

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

### **14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity 21<sup>st</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**

Jesus' listeners could easily have visualised the story of a rogue. You had a landowner, with an agent administering his land. The agent, or "steward", would have been a man of considerable social standing in his locality. The servants in his master's household would have to treat him with deference, for their status was roughly that of slaves, while the agent was a free man. The agent's main job was to rent out his master's land to neighbouring farmers. This was quite a lucrative position. Besides his salary from the landowner, he would have had fees from the farmers for drawing up of rental contracts. And most of them would probably consider it normal and wise to "grease the palms" of such an important official with a present from time to time. A man with such power in the local community, and with many opportunities for dubious practice, could obviously attract critics.

This particular agent finds himself facing accusations by local people that he has been wasting his master's goods. His master charges him with this, and he makes no attempt at denial. Instead of taking the expected course of having the man jailed and forced to pay compensation, the master is merciful and merely fires him. 'Surrender the account books,' he orders him, for you can no longer be steward.' From the moment of this order the agent legally has no authority to act on his master's behalf. But he still has to go back to his office, to get the account books. And on his way back to his office to do that, the full realisation of his present plight strikes him. Every avenue of a tolerable life now seems barred to him. The only glimmer of hope comes from the fact that so far news of his dismissal has not spread, and that he still has those symbols of his authority, those account books! Why be in too much of a hurry to return them? Why not keep them for as long as he dares and use to make use of this authority to make provision for the rough times that certainly lie ahead. So with great haste before the news leaks, he summons the farmers. They don't get a friendly request to drop by at their convenience, but an urgent authoritative summons as if from the landowner himself. One

by one, he doesn't want them talking to one another, he addresses them with all the authority of his recent position. "What do you owe the master?" The terms of the leases are that the annual rent is a fixed amount of the produce, and each verbally confirms what is already on the account in the agent's hand. In so much of a hurry that he doesn't even address them as 'Friend' or 'Sir', he rattles out his order to change the entry in the account to a significantly lesser amount. Naturally the farmers are delighted – 'a splendid fellow, this agent' they would tell their friends, 'He even talked the landowner into a big cut in my annual rent.' High praise of the agent's enlightened and big-hearted actions would spread like wildfire round the village and many would be toasting him that evening!

News of these celebrations soon get to the landowner, who by now has had the accounts restored to him by his sacked agent. He can now check for himself both the original fraud and the subsequent illegal reduction. Yes he has been further cheated by this rogue. What will he do? Have him arrested? He isn't so sure. He isn't a vindictive man, as the restrained way he had reacted to the earlier mishandling shows. Also, is he going to dash the euphoria in the village by what the local people have understood as his own generosity by announcing it was all a mistake? Instead he decides to back his agent's actions and to praise him for the deftness and wisdom he has shown in a tight corner.

Then, in the last words, Jesus takes the story and points it at his listeners; he tells them that those who want to belong to God's Kingdom ('the children of light') should take a lesson from, of all people, that dishonest steward! What was he suggesting we should learn from him? A large clue to the answer is provided when Jesus says that the master praised the dishonest steward 'for his wisdom'. One meaning of the words, 'wisdom' was cleverness and skill deployed in self preservation, which is of course exactly what the steward has shown in this dismissal crisis. But it was also used for the sense of urgency and wisdom the followers of Jesus needed to have now to know that the Kingdom was coming. They too, like the steward, have wasted their master's goods. They too must, by urgent and wise action, earn their master's 'praise': a word that suggests in the New Testament the approval of God at the judgement.

It is possible that the parable is also asking us to consider that the steward entrusted everything to the unfailing mercy of his generous master who, he can be confident, will pay the price for salvation. It is true that the master is merciful both at the beginning and the end of the parable. Did the steward come to rely on his knowledge of his master's fundamental merciful nature?

But there is no clue towards this, and the overriding perception of the parable is one of deft and unscrupulous action, not reliance on mercy.

We know that the Kingdom of God isn't something that merely comes to us; it is an activity, God's activity in the world, that we are asked to become involved in. This is the enterprise in which we are invited to make fruitful use of our abilities. This parable seems to underline the need to have shrewdness as we try to be fruitful. If Christianity seems a rather tame and marginal affair, could it be that we haven't troubled to make a shrewd and alert use of our responsibilities as Christians? We were founded to be a 'kingly, priestly and prophetic people'. Do we speak out (or even try to understand) the injustices of our world, like the 'prophets' we are meant to be? Do we make full use of the world as God's marvellous creation, like 'kings'? Do we make the presence of God available to our contemporaries in the way we live, as 'priests'?

The parable also underlines the sense of urgency of the action required. Life may be long for you and me. We may have many years yet. Though it is up to us how profitable that may be. It is probably true that Jesus felt overpoweringly that the time was now for God's people. Is the same true for God's people today; is our time a special opportunity, which only we can seize? Perhaps it is simply a question of taking a decision now, seizing and valuing each moment, but the fact that a decision for the Kingdom isn't the kind you can play with, it must be fullhearted.

Our master, as other parables show, is one who loves to praise and delight in the fruitfulness in us that his gift enables, and which our shrewd use of that gift can achieve.

### **Prayers**

Rejoicing in the love and life of God made visible among us, let us pray to Jesus, the only begotten Son.

Bread of life, your beloved disciple John has brought us your living word, inspire all evangelists and teachers to build up your Church.

Light of the world, illuminate the dark places of this world, where sin, violence and death cast their shadow over human lives.

Door of the sheepfold, protect all who are in trouble or danger, and give grace to our loved ones, families and friends.

Way, truth and life, minister to all who are lost, misguided or without faith; bind up the broken and give rest to the weary.

Resurrection and the life, raise us up at the last day with all who have gone before us in faith, with those whom we see no longer, with John and all your saints, that in your father's house we may come to the place you have prepared for us. Incarnate Lord, Word made flesh, accept our prayers.

The risen Christ is here in the midst of us.

### **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*

*Tues 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept Deanery Synod 7.30pm Wimblington  
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*

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

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

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

#### **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](mailto:dreamather@sky.com)  
or text 07971153164 to reserve a place.*

#### **HARVEST FESTIVALS**

TODAY Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> St John’s 9.30am

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

#### **ADVANCE NOTICE – new event.**

*Sat 29<sup>th</sup> November 11.30am St Peter’s*

**Live performance of the SNOWMAN**

### **14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity 21<sup>st</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**

***This Week HARVEST FESTIVAL***

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

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

**St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion**

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

*Next 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)

#### **BAPTISMS St Peter’s**

12.30pm Edward Michael Alexander James

Meek-Welcher; 1.30pm Ivy Bella Martin

#### **FUNERAL**

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

*Next Sunday, Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity  
Jeremiah 32 v1-3a & 6-15, Luke 16 v19-31*

***12.45pm Baptisms at St Mary’s***

*NEXT Saturday September 27<sup>th</sup>  
Lions Event at St Peters*

***Thanks to those who supported St John’s Fair,  
the Choir singing and the Bangers & Mash***

**WINDOWS MAGAZINE now available**

### **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, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Old Testament Jeremiah 8 v18 – 9 v1**

The word of the Lord through the prophet: My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick. Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: 'Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?' ('Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their foreign idols?') 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored? O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

### **OCTOBER**

*Sun 5<sup>th</sup> 2.30pm 3 Counties Masonic Service St Peter*

*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*

### **DECEMBER**

*Sat 6<sup>th</sup> St John's Christmas Fair/ Choir Singing*

*Sat 6<sup>th</sup> FMC concert in St Peters*

*Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 1pm Christmas Lunch at St Mary's*

*Fri 12<sup>th</sup> – Sun 14<sup>th</sup> Christmas Tree Festival  
at St Peter's, with Christingle Sunday 3pm*

*Wed 17<sup>th</sup>-Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Winterwonderland at St John's*

*Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Dec St Mary's Coffee Morning at Roger's*

*Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Carol Services 3pm St Mary,  
4.30pm St John, 6.30pm St Peter*

**Next First Thursday** 2<sup>nd</sup> 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;

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 Oct 1<sup>st</sup>*

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

### **Gospel of Luke 16 v1-13**

Jesus said to the disciples, 'There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, "What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer." Then the manager said to himself, "What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes." So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, "How much do you owe my master?" He answered, "A hundred jugs of olive oil." He said to him, "Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty." Then he asked another, "And how much do you owe?" He replied, "A hundred containers of wheat." He said to him, "Take your bill and make it eighty." And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.'

'Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.'

### **Prayer after Communion**

God of unexpected judgement, finding grace in the devious and compromised: free us from the certainty of having you in our grip that a better wealth may flow through our open hands; through Jesus Christ, the Currency of Life. **Amen.**

### **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 Sept 9<sup>th</sup>

Study Group 7pm-8.30pm; Film The Chosen

#### **Wednesdays**

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

**Friday** Choir Practice in Church