



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church



Sunday 9th July 2023
The Fifth Sunday after Trinity
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 9th July	8am/10am	Said Mass/Sung Mass
Wednesday 12th July	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday 16th July	8am/10am	Said Mass/Sung Mass

365

Be still for the presence of the Lord

577

Panfield Church

Sunday 9th July	11am	Morning Worship
Tuesday 11th July	5pm	Evening Prayer/Office Hour
Sunday 16th July	6pm	BCP Evensong

393

Gospel Acclamation

*The Lord is faithful in all his words,
he is loving in all his deeds.*

NOTICES

Junior Church - Our Summer Term will finish on **Sunday 23rd July**, with a session on stained glass windows, please note the new date! We look forward to seeing as many as can make it for that. Drop off from 9.45am in the Church Hall. Dates for the Autumn Term will be announced soon.

Local wildlife walk - At **11.45am on Sunday July 23rd** there will be a wildlife walk around the village taking in Dorewards Farm, heading to the Windmill for their Open Day, and returning back to St Mary's. We are meeting by the Church Hall from 11.30am, Jacqui Hogger, one of our Eco Church leaders will be guiding us. This is open to anyone, either as an individual or with family and friends.

Benefice BBQ - You are invited to a BBQ on Sat July 29th from 3pm in the gardens at The Deanery, cost £5 for adults, children go free. At the back of the church there is a sign up sheet, please add your name plus any others you are bringing. Payment taken on the day. There is also a sheet to add any food items that you can bring, sweet or savoury. Thank you.

Friends of St Mary's - We have made the difficult decision to cancel the forthcoming Barn Dance. For it to have been a successful evening, we needed to sell at least 40 tickets, and by early last week we were far from that. It therefore seemed sensible to cancel and inform the band asap. Hopefully we can get our dancing shoes on again soon!

Mindfulness Trail - From Monday July 24th through to Sunday July 30th there will be a mindfulness trail in the church grounds at St Mary's. This will be an interactive experience open to the local community. You can come and give it a go at anytime on each of those days. Leaflets with more info will follow soon.

Fellowship Outing - On Thursday 28th September there is a trip to Cromer Pier arranged. There are a few places left. Cost is £45 which covers the coach trip and The End of the Pier Show. The coach will leave church at 9.30am. Please speak to Ann Lanham or Ann Harrington to book your place.

Fellowship - The next meeting is Thursday July 20th in the Church Hall, and the speaker is Cherish Watton who will be talking about the Women's Land Army. We start at 12.30pm with a light lunch followed by our speaker, the cost only £5, don't miss it.

Friendly Friday Cafe - The Summer Sessions are now drawing to a close with the last one being on Friday 21st July—this will have a Picnic Theme and will include a few table quizzes for you to enjoy.

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Ron Cole, Peter Hopkins, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Peter, Jo, Tony & Ann, David Denny, Eddie Burton, 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 Edna Hopp, Kenneth Messenger, Michael Jefferies, Charles Waddel, Edith Lee, Maud Moore, Grace Ireland, Merle Hawthorn, Olive Brooks, Sidney Goldston (Priest), Grace Cotton and Wendy Lombardi.

The Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Epistle Reading - Romans 7:15-25a

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Gospel Reading - Matthew 11:16-19, 25–end

'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deed. At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Address

It has been a busy and varied week for me, full of things you might expect, for example meetings, funerals, visits to parishioners and so on, but this last week I also had a first! As Area Dean I had been invited to be a team-building day with the Archdeacon and other Area Deans. I was hoping for something calm and not too taxing, instead we went rowing. Not exercise bikes, not pretend dinghy's, no actually rowing on the River Stour.

I have never rowed before so a complete first. Some in the group had and indeed the Archdeacon rows regularly. I was both excited but also rather nervous, not wanting to make a fool of myself, nor fall in! After being put through our paces, within one hour we were in the boat, and a proper eight man boat worth £25,000! We had some basic training but were metaphorically thrown in the deep end!

It was physically tiring but more so mentally. Remembering my number in the boat, remembering whether I was bow or stern, as well as trying to keep the technique and stroke going, in time. Like so many things in life, the professionals make it look easy. I want to say that at times it was wonderful rowing down the river at a decent pace taking in the great scenery. Well, we did go at a reasonable pace, but at no point could I lift off my concentration to take it all in.

After just longer than an hour we came back for a break, and in that watched the video evidence of our performance. Torture would have been preferable, but we did. Don't get me wrong I think I equipped myself very well, in relation to my own expectations and those of others. There were some very funny moments caught on camera though where some of us, including me, seem to be rowing the air and not the water. Through it all I wasn't on my own, and it is this that stuck with me, and this that I was reflecting on when preparing for today and preaching on the gospel passage.

This generation often thinks that what we do, what we achieve, who we are, can only be defined by ourselves. That we can only rely on ourselves, that we are on our own. One is indeed the loneliest number. That isn't so bad when life is ticking along as expected, but what about when it is not?

I suspect you haven't this week had to go rowing for the first time with fellow colleagues. However, all of us will have had experiences of being outside of our comfort zone, and if not now certainly in the past. In those moments, our instincts are not to reach out for help but to keep our head down and go it alone. The same is true when other challenges come our way, burdens that begin to build and start to become too much to carry on our own. We all do it, trust only ourselves, and I know at times I do it too, but should we? Is there another way?

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Verses from scripture that we know, but so rarely live by. Even when the world, when this generation may say you are better on your own, we never are. Whether it be in the joys, or in life's burdens, we are invited to find rest in Christ, to find peace with God, lay down that which we carry, that which prevents us from living a more fulfilling life. Notice that God doesn't say he will fix them or even better make them go away, but he suggests that by letting others share the load, by letting him share the load, the journey will be easier. We need to learn from his ways, to learn his gentleness and his humility. For us that means, we need to soften our hearts just a little more and be prepared to accept we might not have this right, or that there might be a better way that we just can't see.

That is an important message for us all to hear today, but not least when the pressures of life seem to be getting just too tough, and when we feel there is no-one else to turn to. On Friday evening I was chatting to someone the same age as me, in the last few years he has lost eleven friends to suicide.

That was shocking to me, not because I am blind to the increase in mental health issues, but the number, eleven friends. I really hope our experiences are not like that, but we will know the times when life has become too hard, when the burdens were too much, when we were out of our comfort zone for just too long.

Back at the rowing, thankfully, we stopped watching the video of the morning's session, although only to go back out on the water. There definitely were improvements, and less rowing the air, but eventually, the amount of information I was receiving just started to become too much, my brain was fried. Others felt the same and after another hour we headed back to the boat club for a further debrief. We had been what is called a scratch crew, and our instructors wanted to tell us how impressed they were with what we had achieved in a very short space of time. Maybe there is hope for a clergy rowing team! Hopefully not with me though!

We reflected on the experience and something very interesting started to emerge, a theme. None of us felt alone.

We were a team. If someone wasn't getting it right, that was ok, others could carry us. If someone was anxious others in the boat were calm. Indeed, myself and another colleague were praised for our serene calmness throughout, our faces not changing whether it was going to plan or not. Swan like I would like to think, but we each brought something. Some had experience enough to carry others, but we all played a part. Not one of us let our ego get the better and try to impress or race on. It might have looked good to do so, but would have led to trouble, instead we relied on each other.

Our passage today, invites us to draw on God, to share the load to become connected to him (sharing his yoke) and in doing so managing the journey through life, more easily and more humbly. But that isn't the only way for us to find that rest, and to share burdens, we can do that for one another as well.

Church, and church fellowship is a wonderful expression of the same thing. When you are struggling with prayer, let others pray. When you are finding it hard to be lifted up, let others offer affirmation. When we are in need, turn to those around you. What is the worst that can happen? Well, they could say no, but the next person might not, and indeed they will probably say yes. You might even meet someone else struggling, who is presenting 'swan like' but who is far from it. That kindred spirit may just be what you each need and together can seek help, or be that help.

One may well be the loneliest number, we might well feel we are all by ourselves, but you are not, even in the hardest of times, under the most immeasurable pressure, God is there, inviting you to share the burden. Let's make sure those words mean something by modelling them in our lives and being there for others. In what may seem a typical week, a normal day, someone may be crying out for help. Inspired by his words, let us follow in Jesus' steps, sharing the journey with others, carrying the load, and being humble and gentle of heart to all we meet along the way. Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you,
that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered
by your governance,
that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.