

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

1st Sunday after Trinity 22nd June

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

"Are you there, you disgrace to Israel?" exclaimed King Ahab.

"I, a disgrace, your majesty? How dare you say that I have troubled Israel? You are the one who scorns the commandments of our God and serves Baal. You have brought Israel to the edge of the abyss. No, I am not talking about the drought which is ravaging the land and people, I am speaking of what lies behind it: about apostasy from God, about righteousness that has departed, the justice that no longer flows like a strong stream. Who is the disgrace here?" So they stand facing each other, king and prophet – and neither of them will budge an inch. Who is to arbitrate?

"Let all Israel come to Mount Carmel." Proclaims Elijah the prophet, "together with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the prophets of Ashterah who eat from Queen Jezebel's table." So the children of Israel assemble on Mount Carmel, along with the prophets. Elijah spoke to them. "How long will you continue to walk lame on both feet, to limp on two opinions? If the Lord is God, then go after him; if Baal is God, follow him."

Limp. *Pesach* in Hebrew. Elijah recalls the feast of Passover, when Israel commemorates the exodus from Egypt. "How long will you go on celebrating Passover ambiguously? You cannot serve both God and Baal." The people were silent, alienated from their God and all too ready to seek their salvation with Baal. How can Elijah get the people to say that the Lord is God, the Lord alone?

"I stand before you as the sole prophet of the Eternal One; the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men. Give us two young bullocks. Let the prophets of Baal choose one bullock, cut it into pieces and put it on the logs, but bring no fire. I shall prepare the other bullock and put it on the wood and I too shall bring no fire. Then you shall call to your god and I shall call to the God of Israel. The god who answers with fire shall be God." The whole people answered, "That is good." Two steers were slaughtered, bull calves which, if they aren't sacrificed, will grow up as symbols of power. The god

who consumes this bull with fire will be God. It is the God who once spoke to Moses and summoned him to free his people from the tyranny of Egypt. Elijah believes in this God.

The prophets slaughtered their steer and cried out the name of Baal from morning to noon: "Baal, answer us!" No answer. The prophets danced round the altar that they had made. They *limped*. The prophets were celebrating the Passover, but with a deaf and dumb god. Nothing happened; from morning to noon, nothing happened. Elijah mocked: "You must cry out a bit louder! Isn't he a god? Perhaps he is meditating? Perhaps he has gone to relieve himself? Perhaps he's on a journey? Perhaps he's having a doze and must be woken up?" The prophets of Baal cried louder, and after their custom they castigated themselves with swords and darts; their god wanted to see blood. "Baal, give answer."

Baal gave no answer. Elijah came forward and spoke calmly to the people: "Come closer." He set up again an altar of the Lord which had been torn down. He took twelve stones, according to the number of the sons of Jacob, the tribes of Israel. So Elijah built an altar to Israel's God, with twelve stones restoring the unity of a divided people. He also dug a ditch round the altar with enough room for two measures of seed. A new people of God will rise from the dead. Elijah got the wood, cut the bull in pieces and put it on the wood. "Fill four jars with water and pour them over the burnt offering and over the wood." They did so. "Do it a second time." They did it a second time. "Do it a third time." They did it a third time. How will this sacrifice ever burn?

'At the time of the offering of the oblation ...' – it happened at the evening hour of the burnt offering..... Elijah came forward and turned his face to Jerusalem, the city of God, where at this moment the evening sacrifice was being offered in the Temple. Our times are in the Lord's hand. At the moment when on Mount Zion the fire for the evening sacrifice was being kindled, on Mount Carmel Elijah lifted his eyes to heaven: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done everything in your name. Answer me, Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you alone are God."

'Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt-offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, 'The Lord indeed is God; the Lord indeed is God.' And the verses that follow are, *'Elijah spoke to them: "Seize the prophets of Baal, let none of them*

escape.” They seized them. Elijah had them taken to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there. ’

This story ends with the same violence with which some fairy stories end, and which children enjoy so much. It’s theatre, sacred theatre on Mount Carmel. A war of liberation rages here, a life-and-death struggle which everyone has to wage with his or her Baals. Those who choose Baal will perish by Baal. Those who choose the Eternal One will have to make short work of Baals. Baal promises life, but leads to death. The Eternal One liberates from death and leads to life. He gives rain.

Elijah spoke to King Ahab: “Go, eat and drink, for I can already hear the noise of rain.” Ahab went to eat and drink. Elijah climbed Mount Carmel. Not a cloud to be seen in the sky. He bowed to the ground, his head between his knees. He prayed. Elijah said to his servant, “Climb up and look out to sea.” The boy climbed up; looked out to sea and returned. “There is nothing to be seen, sir.” “Go back, my boy, look again carefully.” “I see nothing.” When the boy had climbed up the seventh time, it happened. “Look, sir, a cloud as small as a man’s fist is rising from the sky.”

“Go, my boy, and tell Ahab to depart quickly, before the rain falls and the wheels of his chariot get stuck.” From one moment to the next the sky grew black with cloud and wind, and a heavy squall came down. Ahab rode to Jezreel. ‘And the hand of the Lord was upon Elijah, he girded his loins and outran Ahab, to where one comes into Jezreel.’ That’s how it is in Israel, it isn’t the king who shows the way, but the prophet.

Prayers

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here in earth.

Almighty and everlasting God, who by thy holy Apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks for all men:

We humbly beseech thee most mercifully (to accept our alms and oblations, and) to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord: And grant, that all they that do confess thy holy Name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.

We beseech thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors; and especially thy servant CHARLES our King; that under him we may be godly and quietly governed: And grant unto his whole Council, and all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all Bishops (*especially Dagmar, and those involved in seeking new Bishop of Ely*) and Curates (*including Andrew, Ruth, Jane, Jenny, Anthony, Mother Jane, Paul and our lay ministers Hannah, Diane, Karen, Gary, Stewart*) that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments:

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace, and specially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and true reverence, they may hear, and receive thy holy Word; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

And we bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to give us grace to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of this heavenly kingdom: grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. **AMEN.**

St Mary's Church Summer Lunch, at Liz & Joel
Middle Fen Farm PE15 0AL **NEXT Saturday** 28th June
1pm £15 (2 courses) 07971153164 Bring deckchair &
drink. Raffle prizes and dessert donations welcome.

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

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 July 2nd*
2nd Christian Aid Lunch in Hall 12-1pm

Next **First Thursday** 3rd July 3pm (note time)
Wimbledon **GARDEN PARTY** at the Rectory,
54 High St behind St Peter's church. *All Welcome*

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 July 8th*
Study Group 7pm-8.30pm; Film The Chosen

Wednesdays

Thursday 1st Thursday Social Group (see above)

Friday Choir Practice in Church 7pm

Redecoration of St Peter's Hall: is being decorated
this week. Volunteers needed to pick up a pair of
curtains on 23rd June, wash, and return them by the end
of the week. Please tell Rev Jenny if you can help

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

First Aid course, open to members of all March
Churches, Wed 2nd July 7:15 in St John's Church. Places
limited to 15. Cost £32 each. For further details and to
book contact Rachel. Money to be paid on booking.

Summer & Autumn Events

5th July St Wendreda's Summer Fair 10-2
5th July FMC Summer Concert 7pm St Peter's
Sat 26th July 1pm Bar-B-Q at Ruth & James
Thu 14th Aug St John Toddlers Beach Party.
Sat 30th August Model Railway Exhibition
Sat 13th Sept CMS Concert at St Peter's
Sat 13th Sept "Ride and Stride" Walk.Cycle etc
Sun 14th Sept Musical afternoon St John's Choir
at 129 West End – Refreshments and Raffle
Sat 20th Sept St John's Autumn Fair
Sat 27th Sept Lions at St Peters
Sun 12th Oct 1 for 1.30 Harvest Lunch at Maureen's
Sat 18th Oct Bondi Concert 7pm St John's

Christian Aid Garden Party 2-4pm

NEXT Saturday 28th June at Jackie's house,
11 Laburnum Grove, PE15 8JR

Also Wednesday 27th August

Christian Aid Garden Party 2-4pm at the Rectory
Final Total for Christian Aid Week was £2924.91

1st Sunday after Trinity 22nd June

Welcome to St John the Evangelist,
St Peter & St Mary Churches in the
March Team

NEXT SUNDAY

Sunday 29th June 4pm
Choral Evensong at St John's

Regular Sunday Services

St John 9.30am Sung Communion

First Sunday of each Month 9.30am

Wholeness Service with Laying on of Hands

Monthly MESSY CHURCH 1-3pm

Next July 20th, none in August

St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion

St Peter 8am Holy Communion

11am Sung Communion

NEXT WEEK Sunday Club

The next sessions will be on 29th June and then 27th July.

*Both will be at the later time of 11am and we plan to
come into church for communion time.*

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, June 29th, 2nd Sunday after Trinity

1 Kings 17 v8-24, Luke 9 v51-62

12.30pm Baptism at St Peter's

2pm Baptism at St Mary's

BAPTISM

12.30pm St Peter's; Harry Robert Kirby

Next Big St Social at St Peter's is

Bacon Butties on 12th July 9.30-11.30

Thanks for helping at St John's Summer Fair

Prayers, Collect, for this week

O God, whose Son, our Messiah and Lord, did not turn aside from the path of suffering nor spare his disciples the prospect of rejection, pour out your Spirit upon this assembly, that we may abandon the security of the easy way and follow Christ's footsteps toward the cross and true life. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament 1 Kings 18 v20-39

Ahab sent to all the Israelites, and assembled the prophets at Mount Carmel. Elijah then came near to all the people, and said, 'How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.' The people did not answer him a word. Then Elijah said to the people, 'I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets number four hundred and fifty. Let two bulls be given to us; let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it; I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord; the god who answers by fire is indeed God.' All the people answered, 'Well spoken!' Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many; then call on the name of your god, but put no fire to it.' So they took the bull that was given them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, crying, 'O Baal, answer us!' But there was no voice, and no answer. They limped about the altar that they had made. At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, 'Cry aloud! Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.' Then they cried aloud and, as was their custom, they cut themselves with swords and lances until the blood gushed out over them. As midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice, no answer, and no response.

Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come closer to me'; and all the people came closer to him. First he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been thrown down; Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying, 'Israel shall be your name'; with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. Then he made a trench around the altar, large enough to contain two measures of seed. Next he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood. He said, 'Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt-offering and on the wood.' Then he said, 'Do it a second time'; and they did it a second time. Again he said, 'Do it a third time'; and they did it a third time, so that the water ran all round the altar, and filled the trench also with water.

At the time of the offering of the oblation, the prophet Elijah came near and said, 'O Lord, God of Abraham,

Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your bidding. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.' Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt-offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, 'The Lord indeed is God; the Lord indeed is God.'

Gospel of Luke 8 v26-39

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me'— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Prayer after Communion

Lord, you trouble our peace, you step upon our guarded shore and confront our chaos: may we who are divided and colonised by the forces of death learn from you to speak our own name and proclaim your works of life; through Jesus Christ, Tamer of Legions. **Amen.**

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