



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church



Sunday 22nd January 2023
The Third Sunday of Epiphany
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

368 (*omit verses 6&7*)

63

613 (*verses 1-6*)

Jesus is Lord (see sheet)

Gospel Acclamation

*Jesus proclaimed the good news of
the kingdom, and cured all kinds
of sickness amongst the people.*

St Mary's, Bocking

Sunday 22nd January

8am Said Mass

10am Sung Mass

Wednesday 25th January

9.30am Said Mass

Sunday 29th January

8am Said Mass

10am Sung Mass

Panfield Church

Sunday 22nd January

11am Holy Communion

Tuesday 24th January

5pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 29th January

11am Holy Communion

NOTICES

Coffee Morning - As part of the fundraising towards the cost of flowers used at this year's Flower Festival there will be a Coffee Morning THIS FRIDAY from 10.30am in the Church Hall. All welcome.

Gwen Nicholls - We wanted to let you know in good time that Gwen's funeral will be at St Mary's on Thursday 2nd February at 11am. We hope many will join us as we give thanks for her life and faith.

Lent Soup - On Sunday February 26th following the main morning service there will be a Lent Soup in the Church Hall. Please can we encourage you to save the date. A sign up sheet so that we can gauge numbers will follow in a few weeks time, thank you.

Quarterly Newsletter - The second issue of our Newsletter needs to go to the printers by Monday 20th February. If you have ideas for content, or areas of church life we could include, please speak to or email Fr Rod. We won't be able to include them all, but we can make sure to do so through the year.

Junior Church - Please let people know that through the first part of 2023, Junior Church will be running on the last Sunday of each month, so the forthcoming dates are January 29th, February 26th, March 26th and April 30th. Continuing and new members always welcome.

A Warm Place this Winter - Every Friday until March 10th we will be opening St Mary's Church Hall from 11.30am to 2pm as a warm place. Along with being a friendly space, there will be refreshments and a simple soup lunch, all of which will be free. Why not bring a friend and come along yourself.

Eco Church - Birdwatch! - Everyone is welcome to join in the Annual RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch in St Mary's Churchyard. NEXT SUNDAY, meet at the churchyard gate 11.30am for one hour's feathery fun. Spotter guide supplied, just wear appropriate clothing. See Jacqui Hogger for more details.

Gareth Bennett - As you may know, Gareth, who had been planning to move in the Spring has decided that now is the time for a new opportunity. We are sad to say that his last Sunday as Director of Music will be NEXT SUNDAY. We hope you will stay for coffee afterwards so we can thank him together.

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Jean Goodwin, Sue, Jackie, Roger Hurford, Frances, Margaret, Peter, Jenifer, Jo, June Blackwood, and Margaret Everitt. We also 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 Harold Griffiths, Irene Bell, Gordon How, Robert Sawyer, Brian Hart, Monica Copley, Margaret Chinnery and Stanley Cotton.

The Collect for The Third Sunday of Epiphany

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness, sustain us by your mighty power;
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 - 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptised none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptised in my name. (I did baptise also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptised anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptise but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 4:12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.' From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Address

Matthew 4. 18-19: As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers ... and he said to them, 'Follow me'

The brothers were fishermen and the words of Jesus continue with the promise that he would make them fish for people. He then calls two more brothers, James and John. It all feels a bit random. If you happened to be in the right place at the right time, then you might end up being called to be a disciple, to be on 'Team Jesus' if you like. Or given how some of the story unfolded perhaps some of those whom he called in this way felt that they had been at the wrong place at the wrong time.

So how do you pick a team? In principle I suppose that you try to identify, from whatever group of people you have, the best person for each of the roles that need to be filled. That no doubt works if you know your people, have enough to choose from and can clearly define each role. It may work in team sports like football: you don't play your best striker in goal or goalkeeper in midfield. But in other walks of life it is rarely as straightforward as that. So organisations may use a range of tools to attempt to identify personality types to help with building a team that plays to members' strengths, or at the very least avoids placing people in roles for which they are totally unsuited. The results can sometimes be surprising. Many years ago a work colleague shared with me a send-up of what such an exercise might have revealed about those whom Jesus called as his disciples. The one who scored most highly and was recommended as best qualified was Judas Iscariot while St Peter was written off as 'emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper'.

Although I am a bit sceptical about some of this, I can see the value of it in the context of team building. It is not good to be surrounded by people who are just like you. Few people are good at everything. Most of us need people who are good at the things we find difficult, even if that sometimes means including in a team someone whom we find difficult. There is nothing new about this. While St Paul wouldn't recognise the language, if you read carefully his letters to the church at Corinth then you can argue that one of the problems he faced was that of team building. There are hints of this in today's reading. Whoever Chloe or Apollos might have been it sounds as though there were rival groupings in the Corinthian church with new believers affirming their loyalty to a particular leader rather than to Christ. Other passages in the letters to the church in Corinth also emphasise that church leaders are called to be servants of God, not focus on themselves.

Perhaps one of the problems at Corinth was that too many people wanted the same role, such as to be Apostles: those who guarded and proclaimed tradition of faith. In a sense it would be as if most people in this congregation wanted to be worship leaders and preach on a regular basis. While Fr Rod and I might fancy an occasional change of role, and some variety might be good, the outcome would probably be chaos and infighting rather than team building! In addition, the Corinthian church seemed to have developed a hierarchy of gifts, putting at the top things like speaking in tongues which St Paul affirms but doesn't think is the most important gift, or even of major importance. St Paul wanted them to focus on God and not on themselves and to recognise that without faith, hope and especially love, all else is at best weakened and at worst made dangerous. The starting point has to be a sense of dependence on God's love of being held in it and of being channels of it.

Is there anything we can learn from this in the very different context of a parish church in twenty-first century Essex? I think there are some useful pointers. Firstly, it can mean valuing people whom we don't necessarily find it easy to get on with. Jesus chose some improbable people, and in the end all but one came good.

I have a suspicion that if St Paul were to test his vocation in the twenty-first century Church of England then he would probably be advised that he was not a suitable candidate even before he got to a selection conference. It means being able to see beyond the surface impression. That can work both ways. I have recently had to spend quite a bit of time refreshing my knowledge of Safeguarding in the Church and keeping myself up to date. One task was to watch a now rather old BBC documentary about Bishop Peter Ball who was long regarded as a man of deep spirituality and holiness until his abuse of young men was revealed. Despite my slight scepticism about some of the management tools I mentioned earlier, I wonder if an appropriate use of them might have flagged a warning much sooner.

So, what conclusions might be drawn from both St Paul and contemporary team building ideas? I think they can remind us of our inter-dependence, that all members of the Christian community are important and have their proper role. It may not be a good idea for some vicars to get involved in say flower arranging, or in my case to lead the singing, any more than for someone with a pastoral call and gifting to demand to lead worship. All gifts and abilities are valuable: discerning and developing individual gifts is an important task for the whole church community. So far as the church leadership team is concerned, priorities might include prophecy: how the church ensures that a Christian voice is heard in the public sphere; teaching: enabling church members to be better able to give an account of their faith; and spirituality: helping people develop their relationship with God through prayer and personal holiness. Few people are good at everything which is why a team approach is so important. Re-visiting some of St Paul's writings may help to provide a Biblical basis for this while some modern management tools may be useful in the creation of an effective team. Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Almighty Father,
whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
may your people,
illuminated by your word and sacraments,
shine with the radiance of his glory,
that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed
to the ends of the earth;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
Amen.