

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

### 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity 28<sup>th</sup> 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

Once again Jesus takes something from his audience's experience. This time it is a popular story. As writers and other artists have always done, he fashions existing material to his own purposes. A legend about a rich man and a poor man had been circulating in the East for some centuries and could be turned into something else that could help those around him to understand what he was saying. The legend Jesus was adapting went on these lines: You have a rich man and a poor man. The rich man has every good fortune, while the poor man lives and dies in squalor. But after their deaths their fates are completely reversed, for when they get to the realm of the dead, the poor man can be seen dressed in royal garments and sitting near the ruler of that kingdom, while the rich man is being punished in a different compartment of that kingdom. In some versions of the story the poor man lives 'in the garden of paradise in the midst of water fountains', while the rich man 'unsuccessfully stretches out his tongue for the river; he wanted to reach it, but he could not.' Also we have, in the legend, someone who comes from the realm of the dead to convince a living person of what happens there.

A strange story certainly; but its point is very simple. It showed, with the imaginative colouring of an oriental story, that the inequalities that are so glaring in life between the very rich (who were liable to have gained their wealth unscrupulously) and the utterly destitute *would one day be evened out*. It was a kind of consolation story for the unfortunate. You may not get a good fortune in this life; but don't worry, and don't imagine that those wealthy people who lord it over you will always be the privileged ones: after death everything will be evened out.

Jesus, in his story, *didn't* want to speak of the after-life. he wasn't telling his audience what would happen in the future when they died. That was just the 'backdrop' to what he wanted to say: the furniture he was taking over from a familiar set. Once we recognise this, we see that Jesus' story hinges on two main decisions. There is the rich man's decision to be interested only in

his pleasures. As a result he couldn't even *see* the beggar at his gate. The other decision (possibly proposed as an excuse for the first) is the one expected of the rich man's brothers: they wouldn't listen to God's word to them. The two decisions are interconnected, because the second throws quite a lot of light on the first. The rich man knew what kind of decision his brothers would make because *it would be like his*. He knew all about people of comfortable or large incomes not listening to God. The story seems to make clear that the weekly listening was the weekly service in the synagogue. That is where, every week, he and his brothers would have heard 'Moses and the prophets' read and explained to them. It was the weekly invitation to respond to God's love for them.

The parable is about the importance of responding to that weekly invitation to see the world with God's eyes. As an acknowledged 'son' of Abraham, the rich man often heard it, and so did his brothers. But it made no difference. There could be a person outside your gate, crippled, destitute, starving and wounded, and you would not even realise they were there. Really listening to God meant being prepared to see things as they are. His word enables us to see those in need. If we don't listen to it, we remain in an unreal world, spun out of our own imagination and desires. And we don't live like humans at all. Eventually, as in Jesus' story, there is an unbridgeable gap between what we have made of ourselves and what we would like to be. His story begins by showing us two people with a *gate* between them, and it makes you half expect that one or other of them will go through the gate to the other. By the end of the story that gate has been replaced by an unbridgeable chasm. The rich man has made his choice: now it is too late to change.

There is something else Jesus seems to be using that old story to say. The story included miraculous communication between God and people. There it has just been a way of getting the story going: someone from the 'other world' had been shown the rich man and the poor man and what had happened to them. But, in Jesus' version, miraculous communication isn't a peg to hang a story on: it's something asked for by the main character, and the request is refused. The rich man asked for it as a way to bypass a difficulty. He knew his brothers wouldn't respond to God addressing them in their weekly invitation to ponder. A miraculous message, he suggested, would get over that difficulty. Jesus was asking his listeners to consider whether they too, however unconsciously, were making the same kind of request of him. They too were being invited to respond to the word of God: as expressed in Moses and the prophets and now as climactically expressed in him. They said, "No: if you want us to accept you, you must show us a

miraculous sign: something that will make the decision for us: will hand the solution to us on a plate.” Jesus, like Abraham in his story, turns down the request. Like Abraham he does so because it would not work. When it is a matter of what kind of person I am going to be, there is no substitute for my own decision. Only ***I*** can find and respond to God. No one can do it for me.

So Jesus turns what had been a soothing bit of escapism for the poor (‘you’ll get even some day’) into a description of the challenge of life for ***everyone***. the test of life is to be open-eyed to what is there, and responsive. the alternative is the irrevocable and tragic failure of human life. the heart of the matter is the stance to life I choose, and my making a real use of the word of God to enlighten that choice.

### **Prayers**

Lord, Jesus Christ we thank you for all benefits you have won for us.  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for us.

Most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

*Lord, when I am hungry, give me someone to feed;  
when I am thirsty, give water for their thirst;  
Lord, when I am sad, give me someone to lift from sorrow;  
when burdens weigh upon me,  
lay upon my shoulders the burdens of my fellows.  
When I stand greatly in need of tenderness,  
give me someone who yearns for love.  
May Your Will be my bread, Your Grace my strength,  
Your love my resting place; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Today God has touched you with his love  
and given you a place among his people  
God promises to be with you in joy and in sorrow,  
to be your guide in life, and to bring you safely to heaven.  
In Baptism God invites you on a life-long journey.  
Together with all God’s people you must explore the way of Jesus  
and grow in friendship with God,  
in love for his people, and in serving others.

*May the living Christ bless you through the fellowship of his people,  
granting you, as a member of his body,  
support, encouragement, guidance and inspiration.  
May you give and receive, love and be loved,  
actively contributing to the life and witness of the Church,  
through the service you offer, the worship you give  
and commitment you show, in word and deed.  
The Lord grant you, this day and always, a clear vision, a living hope and a  
constant faith, that you may live and work faithfully, to His glory. Amen.*

**NEXT Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 2.30pm at St Peter's**  
**Three Counties Masonic Service**  
**All people are welcome to attend**

**Time to Remember"**

**ANNUAL MOURNERS' SERVICES.**

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October 4pm at St John's  
Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 10am at St John's  
Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 10am at St Peter's  
Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November 10am at St Peter's  
Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 9.15am at St Mary's  
Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 4pm at St Peter's  
Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 1<sup>st</sup> November.  
We will also read at the 1<sup>st</sup> November service the names  
of all those we have taken funerals for since July 2024*

**THERE ARE LETTERS FOR DELIVERY BY HAND AT  
THE BACK OF St Peter's and St John's. THANK YOU**

*Tues 30<sup>th</sup> Sept St Mary PCC at Vera's 7.30pm  
CHANGE of DATE Team Council from Tues 9<sup>th</sup>  
Sept to Tues 4<sup>th</sup> Nov at St Peter's 7.30pm*

**NEW PLAN - HARVEST LUNCH.**

*NEXT WEEK 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 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](mailto:dreamather@sky.com) or text  
07971153164 to reserve a place.*

**ADVANCE NOTICE – new event.**

*Sat 29<sup>th</sup> November 11.30am St Peter's  
**Live performance of the SNOWMAN***

**OCTOBER**

**Sat 18<sup>th</sup> Bondi Concert 7pm St John's**  
**Fri 31<sup>st</sup> Lumos 7pm Candlelit Concert**  
**at St Peter's 7-8pm & 9-10pm**

**NOVEMBER**

**Sat 8<sup>th</sup> St Mary Coffee Morning at Sue's**  
**Sat 8<sup>th</sup> CMS Concert St Peter's 2pm**  
**Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> St Peter's Christmas Fair**

**12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> Dec St Peter's Christmas Tree Festival**  
**Entry forms for Christmas Trees now available.**  
**Individuals or Organisation invited to enter a tree.**

**HARVEST FESTIVALS**

**NEXT SUNDAY Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Oct St Mary's 9.15am**  
**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Oct St Peter's 8am and 11am**  
**Sun 12<sup>th</sup> 4pm St John's Harvest Choral Evensong**  
**Please bring produce to the Harvest Festivals**  
**with a good date for Donation to the Food bank**

**15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity 28<sup>th</sup> Sept**

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

**Regular Sunday Services**

**St John 9.30am Sung Communion**

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

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday MESSY CHURCH 1-3pm**

**St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion**

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

**THIS WEEK, Last Sunday Sunday Club 11am**

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:karen.marchchurches@outlook.com)**

**BAPTISM**

**12.45pm St Mary's; Marla Frost Fulcher**

**FUNERAL**

**Mon 29<sup>th</sup> 1.30pm Fenland; Barry Howlett**

*Next Sunday, Oct 5<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity*  
*St Mary & St Peter HARVEST FESTIVAL*  
*Deuteronomy 26 v1-11, Luke 17 v5-10*  
*St John Lamentations 1 v1-6, Luke 17 v5-10*  
***1.30pm Baptism at St Mary's***

**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

**NEXT SUNDAY 5<sup>th</sup> October**

***Thank you very much, wise and faithful servant!***

### **Prayer, Collect, for this week**

O God of justice, hear our cry and save us. Make us heed your word to the prophets; rouse us to the demand of the gospel and impel us to carry it out. 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 Jeremiah 32 v1 – 3a & 6-15**

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah, where King Zedekiah of Judah had confined him.

Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came to me: Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.' Then my cousin Hanamel came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the Lord, and said to me, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord.

And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. Then I took the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions, and the open copy; and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, in order that they may last for a long time. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

### **Regular Church Activities at St Peter's**

#### **Tuesday**

10am-12noon Knit and Natter;

1<sup>st</sup> St Peter's MU 2.30-4pm 3<sup>rd</sup> Deanery MU

#### **Wednesday**

#### **10am Midweek Communion Service**

1<sup>st</sup> Study Group 7.30-9pm Next **THIS WEEK** Oct 1<sup>st</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> Wed Christian Aid Lunch Hall 12-1pm

Wed 19<sup>th</sup> Nov 12.30-2.30pm St John's Hall  
Vaccinations available – see poster for details

### **Gospel of Luke 16 v19-31**

Jesus told this parable to those among the Pharisees who loved money: 'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us." He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them." He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." '

### **Prayer after Communion**

God of Abraham, Moses and the prophets, your covenant binds us as sisters and brothers: help us to overcome the scandal of poverty, the fixed chasm of indifference and to recognize you in the wounded poor; through Jesus Christ, the Builder of Bridges. Amen.

### **WINDOWS MAGAZINE now available**

#### **St John's Church Activities**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday**

9.15-11.15 St John's Tots;

#### **Tuesday**

#### **10am Midweek Communion Service**

2<sup>nd</sup> Study Group 11-12 Next Oct 14<sup>th</sup>

Study Group 7pm-8.30pm; Film The Chosen

**Wednesdays** Community Hub in Hall 12-2

**Thursday** 1st Thursday Social Group (see above)

**Friday** Choir Practice in Church

**THIS WEEK, Next First Thursday** 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct at 7:30 at 129 West End. Film night 'The Thursday Murder Club'. All ladies welcome. Bring snacks to share. Celia Green to speak at the November meeting.