



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church

Sunday 12th March 2023
The Third Sunday of Lent
Staying in Contact



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

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or on Facebook, search for 'St Mary's Church, Bocking', or 'Panfield Church'

Forthcoming Services

Hymns

St Mary's, Bocking

Sunday 12th March

8am Said Mass
10am Sung Mass

Wednesday 15th March

9.30am Said Mass

Sunday 19th March

8am Said Mass
10am Sung Mass

Panfield Church

Sunday 12th March

11am Holy Communion

Tuesday 14th March

5pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 19th March

6pm BCP Evensong

260 (omit vv 3 & 7)

396

Be thou my vision

574

Gospel Acclamation

*Lord, you are the Saviour of the
world, give me living water
that I may never thirst.*

NOTICES

Quiz Night - A huge thank you to all those that attended last weekend, the Friends are pleased to announce that over £750 was raised! Coming up, we have Rock Choir June 11th & Barn Dance July 14th.

Quarterly Newsletter - The Spring Issue is here and it would be fantastic to get copies out across the Parish. If you are able to deliver to your road or other local roads please take enough to do so and sign the sheet at the back so we know that road/roads are covered. Thank you.

Christian Youth Outreach - CYO do brilliant work in our local schools both primary and secondary. This month's coffee moneys will be going to support them and especially their link with Bocking School. Coffee Money from January came to £102.37 and is going to the RNLI.

Fellowship - next meet THIS THURSDAY at 12.30pm in the Hall. Bryan Thurlow will be the speaker and his talk is entitled 'The Perennial Mr Potter'. A popular speaker we expect this to be a busy meeting.

Lent Course - Mondays 13th, 20th and 27th March there will be a session to reflect on that week's material from 'Dust and Glory'. Sessions will run from 1.30pm to 3pm, at The Deanery. Whether you have been part of a discussion group before or not, all welcome.

'Out of this World' - This Friday 7-9pm will be a free star-gazing event in the church grounds, no need to book. On Saturday, we will have the Indoor Planetarium running, tickets £7 and can only be bought on the day. In the grounds there will be free solar gazing, and in church, free craft activities & refreshments. March 19th, Felsted Prep Choir are joining us to make it a very exciting Mothering Sunday 10am service!

Coffee Morning - The last coffee morning to raise funds towards the Flowers for this year's Flower Festival will be on Friday March 24th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.

Electoral Roll - If you have joined St Mary's in the last year or two it is likely you are not on our Electoral Roll. Indeed there may be others who have been meaning to do so, but not taken up the chance. Well, ahead of the Annual Meeting on May 21st, we are inviting you to join now. A short form is at the back, which is easy to fill in and best of all there is no charge either!

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Peter Hopkins, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Peter, Jo, June Blackwood, Tony & Ann, and Margaret Everitt. We remember our care homes Millard House, Fern Lodge, Aspen Grange, Larchwood, The New Deanery & St Mary's Court. In our Years Mind, we pray for the families of Basil Thomas, Filomena Cowlard, Edward Bantin, George Cowler, Kenneth Spurgeon, Francis Gallatly, Karl Hopp, Dorothy Shaw, John Copley, Leslie Nottage, Hans Fick, and Percy Lewis.

The Collect for The Third Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Epistle Reading - Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Gospel Reading - John 4:5-42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and

come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.' Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.' Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

Address

On Friday, I had an MDR. Thankfully, it wasn't too painful and after nearly two hours I made it through. Now before you worry too much, this was not a medical procedure, or indeed anything else you need to worry about, instead it was my Ministerial Development Review, or performance management review. It was an opportunity to reflect on the last few years, the highs and the lows. It is if you like a resting spot, a useful step along the way of life's journey. Time set aside to think about life, family and ministry for me, and one of the most telling ways was to share stories. It was an outlet which is rarely there for me, and extremely useful it was too.

I am lucky enough to also be able to do this sharing of stories with some wonderful colleagues too within my cell group. There are four of us, each from different backgrounds. We trained together at Cambridge and when we meet now, we share stories, and offer support to each other. One of the last times we met up was in a Retreat Centre in London. We chatted, ate and drank a little wine, and then a little bit more. We weren't the only people staying at this place in London, also staying there were the Senior staff of another diocese which should remain nameless, not least because they were so raucous!

The reason for the rowdiness being that it was the Bishop's birthday and during the evening they presented him with cakes and sang happy birthday to celebrate, we reluctantly got caught up in this singing. They all went to bed at a seemly time, we didn't. Later, someone came to clear their mess and we noticed some cake still there, such wastage we couldn't allow, so we finished off the Bishop's birthday cake! Very nice it was too!

Aside from eating the Bishop's cake and drinking wine we shared stories as I said and the privileges of being priests in the places we are, noticing where God has been at work, just like I did at my MDR on Friday, although at that there was no cake and no biscuits either!

For me there are many joys in being your parish priest but one of the most profound has to be hearing from you, hearing your stories, joys and frustrations and with them your experiences of God. We don't often share those experiences and I am lucky that one of those you might choose to share them with is your priest.

For we might expect to meet God at a holy Benedictine Monastery, or maybe at a stunning, awe-inspiring part of our world, say the Grand Canyon, or maybe closer to home here in church, but I know from conversations with many of you that our experiences of God are rarely in church. In fact, God often appears when we are least expecting it, the Holy Spirit is indeed resourceful.

The reality is that God has the strangest sense of location, where and when is down to God, and so our experiences of him are often when we least expect it, at the office, on the bus, waiting at the doctor's surgery. What about you?

The woman in today's gospel certainly has some baggage, not least for where and when she finds herself. 2000 years ago, problem 1 was that she is a she! Marginalised and certainly not an equal. Problem 2, she was a Samaritan, further reason to be cast out and lastly, problem 3 she had been married a number of times. Here, she is out on a regular, daily task, fetching water from the well, ordinary and dull, and she a nobody, at least in her eyes and many around.

But rather than comply with social norms, and ignore her, Jesus speaks to her, he initiates and reaches out to her at the well. She is not in the temple, she is not at a Lent course, or deep in prayer but very much in the ordinary, in drawing water and here she experiences God.

He speaks to her about living water, offers her something more than the water she was planning on drawing from the well. It is complicated teaching, and does she fully get it, no but it was not about what he said but what he did. In that action, she is prompted to ask, are you the Christ, the messiah? Through his actions, she recognises this an experience of God, and she takes that word back to her fellow Samaritans. Not an in depth understanding of the Trinity, or something akin to the Creed but a hope and a question. Through her experience, she spreads word of God, and as a result the Samaritans followed back to Jerusalem in search of this messiah, Christ.

What she didn't do was turn away, to say hey I am busy drawing water, or even assume that she might only see him on the sabbath. She found the courage to listen, to marvel and in doing so, to see Christ. Is she a full believer yet? No, but this experience has been a step along the way, much like my chat with colleagues, or even my MDR. Talking of which I think I passed with flying colours, I haven't heard contrary to that yet, so fingers crossed.

For us, for Christian's that is, we need steps along the way, guidance, but are we willing to pay attention to God and let him in? Are willing to do as the woman at the well did, not to turn away, close off our minds but instead courageously listen because she did, her life changed.

God is looking for you, not just in church, or in prayer but in the ordinary day to day, when you are least expecting it. You might not be eating birthday cake that was once for a Bishop, but in something else just as surprising God will be looking for you and what blessings he brings. Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Lord,
grant your people grace to withstand the temptations
of the world, the flesh and the devil,
and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.