



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church

Sunday 29th October 2023

The Feast of All Saints

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 29th October	8am	Said Mass
	10am	Sung Mass
Wednesday 1st November	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday 5th November	8am	Said Mass
	10am	Sung Mass

Angel voices ever singing

370

641

517

Panfield Church

Sunday 29th October	11am	Holy Communion (BCP)
Tuesday 31st October	5pm	Evening Prayer/Office Hour
Sunday 5th November	11am	Holy Communion

Gospel Acclamation

*God is the glory and joy of all his
Saints, we celebrate their memory
with thanksgiving.*

NOTICES

Funerals - At St Mary's we have been very saddened to hear of the deaths of congregation members in these last few weeks. Please note that, Fred Bowler's funeral will be **Wednesday 1st November, 12.30pm** at Three Counties, and that Peter Hopkin's funeral will be the morning of **November 16th**.

Confirmation - Monday 30th October at 7.30pm we will be welcoming Bishop Roger for a service of Confirmation. We have 7 slightly nervous candidates for the service and all from this Benefice. It would be good if you could come along and support them. It will be a great occasion, so don't miss it.

Friendly Friday Cafe - is now underway and will run each Friday until December 15th. Sessions start at 12noon and run until 3pm in the Hall. All are very welcome, why not pop down and bring a friend too.

Quarterly Newsletter - The Autumn 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 that we know what road/roads are covered. Thank you.

OCC Shoebox Appeal - Can you support the shoebox appeal this year? Here are just some of the items you might be able to gift.... Hats, mittens, wrist warmers, headbands, scarves (small), bags, knitted glove puppets. For stationery, you could donate pens, pencils, notebooks, rulers, rubbers, crayons etc. For toiletries, we are looking for soap bars, sponges, flannels, toothbrushes, combs, hairbrushes, possibly hairbands, scrunchies, bracelets. Finally you could donate a small toy, but it must have a CE mark. All items need to be in by the end of October, thank you. *Pamela Gibson*

Panfield Autumn Lunch - on Saturday 18th November we are hosting an Autumn Lunch. Join us for a Jacket Potato lunch with a variety of fillings. To follow there will be a selection of desserts, tea & coffee, and a raffle! Tickets £10 for adults, £5 for children aged 10 and under. Spaces limited to 40, so please contact Bridget (01376 328907) or Sara (01376 321045) to book your tickets now.

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Darren Hodges, Gemma Howe, Julie Wilkinson, Barry and Janice Goody, Ron Cole, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Jo Meech, 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 William Murrell, John Edwards, Benjamin Farthing, Mary Joscelyne, Aubrey Nichols, Leonard Turner, Jean Burton, Norah Eden, Emmie Smith, Margaret Brown, Frederick Carter, Frank Gentry, William McCallin and Ena Butcher.

The Collect for the Feast of All Saints

Almighty God,
you have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:
grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints
in all virtuous and godly living
that we may come to those inexpressible joys
that you have prepared for those who truly love you;
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 John 3:1-3

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Address

It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but we can't deny the change in weather during this last week or so. It seems only a weekend or two ago we were in t shirts and the like, enjoying warm sunny days. Well deserved days too, after a less than inspiring August and early September.

As the clock falls back though, Autumn is definitely here. Wet and windy at times, cold starts to the day, leaves falling around us and in many ways it is rather beautiful. We don't often notice these times of change; indeed seasons can blend into one another so that that Spring and Autumn often don't feel as marked as I remember them.

In creation, we are seeing those autumnal changes too, leaves slowly changing colours and falling in such great numbers, as trees prepare for hibernation. Creatures too are planning ahead for the winter to come, squirrels and the like hiding food for later in the year. For others, it is time to move on.

Migratory birds are making their way to better climes but as they do so what a marvel in the sky. Last week, when I was in York, often referred to as God's own county, I saw a murmuration of starlings, it was utterly breath-taking. They are more rare these days but maybe you have seen one too? Hundreds upon hundreds of birds filling the air. Dancing with such freedom, no crashing into one another, it seems effortless. All somehow equally distant from one another, and each staying close by with their part to play. No one frontrunner taking the lead either. Collectively they instinctively know what to do. It is mesmerizing and puzzling too, how do they do it?

The how I don't know, but the why is because it offers protection, helps them survive and indeed find food, seamlessly able to communicate between themselves through the dance. There really is nothing quite like it. Today we, the Church, in the midst of Autumn, celebrates the feast of all Saints. An opportunity to remember the saints that went before us, from apostles and prophets to our own loved ones. To pray for the saints to come who will serve God's church, and of course ourselves, the Saints in these times.

I know we don't often, if ever, think of ourselves as such, indeed some of us feel very far away from sainthood, but that is part of the problem. We have got so used to seeing things as this world does, or through the lens of others. I John 3, our first reading today is very clear, unambiguous, we are all loved by God, we are all his Saints, beloved children.

A time will come when through Christ's return, God's Kingdom will break through completely, a new order will arrive, a place where we are one, where this world and heaven become one. Those end times as they are called, for the apostles and early church were likely within in years. Two thousand years on, we are still waiting, but that time will come.

A helpful picture for what the church might look like then, for me, is a murmuration. A time when we aren't buffeted by the winds of change, a time when, with God, it won't matter who is first, or who leads, or how much we have or don't have. We each will have a part to play, in the dance bringing with it a freedom, to just be.

Back in the here and now, that isn't the case. It doesn't matter if it is Storm Agnes, Babet or whatever else is to come, we can't hide from life, even when we try. We can feel like we are going it alone, or at least that we need to. Not in a murmuration, let alone a flock or family, but that we a lonely, individual bird, doing it all and trying to simply survive. That being the case, are you an eagle soaring high above? Or a little wren scabbling around? A wise owl? Leggy flamingo? or a Trafalgar Square pigeon, I shall leave you to decide.

The journey through life is tough, and particularly so at times. It brings its joys too, all too often ignored joys at that. It isn't easy navigating our way through, and the same comes with our faith. It would be all too easy to put our faith in jar for opening on Sunday morning only, instead we are challenged to make it part of each and every day, each and every moment. That brings affirmation when all is well, but confronts us when our world, or the world of others seems unnecessarily painful.

On All Saints, two important reminders, two we so often forget, myself included. One, you are not on your own! Yes, there are those to travel with you, but as the saints today, God promises to be with you. Secondly, that beautiful passage from Beatitudes reminds us that we are blessed. I am sure we can each see ourselves in at least one or two of those groups at some point in our lives, so you are blessed.

If there is one thing writ large in the lives of the saints it is that they came to know their need of God, and from there began to see, just as God sees. On this the feast of All Saints, as the seasons change once again, let us hear that we are beloved children of God, blessed by him in all that seek to do in his name. In that knowledge and in that joy, we seek to live out each day. In that knowledge and in that joy we commit ourselves to share our faith with others further drawing them to God.

Being beloved, being blessed doesn't mean God sits far away beaming his blessing at you, instead know his place is beside you. Encouraging, nurturing, guiding, and protecting but we need to look and listen for him.

Let's not allow his message to us today, to be swept up amongst the storms and busyness of life, to be lost in changing seasons, but instead to stop, to listen, to know and then to live that message out each and every day as we play our part in the dance that is life.

Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

God, the source of all holiness and giver of all good things:
may we who have shared at this table
as strangers and pilgrims here on earth
be welcomed with all your saints
to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.