

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

16th Sunday after Trinity 5th October

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

Have you ever heard a sermon on the book of Lamentations? Probably not, though it is assigned as the reading for today. The book of Lamentations is just that; five long poems of sadness, grief over an ancient city, Jerusalem, that was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587BC. The Jews cried over that destruction, because the holy city was the focus of all their dreams and hopes, the sign of God's presence and fidelity to them, the gathering of all things precious and treasured. And then it was gone, gone by Babylonian invasion, but they said, gone by the anger of God.....and in any case gone! And they wept. They wept for loss. They wept for abandonment. They wept in their deep hurt and despair. And the book of Lamentations lingers in the bible, because Jews have never finished weeping over that loss that showed again in the Nazi holocaust, and that likely is still at work in the present Israeli government with its fear and anxiety and brutality.

Christians have never much used and never much needed the book of Lamentations. Little needed and little used, because Christians have forever been triumphant and dominant, partly confident that Jesus is the winner, and partly privileged culturally, politically and economically. As a result, our losses were never so deep.... and no one did a "Final Solution" on us as on the Jews. We never used and never needed Lamentations, until we considered the cross and the crucifixion and the suffering love of Jesus and his call to enter the places of hurt with him. So now, as we ponder the lost Jerusalem and crucified Jesus and God's suffering love, and recall Timothy being asked to "Join me in suffering for the Gospel."

Read again, (Lamentations 1 v1-6); mark and inwardly digest, these deep cadences of loss, grief and pain.....

It did not used to be so sad in Jerusalem. the city was full of people, great among nations, a princess among princes of this world. Did not used to be, but now lonely, like a widow, a vassal....humiliated, vulnerable, exposed, brutalised. It is a city imagined like an abused woman; *"She weeps bitterly in*

the night, with tears on her cheeks; with no one to comfort her" – none to comfort, grief, loss hurt too deep to utter.

There is a reason that we now have this assigned text of Lamentations that we have not needed or used before. The reason is that, like those old Jews who saw Jerusalem devastated, we are watching the old world we have trusted and counted on, vanishing before our eyes. We are witnessing the demise of patterns of power and patterns of meaning that have seemed eternal. We are watching male privilege under threat, and white privilege is at risk. Western domination is now resisted, and I do not even need to observe that the old heterosexual assumptions are in doubt....old patterns of family and sexuality and medicine and education and justice.....and anything else you might name, are now all in jeopardy. There is a deep loss among us that gives way to deep anxiety that produces deep resentment and, in many quarters, brutality. The big losses so public and seemingly cosmic spin off into immediate, local losses in the neighbourhood. The index of violence and fear issues in public rage and more weapons and more prisons, more homelessness; and the outcome, midst our wealth and prosperity, is a kind of fearful hollowness at the centre, amidst privilege, much less joy that we had anticipated.

Verse 12 adds, *"Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me..."* Do you see? Do you notice? Do you care? Christians are asked to notice and care, even if the world did not notice Jerusalem then, and does not now. And when we notice as Jesus notices, we find ourselves transformed, away from self sufficiency to solidarity, away from private privilege to communal engagement, away from hard dismissive indifference to compassion. Timothy's invitation to join in suffering is an invitation to a different from of life, and different presence in the world, a mode of life that promotes healing in the world.

But we can get bogged down in a sense of our own helplessness in the face of the suffering of and in the world; losses so deep that it leads to depression. But Timothy is asked to *"rely on the power of God."* The antidote to depression is our calling to God's purpose. The ground for well-being amidst suffering is the power of God. We testify that the suffering of the world all around us is in the midst of God's power from which we act freely in caring ways of solidarity. Of course, the power of God seems thin and flimsy in the face of loss and brutality and anxiety and hollowness. But we have learnt that God's gift of faith in us and God's call to us to be different in

the world are supported by God's power that we have seen in the resurrection of Jesus and therefore will prevail in the world in God's good time.

The poetry of Lamentations asserts the same conviction of faith that Christians find in the gift of the resurrection; *"My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say gone is all I had hoped from the Lord..."* but then a few verses after this sense of loss, hurt and abandonment is changed to a new voice *"This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope....the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness"* (3 v17-23)

Here are the three great words in the Old Testament speaking of the power of God; ***steadfast love, mercy, faithfulness***. Israel finds God to be utterly reliable midst any and every loss. The church has found God to be utterly reliable in the midst of every suffering. Even now, as we speak, there are those who know God's steadfast love, mercy and faithfulness that are midst every need. It is people that do not trust God faithfulness, who do not know God's mercy and who have no sense of God's steadfast love who engage in denial and cannot face the loss of all that is going on around us. It is a loss of that memory that lets people fall into anxiety, resentfulness, and destructiveness. But we who eat broken bread and poured out wine, we are different. We know about God's reliable power - steadfast love, mercy, faithfulness – and so we do not flinch from the suffering of the world. We come to it with freedom and confidence, knowing that God entrusts to us the capacity to heal and transform. And so to the table, invited by Christ, there spread before us are all the hurts and losses of the world, there spread before us is the power of God, given as steadfast love, mercy and faithfulness. "We have not a spirit of cowardice, but a spirit of power and of love." We really are different! We are unafraid, with peculiar work to do!

Prayers`

Blessed are you poor, **for yours is the kingdom of God.**

Blessed are you that hunger now, **for you shall be satisfied.**

Blessed are you that weep now, **for you shall laugh.**

Blessed are you when others hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man, **rejoice in that day, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.**

But woe to you that are rich, **for you have received your consolation.**

Woe to you that are full now, **for you shall hunger.**

Woe to you that laugh now, **for you shall mourn and weep.**

Woe to you, when all people speak well of you,

for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

But Jesus says to you, hear,

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

God be gracious to us and bless us, and make your face shine upon us:

Lord, have mercy on us.

May your ways be known on the earth, your saving power among the nations:

Christ, have mercy on us.

You, Lord, have made known your salvation, and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations: **Spirit, have mercy on us.**

Teach us, O Lord, the way of your statutes;

and lead us in the path of your commandments.

Keep our nation under your care; **and guide us in justice and truth.**

O Lord, deal graciously with your servants;

teach us discernment and knowledge.

Let not the needy be forgotten; **nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

Guide the meek in judgement; **and teach your ways to the gentle.**

Lord, remember your people;

whom you have purchased and redeemed of old.

Alternative Harvest Reading

Old Testament Lamentations 1 v1–6

How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal.

She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies. Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude; she lives now among the nations, and finds no resting place; her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress. The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals; all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter. Her foes have become the masters, her enemies prosper, because the Lord has made her suffer for the multitude of her transgressions; her children have gone away, captives before the foe. From daughter Zion has departed all her majesty. Her princes have become like stags that find no pasture; they fled without strength before the pursuer.

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*

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

OCTOBER

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
NEW Wed 12th 7pm St P Can’t Sing Choir Concert
Sat 22nd St Peter’s Christmas Fair
Sat 29th 11.30am St Peter’s Snowman Live perf

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
NEW Sun 14th 4.30 G&S concert in St John’s
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

CHRISTMAS EVE Wednesday 24th December

10am St Peter’s Holy Communion
2-3pm St John’s Outdoor Nativity Experience
4pm St Peter’s Crib and Carol Service
9pm St John’s Midnight in Bethlehem! Communion
11.30pm St Peter’s Midnight Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY Thursday 25th December

Communion Services at usual Sunday times
8am and 11am St Peter’s
9.15am St Mary’s 9.30am St John’s

12th–14th Dec St Peter’s Christmas Tree Festival
Entry forms for Christmas Trees now available.
Individuals or Organisation invited to enter a tree.

16th Sunday after Trinity 5th Oct

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

THIS Sunday 5th Oct 2.30pm at St Peter’s
Three Counties Masonic Service
All people are welcome to attend

Regular Sunday Services

St John 9.30am Sung Communion

THIS WEEK, First Sunday of each Month

9.30am Wholeness Service with Laying on of
Hands

3rd Sunday MESSY CHURCH 1-3pm

St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion

HARVEST FESTIVAL

St Peter 8am Holy Communion

11am Sung Communion

*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

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.

BAPTISM

1.30pm St Mary’s; James David Paul Wilson

FUNERAL

Wed 8th Oct 12noon St Wendreda Robert Winterton
Mon 20th Oct 11.30pm; Fenland; Bob Anderson

Next Sunday, Oct 12th, 17th Sunday after Trinity
Jeremiah 29 v1 & v4-7, Luke 17 v11-19

4pm Harvest Choral Evensong at St John’s

Today we give thanks for the 20 years of LLM
Reader Ministry from Diane Wise at St John’s
She will continue to be an active member!

Thank you very much, wise and faithful servant!

Karen Pritchard is taking a break as an LLM.
We also welcome Stewart Piper a new LLM/Reader
mainly at St Wendreda’s to our March Team

Prayer, Collect, for this week

God our Saviour, you call us into your service. Make us wise and resourceful: children of the light who continue your work in this world with untiring concern for integrity and justice. 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 Deuteronomy 26 v1 –11

When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us." When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me." You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.

Next Christian Aid Lunch
is Wednesday October 8th at St Peters Church Hall
12 noon.

March Christian Aid Group Quiz Night
Friday 14th Nov 6.45 for 7 pm at Catholic Church,
£5 per person to include a glass of wine/soft drink
Come as individuals or as a team of up to 6 people

***NEXT Sunday 12th Oct
4pm St John's Harvest Choral Evensong
All Welcome***

Gospel of Luke 17 v5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

'Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!" '

Prayer after Communion

Lord of the growing seed, you reach to the roots of our being and quench our sea-deep thirst: help us to know ourselves through the eyes of the other who calls us to answer and serve and, in the end, be filled; through Jesus Christ, the Master of the Table. **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 Oct 14th

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

Next First Thursday 6th Nov 7:30 129 West End.

Celia Green on her time as Met Police Special

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 Nov 5th

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

*CHANGE of DATE Team Council from Tues 9th
Sept to Tues 4th Nov at St Peter's 7.30pm*