



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church

Sunday 30th October 2022

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

St Mary's, Bocking

Sunday 30th October

8am Said Mass
10am Sung Mass
4pm Memorial Service

Wednesday 2nd November

9.30am Said Mass

Sunday 6th November

8am Said Mass
10am Sung Mass

Panfield Church

Sunday 30th October

11am Holy Communion

Tuesday 1st November

5pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 6th November

*** No service—all at St Mary's***

Hymns

489 (omit v3)

370

641

O when the Saints

Gospel Acclamation

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

NOTICES

Rock Choir concert - On Friday November 25th at 7.30pm, St Mary's Bocking will be hosting a concert for our friends at Panfield as they continue to raise funds for repairs to the church spire. Tickets are £12 for adults, £10 for concessions, and £2 for children.

Road Closure - Please be aware that there are planned works on Church Lane, by the new Polly's Field complex TODAY. A short diversion, via Bailey Bridge Road may be necessary.

Memorial Service - A reminder that TODAY at 4pm there will be a Memorial Service at St Mary's Bocking. A chance to remember loved ones who have passed away in recent years. All welcome.

Bible Study group - We are looking to re-start Bible Study sessions and would love to hear from you if you would be interested in joining. To help us plan these please speak to Fr Rod about days/times that work for you, and also where it might be best to meet. Thank you.

Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal - It would be really helpful if all knitting, stationery, toiletries (no creams/liquids) was in by the end of October, thank you.

Going Green! - Over the next few months you will be hearing more about our drive to become an Eco-Church. In partnership with A Rocha, an environmental charity, we are hoping to work towards the various awards beginning with bronze. There will be opportunities for all to get involved as we progress, including our younger ones as Eco-Church will be theme for the next Junior Church, Sunday Nov 20th.

Christmas Tree Festival - The Festival weekend will be Dec 10th/11th with performances, raffle, tombola, pound presents, refreshments and lots of in-house stall on SATURDAY 10TH DECEMBER, Father Christmas may even put an appearance in for that. There are lots of ways for you to support this fundraising event, details to follow on the items needed for the hampers plus much more,

Bishop of Chelmsford - Bishop Guli will be preaching at St Mary's Bocking on NEXT SUNDAY. It would be wonderful to see as many of you as possible, so that we can fully welcome her to the Benefice. Please do mark it in your diaries and join us for what will be a special occasion.

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Jean Goodwin, Sue, Jackie, Roger Hurford, Frances, Margaret, Peter, Jenifer, Jo, Bernard, 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 for this week, we pray for the families of William Murrell, John Edwards, Mary Joscelyne, Aubrey Nicholls, Leonard Turner, Jean Burton, Norah Eden, Emmie Smith, Margaret Brown, Frederick Carter, Frank Gentry, William McCallin and Ena Butcher.

The Collect for 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 - Ephesians 1:11-23

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory. I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Gospel Reading - Luke 6:20-31

Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 'Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. 'Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. 'Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your

reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. 'But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. 'Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. 'Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. 'Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets. 'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Address

As I think many of you know, I spent most of my ministry in the County of Derbyshire and the Diocese of Derby – each essentially the same geographical area. Of the five churches at which I was at some point Priest in Charge, four were dedicated to All Saints. It is a common dedication, second only apparently to a dedication to St Mary the Virgin as we are here at Bocking.

My parishes were very different from each other. One, in Matlock, was a parish in its own right. The church was a grand Victorian building, fortunately never completed or its size would have been unmanageable in the present day. When I arrived, the town had just lost its College of Education, but my congregation included several former lecturers as well as people involved in local government, local business and the Rotary Club. The other three were village churches, all medieval in origin. One of them, Mackworth, located in a field on the edge of Derby, was almost destroyed by fire a year ago, but is to be rebuilt. Its parish had a very small population and most church-goers lived outside the parish. The nearby housing estate (also called Mackworth) was not part of the parish. I was told that while there may have been no objection to people from the estate worshipping in the church, parishioners did not want them taking burial plots in the churchyard! Mugginton served a small community, part agricultural and part retired professionals. Congregations were small and declining, but the church was valued. Finally, Kedleston was in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, though we used it occasionally on, for example, Ascension Day and for a summer Songs of Praise. Located in the grounds of Kedleston Hall, its interior was dominated by memorials to the Curzon family.

I have no doubt that most other priests who have served in multi-parish benefices, or simply had several churches in their care, could give a similar account of the sheer variety of buildings and people that comprise the Church of England. There would also be a great variety of dedications. Having a dedication to a specific saint provides an opportunity to find out about just what made her or him so special; or in some cases to do some detective work in trying to find out just who they were. Who, for example, was St Giles to whom the other Matlock church was dedicated? As I said earlier, the dedication to All Saints is a common one, and offers a different perspective. It reminds us that, as Christians, we are all called to be saints, at least in the sense that St Paul used the word when he addressed a letter to 'all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi'. Ephesians, from which our first reading was taken, has a similar opening sentence. St Paul was surely referring to the whole Christian community in a specific location, or at least to those who had made a clear commitment to try to live as followers of Jesus.

Although the festival of All Saints has a place in the Book of Common Prayer, it seems to me that it has acquired greater prominence since the revisions of the liturgy which began with the Alternative Services Book and culminated in the library of books we call Common Worship. I think this is good. It reminds us that sainthood is not about something that only happened in the dim and distant past. Nor is it about being prepared to undergo extreme suffering, and indeed death, for the sake of remaining faithful to the Gospel. I sometimes think that too many pictures of early Christian saints seem to be indulging in a competition to discover who can make the most gruesome depiction of the sufferings, and perhaps eventual martyrdom, of a woman or man who risked everything for the sake of Christ. The current liturgy emphasises the sainthood of all believers and, after allowing reflection on

departed loved ones at All Souls, moves into the Sundays of the Kingdom which anticipate the reign of Christ on earth.

A more coherent liturgical structure does not necessarily mean that difficult issues are resolved. Indeed it may make them more obvious. The prominence given to All Saints tide rather begs the question as to whether we are meant to be celebrating the heroes of the past or are saying something about the Christian community in the present day. It is much easier to do the former. There is also the issue that for much of the society we live in this time of year is about Hallowe'en. Although I have reservations about this rather strange secular celebration, particularly when it seems divorced from any proper recognition of the Christian sequence of marking All Saints and then All Souls at the start of November, I would not wish to try to ban it – or indeed find some anodyne alternative. But as Christians we surely have more useful things to say about death than can be conveyed by images of skeletons and depictions of gravestones.

All of this suggests to me that All Saints (and indeed All Souls) need to be reclaimed as important markers in the Christian year. But how do we affirm the truth inherent in St Paul's address to emerging Christian communities as 'saints' without slipping into some sort of self-congratulatory pose proclaiming that all is well in our churches? Yes, we are called to be the saints in Bocking, but what might this mean in practice in our own day?

Perhaps it is easier to begin by thinking about what it does not mean. It does not mean trying to achieve the impossible: some sort of all-round perfection. Not even the earliest disciples and church leaders achieved that. The story of St Peter's denial of Jesus on the night of his arrest is well known. But there is also the story to be found in Acts of how St Peter, having realised that there was no reason why he should not eat with Gentile Christians, thus disregarding the Jewish food laws, caved in when challenged by some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem. It needed St Paul to tell him that he was wrong. Equally St Paul was all too prone to anger at times and to complain that the people whom he had brought to faith in Jesus were not sufficiently grateful to him and did not properly realise how much he had suffered for them. The heroes of the faith were, we might say, all too human at times.

If that was the case, then surely it is unrealistic to expect that those whom we admire in our own day because of their service to others or because of the way in which they cope with life's difficulties may not also have irritating habits or traits of character. The person whom we admire for their saint-like qualities may also be the person we would not choose to go on holiday with particularly if it involved sharing a room.

Our calling to be part of the company of all the saints is perhaps more straightforward than we might imagine. Is it not to identify what particular gift we have; to nurture that gift; and then to use it for the benefit of the church and the community? We might indeed see that particular gift as being some Christ-like quality, however feeble and undeveloped, that has been entrusted to us and that can be nurtured through the creative work of the Holy Spirit. Do we not all have something to contribute to the life and work of the church so that the good news of Jesus Christ is made more widely known and the local community nourished? That something may relate directly to worship, to evangelism or to spiritual growth. It may equally well be something very practical, connected for example to fabric or to finance. As we get older and less active it may be about listening and praying. What matters at an individual level is to do what we can do and to try not to worry about the things we cannot do. We each have a part to play in building and sustaining the community of the saints here in Bocking. 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.