

Meon Bridge Benefice

Corhampton & Meonstoke, Droxford, Exton with Preshaw



The Feast of St Nicholas
(with provision for 2nd Sunday in Advent)

Toy Festival on St Nicholas' Day held on the Second Sunday Advent

INTROIT HYMN Wonderworker, friend of children

- 1 Wonderworker, friend of children,
sailors hail the name;
Nicholas, the victor glorious,
help us learn the way
To be instruments of care,
our lives declare
your faith and prayer.
- 2 Helping poor, restoring goodness,
first to reconcile;
"Nicholas," the people clamour,
"never leave our side,
Yours the mighty deeds,
the gifts, the works of love,
O wondrous bliss."
- 3 Gracious saint, our friend and brother,
strong in zeal and power,
Now we celebrate with wonder,
all that you have done,
Still your fame and story blend,
as you befriend,
to give us joy.
- 4 Saint of Advent, holy teacher,
of the gifts from God,
share the treasures of Christ's story,
light for us the Way
to be givers of God's love,
disciples of Jesus Christ today.
- 5 And at Christmas blessed Nicholas
help us see the way,
to reach Bethlehem with gladness,
and in awe adore
that with you we may fulfil
God's holy will
and love yet more.

Meter: 85 85 78

Wonderworker, friend of children

J M Rosenthal

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GUITING POWER

John Barnard (1948)

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The Collects

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

Saint Nicholas

Almighty Father, lover of souls,
who chose your servant Nicholas
to be a bishop in the Church,
that he might give freely out of the treasures of your grace:
make us mindful of the needs of others
and, as we have received, so teach us also to give;
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.**

Second Sunday of Advent

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power
and come among us,
and with great might succour us;
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness
we are grievously hindered
in running the race that is set before us,
your bountiful grace and mercy
may speedily help and deliver us;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Advent Collect

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading for St Nicholas' Day

A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

Isaiah 61: 1-3

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Some verses from Psalm 68

R: Let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God

Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered;
let those that hate him flee before him.
As the smoke vanishes,
so may they vanish away.

R: Let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God

Sing to God, sing praises to his name;
exalt him who rides on the clouds.
The Lord is his name; rejoice before him.

R: Let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God

Father of the fatherless, defender of widows,
God in his holy habitation!
God gives the solitary a home
and brings forth prisoners to songs of welcome,
but the rebellious inhabit a burning desert.

R: Let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God

O God, when you went forth before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,
The earth shook and the heavens dropped down rain,
your people came to dwell there;
in your goodness, O God, you provide for the poor.

R: Let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God

Second Reading

A Reading from St Paul's First Letter to Timothy

There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment;
for we brought nothing into the world,
so that we can take nothing out of it;
but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these.

But those who want to be rich fall into temptation
and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires
that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil,
and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away
from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

But as for you, man of God, shun all this;
pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.

1 Timothy 6: 6-11

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN: Almighty God of boundless love

- 1 Almighty God of boundless love,
We plead before thy throne above,
Thy heavenly purpose we may know,
And truly serve thy cause below.
- 2 Confessor of thy Son who died
Is Nicholas, our saintly guide,
Whose feast with double joy is filled,
If hearts be with thy grace instilled.
- 3 His golden gifts bring to the fore
In each of us a wondrous awe,
That yet new mercies we believe
His supplication shall achieve.
- 4 Then grant, O Lord, that e'er may we,
Who place our hope and trust in thee,
Show for our kinsfolk love combined
With right concern for all mankind!
- 5 To God the Father, God the Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One,
All honour, praise and glory be
From age to age eternally.

Meter: LM

Almighty God of boundless love

P. A. Sutherland, b. 1943

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Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the good shepherd:

I know my own and my own know me.

John 10.14

All Alleluia.

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Mark. (+)

All Glory to you, O Lord.

(+)

People were bringing little children to Jesus
in order that he might touch them;
and the disciples spoke sternly to them.

But when Jesus saw this,
he was indignant and said to them,
'Let the little children come to me;
do not stop them;

for it is to such as these
that the kingdom of God belongs.

Truly I tell you,
whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child
will never enter it.'

And he took them up in his arms,
laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Mark 10: 13-16

At the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

To tell you about him and how Santa Claus became Father Christmas— and we have to travel back 1600 years to Myra. Myra is now an obscure place in Turkey but at the beginning of the 4th century AD, Myra was a provincial capital in the Roman Empire and the place of a growing Christian community. Nicholas was its bishop, and we are told he was a humble and faithful man.

He was imprisoned during the Diocletian persecution, but when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, Nicholas was among the bishops gathered at Nicaea for the first Ecumenical council. He lived to a ripe old age and was buried in Myra. Later as Islam swept through Turkey, his remains were transferred to Bari, in Italy. And this is where the legends begin!

There seems to be a grain of truth in the account of a poor man who had three young daughters. The man could not afford a dowry for their marriages. Eventually his plight was so

desperate that he was even considering selling them into slavery. Nicholas, the bishop, heard of this and sold some of his possessions and went late at night to the man's house. He threw three bags of gold through the man's open window and so saved the girls from dreadful future. This was meant to be an anonymous act of charity; but, somehow, the account of Nicholas' benevolence became public knowledge. And he was soon revered as the benefactor of children. It is from this that we eventually get presents coming down the chimney! Those three bags of gold are also the origin of a once common sight. The three golden balls hung above the shops of pawnbrokers.

The first church built in the then new Diocese of Portsmouth is one, because of his connection to sea. Our neighbours at Wickham celebrating their 900th anniversary this year is another, but much older one. Today, St Nicholas is one of the patron saints of Russia. He is the patron of sailors, pawnbrokers, and children too.

On this the second Sunday of Advent, the journey from St. Nicholas to Santa Claus to Father Christmas, so eagerly expected on Christmas Eve, offers us modern people something on to which to hold. Every year, there is the anticipation of the coming of Jesus; the infant of 2000 years ago and the Messiah coming at the end of time.

At any Christmastide, but especially as we struggle to be together safely in the pandemic, hospitality, generosity and faith too. This year we have find new and Covid-safe ways to show hospitality to others; more ways to exhibit generosity to those who need it more than ever; and the eternal ways to keep faith in the face of so many challenges. The epistle, we are told as people of God to: 'pursue righteousness, godliness, *faith*, *love*, endurance, gentleness'.

A manifestation of love is generosity— the kind of generosity shown by Nicholas in his attitude towards the poor man and his three daughters. The gesture does not have to be three bundles of gold tossed through a window, or down a chimney for that matter.

I think of the splendid work that the EC Roberts Centre in Portsmouth and the network of Women's refuges do throughout the year. We can think of the work of Crisis, and the Salvation Army and other Christian churches in caring for the homeless and needy.

The careful of presents collected each year in these parishes, and taken to bring some joy and hope to homeless families. These times offer us a chance to stop and pray and think creatively and to act generously. Perhaps, you might give an extra present to a homeless child or some other gesture of kindness.

Do you know that verse by G. K. Chesterton?

There fared a mother driven forth
Out of an inn to roam;

In the place where she was homeless
All men are at home.

The crazy stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,

Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
Than the square stones of Rome.

We neglect faith at our peril; it has been described variously as the forgotten currency of life in our day. And as the currency that, if not used, leads to impoverished people and stunted culture.

Faith is not intellectual knowledge that leads us in our arrogance to decide for or against God, rather, it is the kind of trust that leads us into a way of living that shapes our whole existence. It does not lead to us becoming miserable, joyless people; it does not lead us to losing our friends. It *does* mean embracing a lifestyle of the love of God and concern for our neighbours. This surely is at the heart of the Advent Hope. It is, precisely, the surprising message of St.

Nicholas—the very surprise that may turn a baby into a Saviour, an obscure fourth century bishop into Santa Claus and each one of us into a saint of God. Amen

Advent Candle Prayers

Advent 2:

God our Father,
you spoke to the prophets of old
of a Saviour who would bring peace.

You helped them to spread the joyful message
of his coming kingdom.

Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
to share with those around us
the good news of your power and love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

OFFERTORY HYMN: Each year we celebrate with joy

- 1 Each year we celebrate with joy the coming
Of that great Saint of old, we love so dear.
His legends are the stories we all cherish,
They call to mind that Christmas now is near

Chorus

O great St Nicholas, we hail and greet you,
We thank you for the good news that you bring.
O lead us on to Bethlehem, the Manger,
Where we can pray and joyous songs forever sing.

- 2 Your love of children, marks your way of caring.
The students three, new life you bring to be.
The sailors, soldiers and the ones in prison,
Your power and prayer, the miracles we see.

Chorus

- 3 Dear saint, your name brings hope and consolation
To people poor and those who suffer wrong.
The celebrations and the joy and splendour
Become the theme and message of our song.

Chorus

- 4 We now receive the gifts you freely give us,
As tokens of your generosity,
That we must imitate and share the goodness
We at this season in each other see.

Chorus

Meter: 11 10 11 10 11 10 11 12

Each year we celebrate with joy
J M Rosenthal, 2010

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We pray the Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

The President continues:

It is right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation;
in your love you made us for yourself.

When we turned away
you did not reject us,
but came to meet us in your Son.

**All You embraced us as your children
and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.**

In Christ you shared our life
that we might live in him and he in us.

**All He opened his arms of love upon the cross
and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.**

On the night he was betrayed,
at supper with his friends
he took bread, and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to them, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

**All Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his body is the bread of life.**

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins;
do this in remembrance of me.

**All Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his blood is shed for all.**

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory,
send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine
may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**All As we eat and drink these holy gifts
make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,
we now watch for the day
when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.
So, with your whole Church throughout the world
we offer you this sacrifice of praise
and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

HYMN after Communion: Blessed saint we honour you

- 1 O blessed Saint, we honour you,
On this great festal day.
Hail Nicholas the faithful say,
Apostle of the Way.
- 2 As you helped those who round you came;
May we your presence feel,
As our commitment is the same
Answering Love's appeal.
- 3 The father poor, the three young girls,
Young men to life restored.
Sailors can rest, the sea is blessed,
Your miracles record.
- 4 In prison dark, your faith was strong;
Help those who suffer wrong,
We heed your words, the gospel call,
To hail Christ, Lord of all.
- 5 As Bari's pilgrims make their way
To sing of your great name,
The wonder myrrh of Myra still
Proclaims your loving fame.
- 6 Lead us dear saint, in joy and peace,
Your prayers we now implore,
As we praise God, the Father, Son
And Spirit blest adored.

Meter: CM

Blessed saint we honour you

J M Rosenthal, 2002

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ST FULBERT

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Post Communion Prayer

St Nicholas and ADVENT

God, shepherd of your people,
whose servant Nicholas
 revealed the loving service of Christ
 in his ministry as a pastor of your people:
by this eucharist in which we share
awaken within us the love of Christ
and keep us faithful to our Christian calling;
through him who laid down his life for us,
but is alive and reigns with you, now and for ever.

And in this season of Advent
make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;

that, when he shall appear,
he may not find us sleeping in sin
but active in his service
and joyful in his praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

HYMN: When tempests rage

- 1 When tempests rage, the storm-tossed sea,
Its dangers, sailors strive to flee.
The cries from ship to shore are clear;
They echo far so all can hear:
 St Nicholas the sailors' friend
 Stay with us now, our lives defend.
- 2 A mighty word, the saint extends
To ask the Lord, your mercy send,
That holding tight the tiller's frame
The storms will cease and all be tame:
 St Nicholas the sailors' friend
 Your prayers surround us to life's end.
- 3 O Trinity of love and power!
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;
 Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
 Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.
- 4 Now bless us on the sea of life,
As we against all deadly strife
Live out our lives courageously
At home, at work and on the sea:
 O wonderworker and our friend
 Your blessing to us now extend.

Meter: 88 88 88

When tempests rage

J M Rosenthal, March 2008

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MELITA

John Bacchus Dykes (1823 – 1876)

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We Depart with God's blessing

Our Lord says, 'I am coming soon.'

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

May the Lord, when he comes,
find us watching and waiting.

Amen.

The ministers and people depart

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Closing Voluntary

Thy Kingdom Come O God

ST CECILIA

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Hymns

Opening Hymn

Wonderworker, friend of children

J M Rosenthal

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QUITTING POWER

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Gradual Hymn

Almighty God of boundless love

P. A. Sutherland, b. 1943

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MORNING HYMN

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Offertory Hymn

Each year we celebrate with joy

J M Rosenthal, 2010

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Post-Communion Hymn

Blessed saint we honour you

J M Rosenthal, 2002

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Recessional Hymn

When tempests rage

J M Rosenthal, March 2008

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