**Sunnyside Church**

**Wednesday morning at 9.30 on 20 January 2021**

**Readings**

***Psalm 139***

***1 John 2:15-27***

*Some reflections on these passages.*

\*The Psalm is a prayer which looks into our hearts and challenges us in our following of the LORD. Three key phrases highlighted below stand out in today’s reading, which summarise this section of the letter.

\*(v. 15-17). “Do not love the world”. There are differences in the way the word “world” is used in the New Testament. Here it is not the world of people or the created world but the world of “sinful man”, his “lusts”, and his “boasting”. This is the world we must keep away from, and a world which could destroy us. However there is a promise to us , the world and its desires will not live for ever. The word used for “lives” is the same as “remain” and “abide”. In the great illustration used by Jesus where he says “I am the true vine” (John 15:1) he goes on to say “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who remain in me and I in them, they may bear fruit, because apart from me, you are not able to do anything (John 15:5)

\*(v.18-25). “This is the last hour, the antichrist is coming”. From the moment of the coming of Christ the New Testament says we are living in the “last days”, (c.f. Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2) waiting for the return of Christ. In this time there are many who preach a false gospel. Both John’s Gospel and the Letter have the background of false teaching about Jesus, especially the relationship of the Son to the Father, and the person of Christ. One of the purposes of both the Gospel of John and this letter was to counteract this false teaching. This was a problem which continued for many centuries and is still present today. The Nicene Creed, which dates from the 4th Century, goes on at length about this because it became important for the church to give a clear declaration on this matter against false teachers. In these verses we are assured that because we have been anointed by the Holy one, we know the truth because we confess that Jesus is the Christ.

\*(v, 26, 27). “There are those who are trying to lead you astray”. John warns his readers that there are people who would lead them astray. It would appear that some of these are those who would say that they were lacking in something. John assures his readers that they have received anointing from Christ, they have received the truth(v.20) and he calls them to remain ( or abide). We need to be on our guard against those who would lead people astray. I well remember when I was Chaplain at Hatfield Polytechnic 45/50 years ago, some students, who I thought were vulnerable, started to worship on Sundays at a community many miles away. They told me that they could not worship anywhere else. This rang “warning bells” for me. The leadership of this community was unaccountable to anyone for their leadership. In time problems about this community became clear and what emerged was simply horrifying. The leaders’ attitudes to authority, sex and money were dreadful. Sadly today there are those who often using the name of Christ will lead especially the vulnerable astray. We can however remember “The anointing we have received from Christ remains in us and we do not need anyone to teach us” (v.27)

*Collect for last Sunday- Epiphany 2*

Eternal Lord

our beginning and our end

bring us with the whole creation

to your glory hidden in ages past

and made known

in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*A Prayer for this time*

Keep us, good Lord

under the shadow of your mercy

in this time of uncertainty and distress

Sustain and support the anxious

and fearful

and lift up all who are brought low:

that we may rejoice in your comfort

knowing that nothing can separate us

from your love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Intercessions**

In this Epiphany season we particularly remember…

…the unity of the Church,

…the peace of the world

…the healing of the sick.

…the revelation of Christ to those from whom his glory is hidden

…all who travel

For the situation as we are now in lockdown, the effect this will have on families, and the vulnerable

The Government as they plan the future arrangements to combat the virus.

The vaccination programme and how the vaccine can be used in the poorer countries of the world.

All in medical and caring professions with the extra load and problems because of the virus

Our schools and colleges at this difficult time.

all who live in the parish especially those living in Little Heath Lane, Canal Close and Paxton Road.

For all who minister and lead at Sunnyside.

For those who have been affected by the virus, especially those who have been bereaved and those in hospital

For the new situation we are in with the EU.

For President elect Joe Biden as he is inaugurated today

*John Kirkby*