

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

5th Sunday of Easter, May 3rd 2026

Regular 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

The water did get to the boat. For forty days and forty nights the earth was pounded by heavy downpours, rivers overflowed their banks, seas swelled, for Someone had opened the floodgates of heaven. Didn't it rain, oh, didn't it rain, children of my Lord! Noah brought the animals into the ark, two by two, and finally went on board himself with Mrs Noah, their three sons and their wives. *'And the Lord shut the door behind them.'* So tender. Suddenly God is very different. God is now like a mother who tucks up her children in bed, kisses them goodnight, and then quietly closes the door. "Sleep tight. Don't be afraid, soon it will be light again."

The water surged; the flood rose; the great deluge. The earth again became formless, a void and chaos, and darkness lay over the waters, as if God had never proclaimed, "Let there be light." The first to die were the creeping things, then the cattle, and after that, the people. When the water had reached the top of the trees, the squirrels and birds finally drowned too. The fish, as usual, were the only ones who noticed nothing strange. Silence reigned everywhere. Deathly silence. No sign of life anywhere, except in that clumsy crate heaving on the dark waves. Noah bobbed along on the floodwater, only a thin wall between him and death. But he felt borne up.

Is this a story to make mortals, tossed around, believe that God will bear them up, carry them through death? Is this what the people of Israel were dreaming of as they drifted over the world sea, far from home, that one day God would bring them home from exile?

For one hundred and fifty days Noah sailed on the waters with his floating zoo. Then spring came. *'And God remembered Noah, and all the animals and all the cattle that were with him. And God made his breath to blow over the earth, and the waters subsided, and the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat.'* The storyteller thinks that Ararat is the highest mountain in the world. So don't go off piously on an expedition in search of this ark; you'd have a better chance of finding Hansel and Gretel's gingerbread house in Mother Gooseland.

Noah opened the window of the ark and sent a raven out on reconnaissance. The raven is a wild bird, a scavenger. The bird kept flying back and forth and Noah was none the wiser. Seven days later he sent out a dove, a bird that prefers to nest in human habitations. But nowhere did the bird of peace find a perch; the waters still covered the whole earth. Noah stuck his hand out of the window, and brought the dove safely back on board.

After another seven days Noah released the bird again. In the evening the dove returned with an olive branch in its beak, the first greeting from paradise regained, the promise of a new garden.

Again, Noah waited seven days. The godly captain clearly reckoned from sabbath to sabbath. He counted the days out from God, and back again. Then he released the dove a third time. That evening the dove did not return. Peace returned.

In our Sunday readings we met Thomas a few weeks ago. On the Sunday evening, a week after Easter, Thomas was with the disciples now, having been absent the week before. When he had heard that Jesus had appeared to the other disciples in the locked upper room, he said he would not believe until he had seen Jesus with his own eyes and touched the wounds with his own hands. When he does encounter Jesus, he realises he does not need to do either and proclaims "My Lord and my God!" Today, we have an earlier appearance of Thomas in John's Gospel. Jesus has spoken of preparing the way to his Father's roomy house, and saying he will indeed come back to escort people there. Thomas appears not to understand and asks, *"How can we know the way?"* Do we read this with a tone of exasperation on Thomas' lips, or do we read it as the helpful next question in order to be ready when Christ comes to escort us? Equally, do we accept the traditional label of "doubting" for Thomas, or do we see him as the one who has real trust in Jesus because of a personal relationship or encounter? I think if John is portraying Thomas in a consistent way, then we have to see him as the one who asks the right question, that takes us forward to the right place; namely to be in close relationship with Jesus.

But Philip, another of the twelve, also gets to ask a question, and there is no sequel for him. *"Lord, show us the Father?"* he asks, and here Jesus does sound exasperated, explaining that He and the Father are One, and that knowing one is to know the other, and that their purposes and actions are completely identified. Then Jesus goes further, to say that those who believe will also act in a way that is consistent with God. This reading continues next week, and straightaway Jesus talks of Holy Spirit being sent. So here we have

the idea of God as Trinity illustrated in one of the Gospels. The Trinity is not a later introduction, but lies at the original heart of the Gospel. And we learn of this through Thomas' and Philip's questioning and seeking. So, we are invited to ask our questions, knowing that they help others and bring us into closer relationship with the reality of God, and that being in that relationship makes demands on our actions.

Prayers (on the Anniversary of the Coronation)

Almighty God, you reign over all things in wisdom, power, and love.
Hear our prayers which we offer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For Charles our King, that you may pour upon him abundant gifts
to help him fulfil the promises made at his coronation:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

That he will have the grace, wisdom, and strength
to live a life of service to you and to his people:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

That he will seek to uphold the values of love, joy and peace,
and always seek to follow you, our heavenly King:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

That he may lead with patience, kindness and generosity,
governing with humility and with a servant heart:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

That in being anointed for service to his God and his people,
you may bless him with faithfulness, gentleness and self-control:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

For Camilla the Queen Consort, William Prince of Wales,
the Princess of Wales, and all the Royal Family;
that they may love and support the King
as he bears the burden of his office:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

For Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury,
her care and service,
that she may be given the strength
to carry out the duties entrusted to her:
For the building up of the Church
and for its Supreme Governor,
for the building up of all Christian people,
and for mutual understanding and fellowship
between all people of faith:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

For this United Kingdom,
for His Majesty's other Realms and Territories,
for the whole Commonwealth of Nations,
for their governments and ministers,
and for all who are called to public service,
that they will seek justice, mercy, and peace:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

For the peace of the world,
for the welfare of all people,
for those who care for others and for the environment,
and for all in need:
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

May the risen Lord Jesus bless us with love, joy and peace.
May he watch over us and renew us as he renews the whole of creation.
May he bless King Charles, both now and always,
in the ways of humility and grace for his ministry among us.
May we, with King Charles, echo his love in our hearts and lives.
All **Amen.**

Saturday 16th May St Peter's Plant Sale
9-30-11.30 Not cancelled! Still happening!

Churches Together March Christian Aid Group

Free Lunch Buffet with a film
and talk by our good friend Sue Claydon.
Tuesday 5th May 12 noon for 12.30
Skoulding Suite above Paninis in Market Square.
All welcome; but helpful to let Val know
Val.buckenham1@gmail.com or 07944 553855

Bishop Dagmar's Farewell 4pm 3rd May Cathedral
Bishop Sarah's Welcome 3pm 21st June Cathedral

St John's Church Regular Activities

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

9.15-11.15 St John's Tots;

Tuesday

10am Midweek Communion Service

2nd Study Group 11-12 **NEXT 12th May**

Study Group 7pm-8.30pm; Film The Chosen

Wednesdays Community Hub in Hall 12-2

Thursday 1st Thursday Social Group (see below)

Friday Choir Practice in Church

First Thursday visit to the deer farm on 7th May 7pm.

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 6th May**

2nd Wed Christian Aid Lunch Hall 12-1pm

Sat 27th June St Peter's 6.30pm

Carl Jenkins Mass for Peace

Singers welcome

for more info contact james.trundle@hev.com

Also Choral Evensong 3.30pm 24th May St Peter's
again singers welcome and contact James

Future Dates

Thur 14th May ASCENSION DAY Service
7pm St John's

Sat 16th May Pig Racing St Mary 6pm

Thur 4th June CORPUS CHRISTI Service
7pm St Mary's

Sat 20th June St John's SUMMER FAIR 11-3

Sat 27th June St Mary Lunch at Liz & Joel's

Sat 27th Christian Aid Cream Tea at Jackie's 2-4

Sat 27th 6.30pm Choral Service at St Peter's

Sat 11th July BACON BUTTIES at St Peter's

Sat 11th July Alan Norris Band Concert St Peter's

Fri 17th July Water Aid afternoon tea, Rachel's

Sat 25th July St Mary's Lunch Bar-B-Q

Sat 5th Sept Quiet Day at St Mary's

Sat 19th Sept St John's Autumn Fair

Sat 19th Sept Model Railway Exhib St Mary's

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

5th Sunday of Easter, 3rd May
Alleluya Christ is Risen! He is Risen
Indeed, Alleluya

Regular Sunday Services

St John 9.30am Sung Communion

First Sunday of each Month

9.30am Wholeness Service with Laying on of Hands

Monthly 3rd Sunday MESSY CHURCH 1-3pm

St Mary 9.15am Traditional Sung Communion

St Peter 8am Holy Communion
11am Sung Communion

Monthly, 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 07957919510 Mother Jane Dicker 661099

Readers; Hannah Taylor 661712, Stewart Piper

Next Sunday, May 10th, Easter 6

Genesis 8 v20- 9 v17, John 14 v15-21

At **St Mary's APCM** Maureen & Sue Churchwardens
& Team Council, Ruth Secretary, James Treasurer,

Liz Safeguarding Officer,

Joel Deanery Synod, PCC Vera, Roger

At **St John's APCM** Clive was re-elected as

Churchwarden (and Deanery), Mark offering support,

Peter treasurer, Rachel Secretary, Ann Electoral Roll.

Anna Godfrey has become Safeguarding Officer.

PCC Karen & Mike (also Team), Mandy, Penny, Julie

St J APCM minutes are now at the back of church

At **St Peter's APCM** Jeremy was re-elected as

Churchwarden and Treasurer, Alan as Deputy, Brian

Secretary, June Electoral Roll.

Natalia has volunteered to be Safeguarding Officer

Team, Deanery PCC, Alan, Susannah;

PCC, Ann, Alistair, Klaudia, Rosemary, Beth

More people are welcome to join, but note still a

vacancy for a Churchwarden at both churches

THANKS to ALL

Prayers, Collects, for this week

We have beheld your glory, O God, in the face of Jesus Christ your Son. Enliven our faith, that through Christ we may put our trust in you. Deepen our faith, that in Christ we may serve you.

Complete our faith, that one day we may live with you in that place which Christ prepares for us, where he lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Genesis 8 v1-19

God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters had abated; and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more. In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. Then God said to Noah, 'Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.' So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.

Gospel of St John 14 v1-14

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.' Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Prayer after Communion

Generous God, whose way is love, whose truth is searching, whose life is freely given in Jesus Christ our Lord: as you have opened for us your house of many rooms, so may we make a place for the rejected and unloved, and share the work of peace; through Jesus Christ, the image of God. **Amen.**

The total raised by our four Churches for the

Water Aid Lent Appeal was £1538.73

Coffee Morning donations £555

Afternoon Tea £60 Lent Lunches £121.00

Egg Painting £275

Team Lent Jar £62.

St. Peter's Lent Jars £180

St. Mary's Lent Jars £41.00

St. John's Lent £104

St Wendreda Lent Jars £140

Thanks for all contributions.

PIG RACING NIGHT

with Sausage and Mash Supper

Saturday 16th May 6pm St Mary's Parish Room

Tickets £10 from Ruth 01354 650858

fundraising@stmaryschurchmarch.co.uk