to each mother, at thy joyful leaping,
Greeting thy Monarch, King of every nation,
In the womb sleeping.
5. Angels in orders everlasting praise Thee,
God, in Thy triune majesty tremendous,
Hark to the prayers we, penitents, upraise Thee:
Save and defend us.

Let Thine Example

Latin Title: *Ut queant laxis resonare fibris*

Paul the Deacon (8th Century)

Tr: Richard E. Roberts

The English Hymnal (London: Oxford University Press, 1906), number 223

CLOISTERS

Joseph Barnby (1838 – 1899)

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POST-COMMUNION HYMN Ere in thy childhood, 'mid desert places

- 1 Ere in thy childhood, 'mid the desert places,
thou hadst a refuge from the city gained,
far from all slander and its bitter traces
living unstained.
- 2 Often had prophets in the distant ages
sung to announce the Daystar and to name him;
but as the Saviour, last of all the sages,
thou didst proclaim him.
- 3 Than John the Baptist, none of all Eve's daughters
'ere bore a greater, whether high or lowly:
he was thought worthy, washing in the waters
Jesus the holy.
- 4 Angels in orders everlasting praise thee,
God, in thy triune majesty tremendous;
hark to the prayers we, penitents, upraise thee:
save and defend us.

Ere in thy childhood
The English Hymnal (London: Oxford University Press, 1906), number 224

HERZLIEBSTER JESU
Composer: Johann Crüger (1598 – 1662)
Arranger: Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)
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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Silence is kept.

Merciful Lord,
whose prophet John the Baptist
proclaimed your Son as the Lamb of God
 who takes away the sin of the world:
grant that we who in this sacrament
 have known your forgiveness and your life-giving love
may ever tell of your mercy and your peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

HYMN Christ is the King! O friends rejoice

1. Christ is the King! O friends, rejoice;
brothers and sisters, with one voice
let the world know he is your choice.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!
2. Oh magnify the Lord, and raise
anthems of joy and holy praise
for Christ's brave saints of ancient days.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

3. They with a faith forever new
followed the King, and round him drew
thousands of faithful servants true.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!
4. O Christian women, Christian men,
all the world over, seek again
the way disciples followed then.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!
5. Christ through all ages is the same:
place the same hope in his great name,
with the same faith his word proclaim.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!
6. Let love's unconquerable might
your scattered companies unite
in service to the Lord of light.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!
7. So shall God's will on earth be done,
new lamps be lit, new tasks begun,
and the whole church at last be one.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

Christ is the King! O friends rejoice
Lyricist: George Kennedy Allen Bell (1883 – 1958)

GELOBT SEI GOTT
Melchior Vulpus (1570 -1615)
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BLESSING

The President gives a blessing using these or other seasonal words:

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Almighty God,
who called John the Baptist
to be the forerunner of his Son in birth and death:
strengthen you to resist corruption
and receive with him the unfading crown of glory;
and the (✠) blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

A minister says these or other seasonal words of dismissal

All Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

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RATISBON

Anon.

From: Johann Gottlob Werners' Hymnal: Choralbuch, Leipzig (1815)

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