

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

Last Sunday after Trinity 26th 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

SUNDAY 4pm at St John's ***MOURNERS SERVICE***

Meditation

The concluding part from Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

In Romans 5, St Paul says: "Whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." St Paul is, as we should be, bowled over by such an extravagant and generous love. He has meditated on this mystery, for he goes on to say that it is a very rare and unlikely thing to die for another, though perhaps one might consider dying for a good person. But to die for a malefactor, for someone who is not good? No, that is wholly improbable. And yet that is precisely what has happened in the case of our redemption. It was whilst we were at our worst, at our most unattractive, at our most repulsive – *that* is when this All-Holy One decided to shed his blood for us.

Had Christ waited until we deserved to be died for, He would have to wait until the cows come home. That is the wonder and the splendour of divine generosity, of the divine self-emptying (*kenosis*). But it is very much in line with the nature of God revealed in the parable of the lost sheep. You will recall the amazing wonder of God's love as depicted in that parable. I doubt that most prudent shepherds would leave ninety-nine sheep by themselves to go into dangerous terrain to search for only one sheep, and that one that may have always been troublesome and wayward. Sheep do not usually stray from their flock just like that. So, the lost sheep seems to have been an exceedingly troublesome old rogue, and many shepherds would probably have sighed with relief that that one had disappeared and said with some considerable relief, "Good riddance to bad rubbish." But the Good Shepherd refuses to give up on this recalcitrant one. The divine love gives up on no one.

For God there is no one who has a first-class ticket to hell. God, our God, invests all of the divine love and concern for each one of us. God gives to each of us not a piece of love, a bit of God – No; God is never distracted in

God's attention. God gives God's all, at every single moment, to each single one of us; to the good and the bad and the indifferent. God loves you and God loves me as if we were each the only creatures God had ever created. It is breathtaking stuff.

If it could be computed, God gives much more of the divine caring and attention to the one on whom the world has given up, the one who is utterly lost. That is how we would interpret the parable of the lost sheep: that God is seemingly willing to risk losing the ninety-nine good sheep just in order to recover the one awkward, troublesome stray. God seems to be saying that something totally irreplaceable would be missing from the joy and beauty of heaven if that lost one were not recovered.

My favourite theologian of the Early Church is Origen, who was thought to be less than orthodox because he cut himself to become a eunuch. I admire him especially for his doctrine of universalism. He taught that the divine love is so appealing, so attractive and so irresistible that, in the end, even the devil will be unable to resist it, and so even the devil and his demon angels will be drawn back into the heaven of the God of love, when God will truly be All in All.

That is how evil will be destroyed, not by recalcitrant and miscreants being thrown into flames that will burn for ever. I find it abhorrent to think that in the heaven of the God of love, the redeemed would be gloating as they witnessed the damned wallowing in anguish and agony. I don't think I would like to go to such a heaven. I believe that God longs for all the persons God created to enter heaven; to be caught up in the endless worship and adoration of a God of all consuming love and compassion.

Since God is infinite love, goodness, mercy, wisdom and truth, there will never come a moment when (speaking, as we have to in space-time terms) any of God's finite creatures would be able to say, "Ah, now I comprehend God fully", for then they would not be creatures, but would have metamorphosed into God. God will forever be God, all-loving, all-holy, all-compassionate, and we will grow in our knowledge of God, discovering ever greater depths to that love and compassion and goodness; and God's love will not let God rest until all of God's creatures have been drawn into the ambit of that love and compassion and caring. That is why God would give God's all, God's Son, to win us back home, even whilst we were yet sinners. That is how highly God regards us, how deeply God loves us; and it is beyond our computing, our comprehension.

God hopes that we, who have experienced the wonder and depth of God's love, will be enlisted in God's team, to seek to draw in those outside, by

emulating God's ways. We are enlisted to attract the recalcitrant; ultimately by love, by compassion and by caring. After all, many in the Ancient World were drawn to the Church when they witnessed just how much these Christians loved one another.

God bless us, inspire us, enable us to draw others to you by our love so that, as the hymn puts it: "They know we are Christians by our love."

We are enabled to love at all only because He first loved us, and was ready to give His all for us – not just when we were good, but especially when we were utterly undeserving of that divine love. *Whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*- this one who chose us to be His before the foundation of the world. It is mind-blowing. You are someone of infinite worth, because God the Infinite, the Immortal, the all-Holy One, chose you, chose me, chose us all to be His, from all eternity until the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayers

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father. O God, the creator and preserver of all, we pray for your people in every kind of need: make your ways known on earth, your saving power among all nations..... Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the good estate of the Church; guide and govern us by your good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold fast the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace and in righteousness of life..... Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We commend to your fatherly goodness all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed, in mind, body or estate; comfort and relieve them in their need, give them patience in their sufferings, and bring good out of all their afflictions..... Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We remember those who have gone before us in the peace of Christ, and we give you praise for all your faithful ones, with whom we rejoice in the communion of saints..... Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All this we ask for Jesus Christ's sake, and as he taught us, so we pray;

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

St John's ROTAS

Clive is now going to co-ordinate the rotas.

If you would like to lead the prayers, read, acolyte, or assist with refreshments, please sign the lists in church.

New people welcome, existing people thanks and please sign to continue.

St Peter's ROTAS

are co-ordinated by Hannah, new people needed and welcomed – have a word with Hannah.

Thanks to all who assist.

St Mary's ROTAS

are co-ordinated by James, please see list; thanks to those who contribute; new people are welcomed.

St John's Church Activities

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

9.15-11.15 St John's Tots;

Tuesday

10am Midweek Communion Service

Study Group 11-12 **NOTE NEXT Nov 18th**

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

NOTE VENUE CHANGE 30 Westwood Avenue

Celia Green on her time as Met Police Special

SAVE THE DATE: First Thursday Christmas meal on

Thursday 4 December at the conservative club 7pm for 7:30pm. All welcome - partners, friends

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**

Time to Remember"

ANNUAL MOURNERS' SERVICES.

TODAY 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

Last Sunday after Trinity 26th Oct

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

TODAY 4pm at St John's MOURNERS SERVICE

Regular Sunday Services

St John 9.30am Sung Communion

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

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

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, Stewart Piper

BAPTISM

2pm St John's Riley Ray Cawley

FUNERALS

Tue 11th 11.30am St Wendreda; Doris Denson

Thu 13th 12noon St Wendreda; Wilfred Bennett

Next, November 2nd, 1st Kingdom, All Saints Sunday

2 Thessalonians 1 v1-12, Luke 19 v1-10

4pm MOURNERS SERVICE at St Peter's

9th Nov, Remembrance Sunday

9.30 Parade from Sainsbury's

9.45-10.30am Service in St Peter's

10.40am Parade to Memorial.

11am Remembrance in Broad St

(Also Act of Remembrance in St Peter's 11am)

11.40am Simple Communion in St Peter's

Services at usual times at St Mary's and St John's

Also Tuesday November 11th 11am in Broad St

Prayer, Collect, for this week

O God, who alone can probe the depths of the heart, you hear the prayer of the humble and justify the repentant sinner. As we stand before you, grant us the gift of humility, that we may see our own sins clearly and refrain from judging our neighbour. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, and for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who is one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament Joel 2 v23-32

O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the LORD your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing-floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

Then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit. I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

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

12th–14th Dec St Peter's Christmas Tree Festival

Entry forms for Christmas Trees now available.

Individuals or Organisation invited to enter a tree.

SHOEBOX APPEAL

Christmas Presents for children in need.

Leaflets available; boxes need to be back by

Wed 5th Nov to St Peter's or any church

by the preceding Sunday, 2nd Nov

Wed 19th Nov 12.30-2.30pm St John's Hall

Vaccinations available – see poster for details

Sat 1st Nov Working Party at St John's from 9.30am
– tackling the limes! All welcome, help needed.

Gospel of Luke 18 v9-14

Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income." But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.'

Prayer after Communion

Infinite God, impatient with your otherness we make you into an idol to serve our own needs: humble our arrogance by the strangeness of your coming and the wonder of your mercy; through Jesus Christ, the friend of Pharisees and tax collectors. **Amen.**

NOVEMBER

Sat 8th St Mary Coffee Morning at Sue's 10-12

Sat 8th CMS Concert St Peter's 2pm

Wed 12th 7pm St P; Can't Sing Choir Concert

Sat 22nd St Peter's Christmas Fair 9.30-12.30

Sat 29th 11.30am St Peter's Snowman Live perf

DECEMBER

Sat 6th St John's Christmas Fair/ Choir 10-1.30

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

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

Wed 17th-Fri 19th Winterwonderland St John's 5-8

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

1-3pm St John's Messy Church Nativity

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

CHANGE of DATE Team Council from Tues 9th

Sept to Tues 4th Nov at St Peter's 7.30pm

THIS FRIDAY 31st October

Lumos – **A Coldplay Candlelight Experience**

at St Peter's 7-8pm or 9-10pm

www.lumos-experiences.com to book in advance