

March Team St John, St Mary, St Peter, St Wendreda

4th Sunday after Trinity 20th July

Regular Church Services

St Peter's Sundays 8am & 11am; Wednesdays 10am

St Mary's Sundays 9.15am; St Wendreda's Sundays 11am

St John's Sundays 9.30am; Tuesdays 10am

Meditation

Elijah is approaching the hour of his end; soon he will no longer be in the land of the living. Will prophecy also disappear from the land with his departure?

And it happened that when the Eternal One was going to make his servant Elijah ascend to heaven in a storm wind, Elijah left Gilgal. Elisha went with him. Elijah said, "Remain here, Elisha, for the Lord has sent me to Bethel." Elijah thinks it is better to say farewell in Gilgal. He wants to prevent Elisha expecting his master to transfer the office of prophet to him. Only the Eternal One can make a person a prophet, "Remain here." But the love of this pupil for his teacher cannot bear such a hidden death, a dying in solitude. "As the Eternal One lives and you yourself live, I shall not forsake you."

So the two went to Bethel and sons of the prophets, followers of Elijah, came to meet him from Bethel. They took Elisha aside and asked, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master from you?" "I know," said Elisha, "Be silent." Elijah said "Remain here, Elisha, the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." "As the Eternal One lives and you live, I shall not forsake you." So the two went on together, to the Jordan, to the bank of the river, to the border of the land of the living.

They went the way of Joshua, the way of the man who brought the Torah into the land, but at that time going in the opposite direction. With his end before his eyes, at the bidding of the Eternal One, Elijah goes from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, from Jericho to the Jordan. He has to go back to the wilderness, where Moses died and Joshua began. It's as if the entry has to be undone. Must prophecy leave the land? What will remain of Israel? What is the Torah without prophets?

When they arrived at the Jordan, the fifty sons of the prophets who had accompanied Elijah and Elisha stopped. They saw from afar how Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up and put it in the water. The water gave way and Elijah and Elisha went between it to the other side. *When they had crossed, Elijah*

said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.'

This is what the firstborn of Israel received, a double portion. So Elisha is really asking, 'Let me be your first born, I want to continue to honour you and remember you as my father.' Since the hour of his calling, when he left his father without bidding him farewell, Elisha has seen Elijah as his father. "Let me be your son, prophet in Israel." "It is not for me to say that to you, Elisha; it lies in the hands of God. It will happen if you see it when I am taken from you, if you do not see it, it will not happen." Only if the Eternal One allows Elisha to share in the mystery by which Elijah lived will he be able to be his son. If he doesn't see it, he won't be a seer, a prophet. If he has eyes to see how Elijah is taken away from the earth, it is a gift of God.

As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching! Elijah is taken up to heaven in a chariot by the fire by which he lived, borne up by the breath of the Eternal One. And Elisha? Elisha sees it! The Lord has appeared to him. Elisha has become a seer, a prophet. What would he have to tell over there in the land if he hadn't seen the land on the other side? A new prophet has arisen. Elisha will be Elijah's son.

"My father, my father, Elisha exclaimed, "you are Israel's armed forces." The power of Israel lay in the power of prophecy. Israel's armaments are the voice of the prophet. *'When he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, 'Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.'* The Lord confirms what Elijah did to Elisha when some time before he had cast his mantle over him and called him from behind the plough.

Elisha was ploughing in the field with his servants, twelve teams of oxen in front of him. It seems that all the tribes of Israel were assembled there. Elisha was the twelfth team, the tribe of Israel to which he belonged. ***Elijah passed him by.*** Just as the Eternal One passed by Moses in the cave, just as the Eternal One passed by Elijah there, so now Elijah passes by Elisha. And he cast his prophet's mantle on him then. For Elisha it was as if God himself was passing by. He abandoned his oxen and had hastened after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother, then I will follow you." "Turn around," said Elijah, "have I not cast my mantle upon you." ***Turn around.*** What God said

to Elijah, Elijah said then to Elisha. “God wants you, Elisha, to go the way I too must go.” Elisha turned round. He did not bid farewell to his father and mother; he did follow Elijah and thus his Lord. He slaughtered the team of oxen with which he had been ploughing, prepared the flesh on the wood of the plough, and gave some of it to all the people on the land to eat. So he broke the bonds of his family and is to feed all the people. Elisha arose, followed Elijah, and served him. From now on he will plough elsewhere.

Just as the Eternal One did with Moses when he stretched out his staff over the sea, just as the Eternal One did with Joshua when he crossed through the water of the Jordan with the ark, so the Eternal one has done with Elisha. Prophecy returns to the land! The history which began with the exodus of Moses and the entry of Joshua begins again. Together with Elijah, Elisha has gone from Bethel to Jericho and from Jericho to the Jordan. Now Elisha returns as a prophet through the Jordan to the land. He goes to Jericho and from there to Bethel. So he literally treads in the footsteps of his great predecessor.

Elijah is nowhere to be found, any more than the grave of Moses is to be found. The Eternal One has taken good care of him. Anyone who wants to honour Israel’s prophets should honour the word of the Lord that Moses received in the wilderness, that Joshua bore through the Jordan, and that Elijah proclaimed throughout the world with so much fire. As it was in the time of Elijah, so too will it be in the time of Elisha.

Prayers

God has called us to follow Christ, and has formed us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Father of all, we give you thanks through your servant Jesus Christ our Lord. At his baptism he was revealed as your beloved Son and coming among us as one who serves, he taught that they are greatest in your kingdom who make themselves the least and the servants of all. Although he was their teacher and their Lord, he washed the feet of his disciples, and commanded us to do the same. Through your Holy Spirit you bestow upon your people a rich diversity of gifts and ministries, you raise up men and women to show your love and presence, to care for your people and to build your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. You call us to serve the world your Son redeemed and build up his body, the Church, to the greater glory of your name. Amen.

God our Father, you give us gifts that we may work together in the service of your Son: bless the leaders of your Church that they may be firm in faith and humble before you. Bless those who teach, that they may increase our understanding, and be open to your word for them. Bless those who minister healing, that they may bring wholeness to others, yet know healing in themselves. Bless those through whom you speak, that they may proclaim your word in love, yet open their ears to your gentle whisper. Bless those who work in your world today, that in the complexity of their daily lives they may live for you, fulfil your purposes, and seek your kingdom first. Bless those who are uncertain of their gifts and those who are powerless in this world’s eyes, that they may be strong in your gift of the Holy Spirit.

May the boldness of the Spirit transform you,
may the gentleness of the Spirit lead you,
may the gifts of the Spirit equip you to serve and worship God;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen

NEXT SATURDAY 26th July 1pm
St Mary's Bar-B-Q
at Ruth & James
Book 01354 650858 £10 each
All Welcome

Next Choral Evensong
Sunday 10th August
4pm at St John's
All Welcome

Regular Church Activities at St Peter's

Tuesday

10am-12noon Knit and Natter;
1st St Peter's MU 2.30-4pm 3rd Deanery MU

Wednesday

10am Midweek Communion Service

1st Study Group 7.30-9pm *Next Aug 6th*
2nd Wed Christian Aid Lunch Hall 12-1pm

Next **First Thursday** 4th September,
June Jackson on her work in the Prison Service.
No August meeting.

St John's Church Activities

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

9.15-11.15 St John's Tots;

Tuesday

10am Midweek Communion Service

2nd Study Group 11-12 *Next Aug 12th*
Study Group 7pm-8.30pm; Film The Chosen

Wednesdays

Thursday 1st Thursday Social Group (see above)

Friday Choir Practice in Church 7pm

THIS TUESDAY – ALL WELCOME

Fenland Churches Celebration

Tues 22nd July 6.15-8.15 at Centenary Baptist
Hear from civic and health leaders, see the faith-based social action mapping, explore working together to support people across Fenland

Saturday 6th Sept – Quiet day at St Mary's
Led by Mother Jane

Volunteers are urgently needed for the
Community Hub run by Anna Godfrey through
Cambridgeshire Acre. Wednesdays 12:30 to 2:30 in
St John's Hall. Please see Anna for details.

Wednesday 27th August
Christian Aid Garden Party
2-4pm at the Rectory
All Welcome

5th Sunday after Trinity 20th July
Welcome to St John the Evangelist,
St Peter & St Mary Churches in the
March Team

Regular Sunday Services

St John 9.30am Sung Communion

First Sunday of each Month 9.30am Wholeness Service
with Laying on of Hands

THIS WEEK MESSY CHURCH 1-3pm

3rd Sunday of the month, none in August

St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion

St Peter 8am Holy Communion

11am Sung Communion

*Last Sunday of each month, **Sunday Club***
The next sessions will be NEXT WEEK, 27th July at
11am and we plan to come into church for communion.
There will be no session in August (31st).

TUESDAY St John's; 10am Holy Communion
WEDNESDAY St Peter's; 10am Holy Communion
Zoom services Sunday 5.15pm Team Service
Thursday 8.30am Morning Prayer

Team Rector: Rev Andrew Smith 01354 572117
andrew.marchurch@gmail.com
All enquiries about Weddings Baptisms etc to Andrew
Baptisms; 12.30 St Peter; 2pm or later St John St Mary

Team Leader in Mission Ruth Clay 07905950849

RevRuth.marchchurches@outlook.com
Clergy; Jane Rees 463284, Anthony Chandler 652894,
Jenny Webb 650855, Mother Jane Dicker 661099
Readers; Hannah Taylor 661712, Diane Wise 651512.
Karen Pritchard karen.marchchurches@outlook.com

Next Sunday, July 27th, 6th Sunday after Trinity
2 Kings 5 v1-14, Luke 11 v1-13
Baptisms 12.30pm St Peter's & 2pm St John's.

BAPTISM

3.30pm St John's; Lilah Theobald

FUNERALS

Thu 24th 11.30am St Wendreda's; Pauline Banks

*Andrew circulates a **Weekly Meditation** via email*
(homedeliveries are available for those without email)
If you would like to receive this, please contact
andrew.marchurch@gmail.com or 01354 572117

Prayer, Collect, for this week

Eternal God, you draw near to us in Christ and make yourself our guest. Amid the cares of our daily lives, make us attentive to your voice and alert to your presence, that we may treasure your word above all else. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, and for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen

Old Testament 2 Kings 2 v1-2 & 6-14

When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel.

Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, 'Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

Gospel of Luke 10 v38-42

Now as Jesus and his disciples went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then

to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

Prayer after Communion

God of unnatural wisdom, you gave us Jesus our Rabbi to question the roles we play, the submissions we enforce: may your living truth free us from the lie of exclusion and make us all learners and doers of your word; through Jesus Christ, teacher and liberator. Amen.

Future Events for your Diaries

AUGUST

Thu 14th St John Toddlers Beach Party.

Fri 15th VJ Day Service 11am War Memorial

Sat 30th Model Railway Exhibition St Mary

Sun 31st Armed Services events in Park,

Service at 5pm.

SEPTEMBER

Sat 13th CMS Concert at St Peter's

Sat 13th "Ride and Stride" Walk, Cycle etc

Sat 13th Working Party in St Mary's Churchyard

Sun 14th Sept Musical afternoon St John's Choir

at 129 West End – Refreshments and Raffle

Sat 20th St John's Autumn Fair

Sun 21st Harvest Festival at St John's

Sat 27th Lions Event at St Peters

OCTOBER

Sun 5th Harvest Festivals at St Peter & St Mary

Sun 5th 2.30pm 3Counties Masonic Service St Peter

Sun 12th 1 for 1.30 Harvest Lunch at Maureen's

Sun 12th 4pm Choral Evensong St John's

Sat 18th Bondi Concert 7pm St John's

Sun 26th Mourners Service at St John's 4pm

Tues 28th Mourners Service at St John's 10am

Wed 29th Mourners Service at St Peter's 10am

NOVEMBER

Sat 1st Requiem at St Peter's 10am

Sun 2nd Mourners Service 9.15am St Mary's

Sun 2nd Mourners Service at St Peter's 4pm

Sat 8th St Mary Coffee Morning at Sue's

Sat 8th CMS Concert St Peter's 2pm

Sat 22nd St Peter's Christmas Fair

DECEMBER

Sat 6th St John's Christmas Fair/ Choir Singing

Sun 7th Dec 1pm Christmas Lunch at St Mary's

Fri 12th – Sun 14th Christmas Tree Festival

at St Peter's, with Christingle Sunday 3pm

Wed 17th-Fri 19th Winterwonderland at St John's

Sat 20th Dec St Mary's Coffee Morning at Roger's

Sunday 21st Carol Services 3pm St Mary,

4.30pm St John, 6.30pm St Peter

Please let Andrew know of

any correction, additions or further details