

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

18th Sunday after Trinity 19th 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

More words from Archbishop Desmond Tutu – concluding part next week.

Julian of Norwich in her *Revelations of Divine Love* describes the visions she was granted of God and the ways of God. Some of you may be familiar with her best-known vision in which she describes holding in her palm something like a hazelnut which, she is told, symbolises all that is created. When she is perturbed, worrying that all has been created is so vulnerable that it could disintegrate into nothing at any moment, she is told that it was love that brought it into being, that it is love that upholds and maintains it in being, and that it was brought into being *because* God loves it. Later, she describes another vision where she is deeply puzzled because she sees that nowhere that God blames us. And she cannot reconcile what appears to be clearly contradictory truths: the incontrovertible fact that we are sinners, and what has been revealed to her – that God does not blame us, and that nowhere is God wrathful, or taking us to task for our sins. She is reassured that she will one day see the truth that “All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.”

We are incredibly precious creatures. God created us, not because God *needed* us, but wonderfully, exhilaratingly; God created us because God *wanted* us. It is so important for us to bear in mind that God was, and is, fullness of being, pulsating love from eternity to eternity. God needed nothing. God needs nothing, outside of God, to be this pleroma; this fullness of love and fullness of being.

We Christians believe that God is a glorious Trinity, in which the Father pours out the fullness of the Father's being to the Son, who is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and so can return in equal measure, from all eternity to all eternity, the Father's love and being; and this pulsating interchange of love and being is the Holy Spirit. How fantastic! So, this God who needed nothing, who needs nothing outside the Godhead to be truly God, yet out of sheer grace wants us. *What an exhilarating truth* – and what a

world lies between ‘wanting’ and ‘needing’. We do not say, “I want oxygen”, as if it were a matter of indifference. No, we don't ‘want’ oxygen; we ‘need’ oxygen. There is a huge world of difference there. We are endowed with a remarkable worth. You and I have been brought into being by a God who did not need us, who does not need us. We are creatures of love, a love we could not earn, no matter how hard we tried – until we were blue in the face – because we were not there. But there is no need for us to strain, no need to try and impress God into loving us for *God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world*.

It is a stupendous reality that we do not need to impress God into loving us. God so loved the world that God gave to us, and to the whole of God's creation, the greatest gift that God could give: not this or that thing, but nothing less than God-self in God's greatest gift – God's Son.

God emulated Abraham, who was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, but had not in fact done so. God offered God's Son, not just on the cross but in the entire business of the Incarnation. Jesus, the Son of God, did not cling to his status as divine. No, He emptied Himself, divested Himself of the glory and privilege of His divinity, and took on the form of a slave (with all the weakness, and all the humiliation and indignity of a slave), and was obedient, even up to being done to death on the Cross by His own creatures. This One, who could have called upon flocks of angels had He wanted to do so, who could have commanded the forces of nature (after all, He commanded the winds to abate and the waves of the stormy lake to be still), did not use His divine power to escape the consequences of having sided with the poor, the downtrodden, the despised, the ostracized, the sinners in a world such as ours. He did all these things, He suffered the many indignities of His Passion and death on the cross, all to demonstrate the deep love He had for us; to prove that He loved us, not because we were lovable precisely and only because He had loved us in the past, He loved us now in the present, and He would continue to love us into eternity.

God has always loved us. That is why, in His earthly life, Jesus did not keep company with the respectable, the powerful etc. No, in keeping with the manner in which He became Man – when He chose to be born of a young woman who was of no status (as neither was her spouse) – He companied with the riff-raff, the poor, the despised, the insignificant, and He was criticised for the company He kept. We might say, really that anyone and everyone could enter the heaven of this Jesus; the standards were low and the judge was hopelessly biased in favour of sinners, the weak and the despised. Really anyone could enter the heaven of this Jesus.

And as we have heard, this was a God who was ready to leave ninety-nine perfectly well-behaved sheep to go after the recalcitrant and troublesome one, and could then announce that there was not just great joy, but **greater** joy in heaven over this obstreperous one, who had caused so much trouble, than over the ninety-nine who needed no repentance. Our God really is amazing.

Prayers.

Litany – for the darkness of waiting.

(Written for Advent Sunday 1985 by Women in Theology)

For the darkness of waiting of not knowing what is to come
of staying ready and quiet and attentive,
we praise you O God: for the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

For the darkness of staying silent for the terror of having nothing to say
and for the greater terror of needing to say nothing,
we praise you O God: for the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

For the darkness of loving in which it is safe to surrender
to let go of our self protection and to stop holding back our desire,
we praise you O God: for the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

For the darkness of choosing when you give us the moment to speak, and act,
and change, and we cannot know what we have set in motion, but we still
have to take the risk,
we praise you O God: for the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

For the darkness of hoping in a world which longs for you, and for the
wrestling and labouring of all creation for wholeness and justice and freedom,
we praise you O God: for the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

O thou sudden God, generous in mercy, quickener of new life,
giver of new love, irreverent, subversive, deep source of yearning,
startling comforter, bearer of darkness, unmaker of old paths,
bringer of strange joy, abundant, disturbing, healing unlooked for,
tender and piercing: late I have loved thee, O Christ,
O beauty so ancient and so new.

O God our comfort and challenge,
whose presence is ever reliable and ever unexpected:
grant us to grieve over what is ending without falling into despair
and to enter our new lives and calling without forgetting your voice.
May the God who shakes heaven and earth, whom death could not contain,
who lives to disturb and heal us,
bless you to go forth and live in the light of the gospel.

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 7:30 129 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

Thanks to all who supported the Bondy Concert

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*

18th Sunday after Trinity 19th Oct

One World Week

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

THIS WEEK 3rd 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

*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

12.45pm St Peter's Bryony Jayne Barnes

FUNERAL

Mon 20th Oct 11.30pm; Fenland; Bob Anderson

Next Sunday, October 26th, 19th Sunday after Trinity

Joel 2 v23-32, Luke 18 v9-14

2pm Baptism at St John's

4pm MOURNERS SERVICE at St John'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

REMEMBER TO ALTER YOUR CLOCKS

Prayer, Collect, for this week

Lord, tireless guardian of your people, always ready to hear the cries of your loved ones, teach us to rely, day and night, on your care. Support our prayer, lest we grow weary. Impel us to seek your enduring justice and your ever-present help. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, and with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament Jeremiah 31 v27-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of humans and the seed of animals. And just as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD. In those days they shall no longer say: 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' But all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge.

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the LORD', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

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

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

Gospel of Luke 18 v1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." ' And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

Prayers, Collects, for this week

God of the dispossessed, you teach us to hunger for justice even when the weak are shut out and the powerful turn in their beds: in the heat of our anger and the bitterness of our complaints, give us courage to protest, the persistence to pray and the heart to love; through Jesus Christ, the true judge.

Amen.

NOVEMBER

Sat 8th St Mary Coffee Morning at Sue's

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

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

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

CHANGE of DATE Team Council from Tues 9th

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

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