



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church



Sunday 11th February 2024
The Sunday next before Lent
Staying in Contact

The Very Revd Rod Reid - Incumbent (*usual rest day Monday*)

Email: bockingchurch@gmail.com Call: (01376) 324887 www.stmarys-bocking.com
or on Facebook, search for 'St Mary's Church, Bocking', or 'Panfield Church'

Forthcoming Services

Hymns

St Mary's, Bocking

Sunday 11th February

8am Said Mass
10am Sung Mass

Wednesday 14th February

9.30am Said Mass with Imposition of Ashes

Sunday 18th February

8am Said Mass
10am Sung Mass

258

Make me a channel

548

J

Panfield Church

Sunday 11th February

11am Morning Worship

Tuesday 13th February

5pm Office Hour/Evening Prayer

Wednesday 14th February

7.30pm Communion with Imposition of Ashes

Sunday 18th February

6pm BCP Evensong

Gospel Acclamation

*Speak, Lord your servant is
listening, you have the
message of eternal life*

NOTICES

Fellowship - The next meeting is THURSDAY 12.30pm in the Church Hall. Our speaker this month will be talking about Warners Mill including the fabrics woven for the Queen's Coronation in 1953.

Ash Wednesday - There will be services in both churches on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. At St Mary's there will be the usual mid-week Communion with the addition of the Imposition of Ashes at 9.30am. Then a Benefice evening service 7.30pm at Panfield, all welcome.

Charity of the Month - In February, the monies donated at tea and coffee after the main service at St Mary's will be go to Farleigh Hospice. Last month £100 was raised for Dean Rogers Million Penny Fund.

Stepping Stones - Our next sessions of Stepping Stones will run through Lent, beginning on February 27th at 7pm, please note the new start date. The remaining sessions will be March 5th, March 19th and March 26th. All welcome. More details on each session are available at the back of the church.

Lent Soup - Just to let you know that on Sunday March 3rd following the 10am service at St Mary's there will be a Lent Soup Lunch in the Church Hall. A signup sheet to help with numbers is at the back.

Quiz Night - The next Friends event will be a Quiz Night in the Church Hall with Fish & Chip supper, Saturday March 16th, 6.30 for 7pm. Tickets available now.

Friendly Friday Cafe - We are pleased to say that the Friendly Friday Café is back in the Church Hall from 12noon onwards, and now running each Friday up to, and including Friday March 22nd.

Stargazing Evening - On Friday March 1st from 7-9pm our friends from the North Essex Astronomical Society will be running a free stargazing session in the church grounds. All are welcome.

World Day of Prayer - The local World Day of Prayer service will take place at Braintree Baptist Church on Friday March 1st at 10.30am, the service created by the women of Palestine. All welcome.

Online Donations - At present, the card reader in St Mary's is out of action, but you are still very welcome to give online. You could do this by scanning the QR code at the end of this Notice Sheet or you'll find it in church, you scan the code using the camera on your phones. On most phones it will then ask you to 'open the link', from there you can give via the website. Some older phone models may need an additional app to scan the QR code. Alternatively you can go straight to the following website <http://givealittle.co/campaigns/8e6670a3-8911-43d2-bcc3-4b29613d6573>

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Barry and Janice Goody, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Jo Meech, and Tony & Ann. We remember our care homes Millard House, Larchwood, Fern Lodge, Aspen Grange, Braintree Mews, St Mary's Court and The New Deanery, and the following, whose anniversary of their passing falls this week Cyril Cook, William McFadden, Dorothy Taylor, Mabel Humphries, Lilian Shrimpton, Sarah Warren, Barbara Brown, and James Adams, Richard Lewis

The Collect for the Sunday next before Lent

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Epistle Reading - 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading - Mark 9:2-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Address

May I speak in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Making disciples. For me that is what lies at the heart of the transfiguration story, we hear again today. It is familiar territory to us, and I know Fr Ian has commented rightly in the past that each time it comes up, he is often preaching. Well, it is me reflecting on it with you today, and while I could focus on this moment from the point of view of Jesus, it is indeed his transfiguration, I want to invite us to step back a little, to see if we can draw out some other threads, that for me also lie at the heart of this passage.

As I mentioned a few minutes ago, I feel drawn to see this reading through the lens that once again God, through Jesus', is teaching, he is showing us how he makes disciples, and for me that seems significant at the moment.

As some will know, I have been away this week in Leicester, part of ongoing training that the Church of England are giving me to support my ministry here and in the Diocese. Across the next 18 months or so, there will be further training, with a wonderful group of priests from many roles in the church and from many of the 43 Dioceses. This recent module, these last few days, have all been on strategy!

I will admit to being slightly anxious about this. While I feel we can learn from the business world, and work better, and more efficiently, the Church of England as an institution and certainly as part of God's church doesn't run in the same ways as businesses nor many other organisations. So while a strategy is helpful, especially with scarce resources, it has to have a primary vision and purpose at the heart of it, and for the Church our primary purpose remains the same.

For me, it is about worshipping together, making disciples, and building each other up. I know we could list more things as well, but those three seem key. The issues with finance, people, vocation are only going to significantly shift if we keep seeking to make disciples, and today's gospel shines a light on how God seeks to do that, and it is a model we need to learn from.

As we heard Peter, James and John are singled out, they are invited to join Jesus for this moment of transfiguration, of revelation. As they climb the mountain, they are literally, lifted up, and it is through what follows, as Christ's divinity is truly revealed, and as his light shines, so too do they recognise their own light. As was spoken of in the first reading from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, the veil is lifted.

It can feel like they get their light from Christ, but it is actually his moment of transfiguration, leading to an awakening of who they are in Christ.

Jesus takes ordinary folk, fishermen in many cases, he invites them on a journey with him, and as he reveals who he truly is, so too the scales fall from their eyes, and they are transformed, lifted high. The Transfiguration, is just one example, amongst so many in Jesus' ministry where he follows this path.

Only too aware that being a disciple will have its highs and lows. They had to come down the mountain, and of course what must those three have been thinking, not least why us? Understandably too they want to talk about the spectacle, the awesomeness of the moment they have witness, so good Peter wants to hang on to it. The power of that moment on the mountain can't be underestimated, recognising their light, their calling to work and serve the kingdom must have had such an impact on them.

Then Jesus tells them not to speak of it. Not because it is a secret, but because as we spoke of before, his moment hasn't yet come, this is their moment. It is about what this means for them, and their discipleship.

So each day, today, God is making disciples, but we have a part to play, and a crucial part.

My role, as your priest, is to lift you all up. Not literally, nor you will be pleased to hear lead you up a mountain, thank goodness. That said, my role is to encourage, nurture, support, enable you. Hold you to God, through worship, prayer and pastorally. In doing so, allowing you to flourish, for you to be transformed, the veil to be lifted, and your light to shine as disciples.

Our role is to do the same in supporting others. Is that a model we see around us though? I'm afraid, no. Society wants to knock you down, belittle and diminish you. We, in making disciples, are called to be counter to that, to lift up others, to support them, want the best for them whoever they are. We can be better, and live better, encouraging others, wanting them to be the best version of themselves, shining brightly.

It was timely then to read about the experience of Adam Peaty, world class British swimmer, competing again this year at the Paris Olympics. Someone who has also been honest about the cost of being an athlete, and the cost of being famous on his mental health. So many want to knock him, not even knowing him, to diminish his achievements. It was in attending church, where he found none of that mattered. He was allowed to be himself, of which a big part is still his swimming career but everyone there built him up, including the ministry team. It is for that reason he has a new tattoo. It is a cross to represent his faith, and the words 'Into the light'.

Together, we can make disciples, grow God's church and serve his kingdom. A strategy on how we do that will come and go, will develop over time, but let's remain focussed on the vision and even more importantly the mission, worshipping together, making disciples, and building each other up

In God's light, held up by Christ, may we seek to hold up others, and as we share our light, so too may others shine brightly. To close I am reminded of the words spoken at the end of the Beatitudes and given to us in Matthew's gospel. *'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven'*.

Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Holy God, we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:
may we who are partakers at his table
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know his power to change and save.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

You can scan this QR code with your phone at anytime and make a donation to the church.

Open your camera app, hold it over the QR code and then click 'open link' Thank you

