

Feast of St John the Evangelist 2021

Simon says:

- Touch your nose
- Wave your arms
- Stomp your feet
- Shout Alleluia
- XXX Stand up!

Jesus says "Follow me".

- Today, we continue our journey in the joy of the risen Christ – we walk in his light and love, trying to remain faithful to our calling
- Today we rejoice in St John – who heard the call of Christ whilst mending his nets in the boat, and left his father in the boat to follow.
 - From such a lowly beginning comes a man who conveys to us, and each generation, something of the mystery of Christ, the light and life of the world, God incarnate and living among us.
 - John uses the simplest of language to convey the deepest of truths. A simple skim read of his Gospel takes no more than a couple of hours. To truly understand its hidden depth will take a lifetime!

As we know Jesus was not your conventional leader and teacher. When he called his disciples and said "Follow me" he didn't first check their credentials to see whether they have had qualifications in communication, team management, change management, applied theology, or nursing care. His first disciples were a diverse and disparate group with few recognised skills. They simply heard the call and followed, and from whatever gifts and skills they had, God was able to make known the story of salvation – of Jesus risen from the dead – to the extent that we have come to know and believe, 2000yrs later.

From the skills with which John and his fellow disciples were entrusted grew the Church. Prompted and equipped by the Holy Spirit they used their gifts to proclaim the life in Christ which is full and abundant; forgiveness in his name; the nearness of God's kingdom, and our responsibility to each other.

In our own day, we too are called to follow Christ and use the gifts and talents we have for the glory of his kingdom. We've all been blessed with so many and varied gifts it would take an age to collectively write them all down. But I wonder, can you write down your gifts and let me know? What gifts do you have that might help our common life? What way might you be able to enrich God's kingdom here on earth so that the message of salvation might be made known to this and future generations?

As we emerge from Lockdown we have been given the opportunity to look afresh at what we do as Church, and how we do it. Who does what and when? What are our priorities? Do our services enable us to glimpse something of God or do they leave us bored and wanting something more or different? How are we engaging with our wider community and what might we do? Are we really a friendly Church where all are welcome or are we only friendly to those whom we know or those who look like us? How are we teaching and proclaiming the faith? Is there something we can all do differently? Would you like to go deeper into God? Could our prayer lives be richer? Could we pray more often? Do you tell others about our Church with joy – inviting them to come along and become part of us?

As a Parish, we have St John as our Patron Saint. John, who proclaims love, light, life. Surely that is the type of Church we want to be? Let us hear afresh Christ's call to follow and let us do all that we can – through the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit – to likewise be a people of love, light and life to the whole community of the Parish of Boxmoor.