



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church

Sunday 24th March 2024

Palm Sunday

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

Palm Sunday - March 24th	8am	Said Mass
Palm Sunday - March 24th	10am	Sung Mass
Wednesday - March 27th	9.30am	Said Mass
Maundy Thursday - March 28th	8pm	Sung Mass followed by the Watch
Good Friday - March 29th	2pm	The Liturgy of Good Friday
Easter Sunday - March 31st	6.00am	Dawn Easter Service <i>followed by breakfast in the Hall</i>
Easter Sunday - March 31st	8am	Said Mass
Easter Sunday - March 31st	10am	Sung Mass for Easter

See
*special
booklet*

Gospel Acclamation

*Christ was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
above all names.*

Panfield Church

Palm Sunday - March 24th	11am	Palm Sunday service
Tuesday - March 26th	5pm	Evening Prayer/Office Hour
Maundy Thursday - March 28th	7.30pm	Holy Communion
Good Friday - March 29th	12pm	Good Friday service
Easter Sunday - March 31st	11am	Holy Communion

NOTICES

Charity of the Month - In March, the monies given at Tea & Coffee after the main service at St Mary's will go to Essex Air Ambulance. The total raised for Farleigh Hospice last month was £97.

Stepping Stones - The final session is this Tuesday at 7pm in the church. We will be looking at a Passover meal, talking about the main elements of it, and alongside that reflecting on Holy Communion, and the links between the two. Whether you have made a session before or not, you are very welcome.

Thank you - We are pleased to say that last weekend we had two very successful fundraising events. The Quiz run by the Friends raised over £600, and the Bring and Buy raised £285. Thank you!

Holy Week Booklet - At the back of the church you will find a guide to Holy Week and Easter with a reading for each day, a short prayer and a list of the services taking place across the Benefice.

Friendly Friday Cafe - The Café has paused now for an Easter break, but will return on April 19th. Thank you to all those who work so hard to run the sessions, and of course all who support it.

Freewill envelopes scheme - A number of you use the Freewill envelope scheme, this year the envelopes have been yellow. Sadly, the cost to print a new set is getting on for £200, so we are discontinuing using them going forward. Fr Rod will be writing to all on the scheme with a range of ways to continue supporting the church financially. If there are any questions please do speak to Fr Rod.

Coffee Morning - The last coffee morning to raise funds towards the flowers for this year's Flower Festival will be on Friday April 5th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.

Honorary Canon - Fr Rod has recently heard that the Diocesan Bishop has invited him to be an Honorary non-residential Canon at Chelmsford Cathedral. A service of Choral Evensong will take place at the Cathedral on Sunday April 28th 3.30pm where all the new Canons will be installed. All welcome.

Electoral Roll - If you have joined St Mary's recently 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. Ahead of the APCM on May 19th, we are inviting you to join now. A short form is at the back, which is easy to fill in.

Monday May 6th - May Day Fayre helpers needed! We know it is early but please save the date and help us make this the most successful year yet. Pru, Margaret or Jo look forward to hearing from you if you can give us some time on the day. The more volunteers we have, the more stalls/games we can run.

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Brenda Dunstone, 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 Ethel Hurry, James Thomas, Maud White, Dorothy How, Frank Noble, Reg Saunders, Grace Goram, Chris Brown, and Dorothy Smith.

The Collect for Palm Sunday

True and humble king,
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory. Amen.

Epistle Reading - Philippians 2:5-11

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Reading - Mark 11:1-11

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went

ahead and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!' Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Address

It was Passover, and they entered the city in their hundreds, a triumphant return, and one that caused quite the stir. There was so much noise as they followed their leader. Marching in time to the drums, row after row of soldiers marched past. Their armour gleaming, the sounds of feet hitting the ground, horses, carriages and more. As they made their way into Jerusalem, the battalion marching past caused those in the streets to run inside, doors closed, people fled. At this time, the ruling armies were strengthening their forces, the men that made up those ranks with only one thing in mind, to follow their leader, obey commands, fall in line. There was no time for hope or despair, there was no place to choose whether they followed or not, they fulfilled their command, ready to fight for the King.

It was Passover, and they entered the city in their hundreds, if not more. A triumphant return to the city. The leader this time was not crowned and living in a palace but dressed as everyone else was, and riding a donkey. There was so much noise, such a commotion, the crowds just kept on growing. He brought with him a palpable sense of hope, a feeling that this was their time, he was their King, things were going to be different. People were getting caught up in it all, whipped up by the emotion. Palms and branches were laid to welcome him, to honour him. Could this really be our time they thought? Was he really going to save us from this rule? Those who followed felt compelled to join in, they didn't want to miss a single second of this.

This was a day of two processions then. If Pilate's procession was meant as a show of military might and strength, Jesus' procession was meant to show the opposite. The king they seek will come to them humbly, not on a steed of war, but on a slow-moving donkey, the symbol of a king who comes in peace. The two processions could not be more different in the messages they convey. Pilate, leading Roman centurions, asserts the power and might of the empire of Rome which crushes all who oppose it.

Jesus, riding on a young donkey, embodies the peace and tranquillity that God brings to His people, but his message, his presence would change everything. The events that followed would change everything, the most powerful and transformative acts of love were still to come. Can those following Jesus see that yet? I'm afraid we know the answer, they see this man and put all their hope in him defeating their ruler, conquering on their terms, but none of this was about their ideas, their ways, the things of this world.

Those who watch that day will make a choice. They will either serve the god of this world, might and power; or they will choose to serve the king of a very different kind of kingdom, the kingdom of God.

Someone once said, "Leadership is about disappointing your own people at a rate they can absorb."

So, Jesus has a problem. Of course, his followers and others who get caught up in his entry into Jerusalem think they are choosing to follow Jesus. But by the end of the week, Jesus will have disappointed the crowd at a rate faster than they can stand. They will turn on him. Even those closest to Jesus, the disciples, will either betray him outright, or abandon him in confusion and fear.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem may or may not have been planned to occur on the same day as Pilate's procession through the western gate of the city. Whether it was planned or not, the two processions provided a contrast that was unmistakable.

A contrast between kings and kingdoms was on display that day in Jerusalem. And, although many of the common people thought they sided with Jesus, they did so for the same reasons the Pharisees and others sided with Rome. They thought Jesus could do for them what Rome had done for their rulers — make their lives better, deliver them from the oppressive system under which they lived and worked, and turn the tables on the Romans.

That's why the crowd turns on Jesus by the end of the week. By then they don't think he's going to do any of those things. Their hope and joy at his triumphant return was superficial, and as soon as it is tested, melts away. And, in addition, Jesus is going to make life worse for them, not better. Their religious leaders, all of them, who never agree on anything, agree that Jesus is going to attract the attention of the Roman empire, especially during Passover, and Rome will come down fast and hard on the entire nation.

So, when Jesus is accused, when he is brought by Pilate before the angry mobs, they want to be rid of him. Jesus, in their minds, never did what they wanted him to do. He never defeated the Romans, he never dissolved the unfair tax system, he never put common people in charge of the government, and furthermore, he never would.

That is the story that awaits us this week, as we walk the way of the cross. I hope you will join us, before we then celebrate his Resurrection next Sunday.

As we step into this week, similar questions are posed at us? A choice... maybe not two processions, but two options. Do we choose power, or love? Do we choose our desires, or God's? Do we choose "the way things are done" or "the way God intends them to be." Each choice has consequences. Each has an easy path, and another that while much more unpredictable is albeit rewarding. Two choices. Which would you choose? What kind of king do you want?

Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:
give us the mind to follow you
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

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