

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

13th Sunday after Trinity 14th September

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

'There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.' Who do you see yourself as? Are you the one lost sheep? Are you one of the ninety-nine?

Who are we meant to identify with? Perhaps the ninety-nine who may have reason to feel aggrieved. Were they put at risk because the shepherd went off looking for the lost sheep? Now it may be they were rather at less risk than we first think, for shepherding was a collective activity. There would most likely have been several shepherds, so perhaps only one went off, so the sheep were not stolen, eaten by wild animals, or neglected in the search for food, drink and shelter. Is this one of many parables when Jesus is criticising the self-righteous, those who look down on others, and see others as needing forgiveness? If we identify with the ninety-nine, then we are being warned against simply being one of the crowd and looking down on other people as less than us.

We don't get in the parable any indication as to why the one sheep got lost. Maybe it just wandered a bit too far after some particularly luxuriant grass. Maybe it doesn't notice the shepherds moving the flock to new pastures. Maybe this was the adventurous sheep, the one with a bit of character and independence. Maybe it was the one that made a break for freedom from the slavery of ownership, and wanted a better life than just breeding the next generation, to end up as lamb chops or as a supplier of woolly jumpers. Maybe it was the introvert who liked their own space. Maybe it was delighted to be found and rescued. Maybe it felt that it was now back to the restrictions of where it started from and its brief bid for freedom was at an end. I suspect we all can identify with bits of these ways of seeing the lost sheep.

What about shepherds? Shepherds do get a good press in the bible; it was the shepherd Abel whose gift was accepted, whilst the farmer's Cain was rejected. David, the founder of the Royal dynasty, was a shepherd boy. The

shepherds were the first to hear the good news of great joy; that a child had been born, Christ the Lord, and to learn the angles' song 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth!' Jesus in John's gospel calls himself "the Good Shepherd". Are we meant to identify the rescuing shepherd with Jesus, or perhaps to identify ourselves as following in Jesus' footsteps to become good shepherds seeking out the lost and the least and bringing them home? Or would that be arrogant or even blasphemous to identify so closely with Jesus?

But there is another group in the story that we could identify ourselves with; those who experience joy when they see the shepherd with the lost sheep on his shoulders.

The lost sheep story is immediately followed by the woman who lost a coin. Do we see the woman as typical, or irresponsible, or forgetful, or thorough? The footnotes in my bible say that the silver coin is about a days wage, so worth a bit but not a fortune. Did she fear it had been stolen and her home violated? Is the woman in debt, and under threat if she cannot repay? Is she quite wealthy, having 10 days wages saved up, is that enough for a sustainable life, or just the bare minimum for survival? If she did not find the lost coin and had only nine would that have severe consequences, or just deny her a treat, or cause her to curse her own forgetfulness or carelessness? She wasn't prepared just to sit back and to think it will turn up sometime in some unexpected way. Well, we can certainly all identify with losing something in our homes. We swear we put them back in the usual place; even accusing others of moving them. We do retrace our steps and rack our brains as to where we last saw that which is missing. We do, as the woman in the parable does, get a decent light, search over and under everything, and all too often find the lost possession in a place we swear we had looked at previously. The woman, when she finds the coin, invited her neighbours to share her joy.

Perhaps the common punchline of joy being shared indicated that this is the prime punchline, and the parables are an invitation to live life seeing the best, and making the best happen.

But, although we did not read it today, there is a third lost and found story – the Prodigal Son. Perhaps strangely, we read this on Mothering Sunday; a story where the mother is noticeably absent and her opinions unsought and unexpressed on a day when we remember mothers! Again, in this parable, some may easily identify with the younger son, who selfishly makes demands of his father, who squanders and leads a dissolute life, but then returns ready to repent. But he is overwhelmed by the greeting of and celebration from his father; there is a party and great joy; the one who was lost is found. Just as we

identify the shepherd as Jesus, do we leap to identify the father as God, or do we see his behaviour as something we are asked to emulate, or do we see that as presumptuous and arrogant? Then there is the older brother, who has been faithful, yet had been unrecognised. What of his father's behaviour toward him, was that taking him so much for granted? Would we bite our tongue and feast on the fatted calf, or would we experience true joy?

Do we see ourselves as lost, or found, or searching and finding? Or a bit of each? Whoever we are, whatever we do, let us learn to rejoice in who we are, and encourage others to rejoice in who they are.

**St John's Community Hub – Vaccines
Wed 19th November 12.30-2.30pm**

Vaccines available

COVID: age 75+ or 18-74 if vulnerable

FLU: 65+

PPV: 65+

RSV Age 70

Some people 60-65 may also be eligible for Flu and shingles vaccines depending on health and medical conditions.

NO CHARGE

Prayers

We bring our prayers to Christ as Lord of the Church.

For the Church universal, of which our buildings are a visible symbol,

Lord receive our thanks and prayer.

For our congregations as we remember your promise that when two or three are gathered in your name you are in the midst of them.

Lord receive our thanks and prayer.

For our homes that we may be still and know that you are God and the fulfilling of our desires and petitions as you see best for us;

Lord receive our thanks and prayer.

For the pardon of our sins when we fall short of your glory, for your blessings in the past and for a vision for the future.

Lord receive our thanks and prayer.

For the gift of the Holy Spirit and new life in baptism, for the foretaste of your eternal kingdom in the sacrament of communion

Lord receive our thanks and prayer.

For the blessing of our vows and the crowning of our years with your goodness. For those who come in times of joy or times of sorrow, those who have much to look back on, and those who have much to look forward to.

Lord receive our thanks and prayer.

For the faith of those who have gone before us and for grace to persevere like them; for the benefactors of our churches and all who have died in the peace of Christ and are at rest.

Lord receive our thanks and prayer.

O God, from living stones you prepare an everlasting dwelling place for your majesty. Grant that by the power of the Holy Spirit those who serve you may always be kept in your presence and we may have a sense of fellowship with Saints John, Mary, Peter and Wendreda. This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

NEXT Saturday 20th September
St John's Autumn Fair 11am-3pm

*This Friday 19th Sept 6pm St John's
Bangers & Mash + Disco and Bondi
£10 adults £5 children See Anna 07926381219*

Time to Remember"
ANNUAL MOURNERS' SERVICES.

Sunday 26th October 4pm at St John's
Tuesday 28th October 10am at St John's
Wednesday 29th October 10am at St Peter's
Saturday 1st November 10am at St Peter's
Sunday 2nd November 9.15am at St Mary's
Sunday 2nd November 4pm at St Peter's
Sunday 16th November 4pm at St Wendreda's

*If you are intending coming to any of these services,
please let Andrew (01354 572117 or
andrew.marchurch@gmail.com)
have the names of the loved ones you wish to have
remembered by name, or write their names on the lists in
any of our churches.*

*Each church has list for each one of these services.
If you are not able to come please let us know the names
and we will read them at the service on 1st November.
We will also read at the 1st November service the names
of all those we have taken funerals for since July 2024*

*Tues 16th Sept St Peter's PCC 7.30pm
Thurs 18th Sept St John PCC 7pm
Tues 23rd Sept Deanery Synod 7.30pm Wimblington
Tues 30th Sept St Mary PCC at Vera's 7.30pm
CHANGE of DATE Team Council from Tues 9th
Sept to Tues 4th Nov at St Peter's 7.30pm*

Diane Wise sadly has decided to retire as LLM
(Reader) at St John's after 20 years of faithful
service for which we are very grateful and have
been blessed. She will continue as an active
member of the congregation, but we will need
someone to take on the readers/servers rotas.
Her last Sunday as LLM will be 5th October
Thank you very much, wise and faithful servant!

NEW PLAN - HARVEST LUNCH.

*5th October at Middle Fen Farm 1 pm.
£15 per person.*

*Raffle prizes and puddings gratefully received.
Bring alcohol as preferred.
Please contact Liz on dreamather@sky.com or text
07971153164 to reserve a place.*

HARVEST FESTIVALS

Sunday 21st St John's 9.30am
Sunday 5th Oct St Mary's 9.15am
Sunday 5th Oct St Peter's 8am and 11am
Sun 12th 4pm St John's Harvest Choral Evensong
Please bring produce to the Harvest Festivals
with a good date for Donation to the Food bank

13th Sunday after Trinity 14th Sept

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

TODAY Sunday 14th

Musical afternoon 2.30pm with St John's Choir
IN CHURCH (weather) – Refreshments and Raffle

Regular Sunday Services

St John 9.30am Sung Communion

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

Monthly, 3rd Sunday **NEXT WEEK**

MESSY CHURCH 1-3pm

St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion

St Peter 8am Holy Communion

11am Sung Communion

*Last Sunday of each month, **Sunday Club***

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

BAPTISMS

12.30pm St Peter's Marilyn Joan Williams,
Kyle Russell Williams, Ronnie Adrian Williams

FUNERAL

Tues 16th 2.30pm Fenland; Elizabeth Repper

*Next Sunday, Sept 21st, 14th Sunday after Trinity
St John HARVEST FESTIVAL*

*Deuteronomy 26 v1-11, Luke 16 v1-13
St P & M, Jeremiah 8 v18- 9 v1, Luke 16 v1-13
12.30pm & 1.30pm Baptisms at St Peter's*

Thanks for Ride and Stride" walkers, cyclists and
those who offered hospitality. etc
*Thanks too to St Mary's Churchyard Working Party
and all who maintain it throughout the year.*

WINDOWS MAGAZINE now available

Prayers, Collects, for this week

Undaunted you seek the lost, O God, exultant you bring home the found. Touch our hearts with grateful wonder at the tenderness of your forbearing love. Grant us delight in the mercy that has found us and bring all to rejoice at the feast of forgiveness. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament Jeremiah 4 v11-12 & 22-28

At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem: A hot wind comes from me out of the bare heights in the desert towards my poor people, not to winnow or cleanse—a wind too strong for that. Now it is I who speak in judgement against them. ‘For my people are foolish, they do not know me; they are stupid children, they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil, but do not know how to do what is good.’

I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. I looked, and lo, there was no one at all, and all the birds of the air had fled. I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger. For thus says the LORD: The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end. Because of this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above grow black; for I have spoken, I have purposed; I have not relented nor will I turn back.

SEPTEMBER

Sat 27th Lions Event at St Peters

OCTOBER

Sun 5th 2.30pm 3Counties Masonic Service St Peter

Sat 18th Bondi Concert 7pm St John’s

*Fri 31st Lumos 7pm Candlelit Concert
at St Peter’s 7-8pm & 9-10pm*

NOVEMBER

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

Sat 6th FMC concert in St Peters

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

Friday 19th September in St John’s

Morning Toddler Harvest

1.30-3pm Westwood School

Gospel of Luke 15 v1-10

All the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, ‘This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.’

So he told them this parable: ‘Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.” Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

‘Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.” Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’

Prayer after Communion

God of the dirtied hands, the wandering feet; you seek out the lost before they ever turn to you: take us with you into the abandoned places to find a new community outside our fortress walls; through Jesus Christ, the Searching One. **Amen.**

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 Sept 9th

Study Group 7pm-8.30pm; Film The Chosen

Wednesdays

Thursday 1st Thursday Social Group (see above)

Friday Choir Practice in Church

Next First Thursday 2nd Oct at 7:30 at 129 West End.

Now a film night 'The Thursday Murder Club'. All ladies welcome. Bring snacks to share. Celia Green will now speak at the November meeting.

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 Oct 1st

2nd Wed Christian Aid Lunch Hall 12-1pm

Wed 19th Nov 12.30-2.30pm St John’s Hall
Vaccinations available – see poster for details