

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

10th Sunday after Trinity 24th August

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

Lift up your hearts – we lift them up to the Lord.

The story about the unknown woman with a chronic stoop, whom Jesus healed in a synagogue on the Sabbath Day, is told only in Luke's gospel. Its dramatic character seems to occur in a situation where men and women sat separately to worship, and where Rabbis never addressed or touched a woman who was not their own wife. It is one of a sequence of stories in every Gospel in which Jesus' healing on the Sabbath posed a real challenge to his religious critics, as well as asserting his authority to act in this way on behalf of God.

When I hear this moving story it brings to mind several people who I gradually learnt were weighed down by events they could not control. And I expect that hearing this today may trigger similar memories for you of yourself or of others. Sometimes people bear woes, be they other people in their family, or situations, or pain of physical, spiritual or mental dimensions. Sometimes people are able to hold their head high for a while, but at other times they can be literally bent over by the burdens they carry, or feel they cannot shoulder the burden any longer, so cease to go out and interrelate with others. Sometimes, encountering situations like this can leave a feeling of deep frustration, sadness, helplessness or regret. When friends ask me why I attach such importance to pastoral ministry in parishes, it is because I am sure that no family or individual should feel unsupported and uncared for. We try to be here to help families and individuals in the tight corners of life that come to us all. Around the kitchen table of a home, like another altar, people pour out their hearts, and we listen, encourage and show an interest in their lives. *Lift up your hearts.* All Christians are called to share in this pastoral ministry by being alert to the needs of others in a kind and non-judgemental way. Indeed, every Christian is in the midst of a unique web of relationships. The particular vocation of Anglican Christianity is to offer this help and support to anyone in the community, whether they come to church or not.

That is why the parish system needs to be maintained and valued. A Gospel story like this one sets us all a fine example.

In many of the miracles of Jesus, such as this one, what happened outwardly shines light on what is needed inwardly. He went across to her as she lurked in the shadows; he spoke with her and listened to her; he embraced her and raised her up; he liberated her from a crushing burden that had distorted her life for eighteen hard and wearisome years. She lived in a religious society that may have taught that such illness was a punishment from God for sins committed by her, or perhaps by her parents. Part of the mission of Jesus was to break this tyranny of opinion, hence the sharp reactions from his religious critics, as well as the joy of some of his hearers.

Jesus came to liberate people from their inner burdens – of fear and guilt and sin, of trauma and hurt; at his cross we find our burdens are rolled away. This is why in every service we confess our sins and seek absolution. By so doing we express our loving and penitent solidarity with those around us who are in a similar plight before God, from whom no secrets need to be hidden. No one needs to be trapped in their unhappiness.

This woman was bowed down and unable to look up. This may symbolise the plight of every fallen human, unable to look in the direction of God, and fixated on the things of this created world as ends in themselves. Every human society, from the poorest to the richest, is prone to this. In our own society, the greatest enemy of Christianity may be distraction. The aim of a consumer society is always to keep people focussed on the next purchase, the latest fashion. A good symbol of this is the mobile phone which some people give their inordinate attention. More tragically, people can easily become bowed down by obsessions promoted by consumerism; the next car, gadget, fashion; or more destructively the compulsion of addiction to drink, drugs, pornography, or the inordinate love of wealth or status. Finally, many people are simply oppressed, bowed down by poverty, power abuse in family, work, or relationships. Sometimes whole countries seem to succumb to such an oppressive legacy from which they cannot escape, inflicting violence on their neighbours in a vicious cycle that can last for centuries.

Jesus said "I have come that they may have life – life in all its abundance." This is why we stand to hear the Gospel in Church and at the communion prayer we say, "*Lift up your hearts – we lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise.*" These are some of the earliest Christian prayers and have always prefaced the consecrating prayer. This is because we are bidden to come into the presence of God as those who have been liberated from the downward bias of sin, no

more cowering in the bushes, hiding from God and clutching fig-leaves! For ‘the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty: so, we all with unveiled faces, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.’ (2 Cor 3 v17-18)

Returning to the Gospel story once again, we see that there were two other people who were stooped down; one actually; the other metaphorically. The ruler of the synagogue responded in a frustrated and institutionalised manner, protesting that such disturbance should not occur in divine worship. Jesus exposed the folly of his tunnel-vision and the innate hypocrisy and cruelty in terms that were clearly not forgotten by those who witnessed it. Indeed, it is possible that this was actually a moment of liberation for some of them, perhaps even for the ruler of the synagogue himself. St Paul certainly testified to the crushing nature of obligation to the Law of God for so many at that time and the barrenness of being obsessed with its literal interpretation.

The other person who stooped down was, of course, Jesus himself, bending over to hear the whispered story of this unhappy woman, who was confined to the margins of society. “Proud people can only be saved by a humble God”, and the humility of Jesus was his hidden strength because it sprang from God himself. This is one of the great themes of Luke’s Gospel, culminating in Jesus staggering and bowed down by his own cross, and yet able to pray for his tormentors who were lost in their own darkness, blindness and cruelty.

We too are called to stoop down willingly in humility in order to come alongside others in a kind and non-patronizing way. We are called to stoop as we receive the Holy Communion, saying “*Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and your servant shall be healed.*” We are called to stoop in our hearts as we contemplate the humility and love of God in the tiny baby of Bethlehem, born in a cave or an underground outhouse. We are called to stoop in wonder as we peer into the Empty Tomb, and then, like the women, to fall at the feet of our Lord in loving worship, and to hear him say to us also, “*Peace be with you*” “*Lift up your hearts.*”

Prayers

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father. Lord of glory, it is good to know you are with us. In peace we make our prayer to you. In trust we confirm our faith in you. Help us to set our faces steadfastly to where you would have us go.

Lord of glory, look with favour on your Church, proclaiming your beloved Son to the world and listening to the promptings of his Spirit. May she be renewed in holiness that she may reflect your glory.

Lord of glory, look with favour on the nations of the world, scarred by hatred, strife, war, plague, and injustice. May they be healed by the touch of your hand.

Lord of glory, look with favour on those in need or distress, suffering as your Son suffered and waiting for the salvation you promise. May the daybreak and Christ the Morning Star bring them the light of his presence.

Lord of glory, it is good if we suffer with you so that we shall be glorified with you. According to your promise bring all Christ’s brothers and sisters to see him with their own eyes in majesty and to be changed into his likeness from glory to glory.

To him be praise, dominion and worship now and for all eternity. Amen.

Christ Jesus, the splendour of the Father and the image of his being, draw us to himself that we may share in his light and share his glory; and may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. Amen.

MODEL RAILWAY SHOW

NEXT Saturday 30th August

in St Mary's Church & Hall 10am-4pm

Many layouts, Trade & Club Stands

Entry £5, under 16 free

Refreshments, Bacon butties etc available

Please could we have donations of cakes for our refreshments stall. Also, any help on the day would be greatly appreciated. Please speak to Ruth or James.

Saturday 6th Sept – Quiet day at St Mary's

Led by Mother Jane

10am - 4pm Shared lunch.

The modern mystics

Future Events for your Diaries

AUGUST

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

NEW ADDITION Fri 31st Lumos 7pm Candlelit

Concert St P's 7-8 & 9-10pm

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

NEW ADDITION 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

10th Sunday after Trinity 24th

August 2025

**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**

**MESSY CHURCH 1-3pm 3rd Sunday of the
month, not in August**

St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion

**St Peter 8am Holy Communion
11am Sung Communion**

Last Sunday of each month, Sunday Club

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, Aug 31st, 11th Sunday after Trinity
Jeremiah 2 v4-13, Luke 14 v1 & 7-14***

5pm at the Bandstand Armed Services Service

BAPTISMS

12.30pm St Peter's; Joshua David Kristian Jones

2pm St John's; Albie-George Clive Prout

3pm St John's; Vienna Amaris Taylor

FUNERALS

Wed 27th 11am St Peter's; Memorial; Martin Smith

Fri 5th Sept 2.30pm; Roger Jones

**THIS Wednesday 27th August
Christian Aid Garden Party**

2-4pm at the Rectory

All Welcome

Prayer, Collect, for this week

To the banquet of your kingdom, O God of the nations, you have invited people of every race and tongue. May all who are called to a place at your table come, by the narrow way, to the unending feast of life. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Old Testament Jeremiah 1 v4-10

The word of the LORD came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' Then I said, 'Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.' But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, "I am only a boy"; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.' Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, 'Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.'

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 Sept 3rd*
2nd Wed Christian Aid Lunch Hall 12-1pm

First Thursday No August meeting.

Next is 4th Sept at Rachel's
June Jackson on work in Prison Service.

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
resuming 2nd Sept.

Wednesdays

Thursday 1st Thursday Social Group (see above)

Friday Choir Practice in Church 7pm

Gospel of Luke 13 v10-17

Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.' But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?' When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Prayer after Communion

God of the Sabbath, this is the day and this is the hour when women long oppressed learn to stand with dignity, when your healing escapes our desire for control: may your joy stretch the fabric of our hearts and inspire us to loose each other's bonds; through Jesus Christ, the shamer of the powerful and the raiser of the dead. Amen.

YEARS Mind – a reminder

The names we read out in the prayers in church are to be found in the 2024 diaries in each church. Please feel free to add any more names for the rest of this year.

Diaries for 2026 entries will be
available in the autumn

Names should be read on the Sunday the week before
the anniversary.

*The names for the sick are also usually by this book, **and you can add names**, and for other names see the information on this notice sheet.*

WINDOWS MAGAZINE

Please send contributions for the next "Harvest"
Edition to Allan by 5th September please
<allan.whyte@yahoo.com>