



# The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church



Sunday 12th May 2024  
The Seventh Sunday of Easter  
Staying in Contact

The Very Revd Canon 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 May 12th	8am	Said Mass
Sunday May 12th	10am	Sung Mass
Wednesday May 15th	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday May 19th	8am	Said Mass
Sunday May 19th	10am	Sung Mass followed by the APCM

420

476

319

*Christ Triumphant*

### **Panfield Church**

Sunday May 12th	***Please note no service this week***	
Tuesday May 14th	***Please note no Office Hour***	
Sunday May 19th	6pm	BCP Evensong

## Gospel Acclamation

*I will not leave you comfortless, says  
the Lord. I will come back to you  
and your hearts will be full of joy.*

## NOTICES

**Charity of the Month** - In May, the monies given at Tea & Coffee after the main service at St Mary's will go to Christian Aid. The total raised for Roundwood last month was just over £100, thank you!

**Flower Festival/May Day** - What a wonderful success the Flower Festival & May Day has been this year. Despite a little rain on May Day itself, it was brilliant to welcome so many down to the church over the Bank Holiday Weekend. Full details on monies raised will follow soon, but a huge thank you to everyone that supported the event, and particularly those who worked so hard to make it such a success.

**Fellowship** - The next meeting is THIS THURSDAY May 16th at 12.30pm in the Church Hall. Our speaker this month is Sheila Gunson, 'The Bag Lady'. New members always welcome.

**Funeral** - We would like to let you know that Sue Lord's funeral will take place on Friday May 17th at 2pm here in St Mary's Church. Wilson and Philip would be delighted to be see many of Sue's friends gather for a celebration of her life. Please feel free to share this date with others.

**Annual Parochial Church Meetings** - After the 10am service on Sunday May 19th, it will be St Mary's Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) and Fr Rod would be really pleased if many could plan to stay for that. Please note that tea and coffee will be in church on that Sunday.

**Friendly Friday Cafe** - The Café had paused for an Easter break, but we are pleased to say that it is now back up and running every Friday until the middle of July. Why not pop in and bring a friend too?

**Men's Mental Health training** - We have partnered with MIND Mid & North Essex to offer free training. It will take place in the Church Hall on Tuesday June 11th 1pm - 4.30pm. More details to follow.

**Prayers** - We keep in our prayers Noreen Watkinson, Brenda Dunstone, Barry and Janice Goody, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Jo Meech, Tony & Ann, Joan Insole and Susan Cavill. 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 week; Edith Gostling, Ivy Elliott, Arthur Tyler, Christine Clayden. Gladys Annetts, Jean Stiff, Jack George (Priest), Caroline Tyler, Keith Benzies (Bishop), Karl Miller, Ronald Elliot, John Darby, Gwendoline Mayes and Alice Geddes.

### The Collect for the Seventh Sunday of Easter

O God the King of glory,  
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ  
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:  
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,  
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us  
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### ***Epistle Reading - Acts 1:15-17,21-end***

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people) and said, 'Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry. So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.' So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; he was added to the eleven apostles.

### ***Gospel Reading - John 17: 6-19***

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself so that they may be sanctified in truth.

## Address

As we turn from one busy week and look to another, I know that for me, I have the upcoming pleasure of a three day training course in Leicester, aren't I lucky! Going away for several nights like this is not unusual, but it still presents all sorts of challenges, not least for Miriam and the kids. However, for me, the hardest bit is saying goodbye to them. It is only Leicester, and I shall probably be fine, but our routine will be different, and I will miss seeing them and catching up on their day. Saying goodbye and indeed driving off will be hard.

Reflecting on that, it struck me that the way that people say goodbye is very personal, particularly the big goodbyes, the ones that happen when a child goes to school for the first time, or away to university. Or when a colleague that we find we've got so used to leaves for another job. Maybe when a good friend emigrates, or of course when we are with loved ones coming near to the end of life. In short, when the people we love move on.

Some people are very expressive: it's all tears, hugs, and drama. Others are expressionless, preferring to stoically keep it all in. Many people make sure that they say their goodbyes beforehand, when they've got time and when emotions are not quite so high. Important things can't always be said and done on the doorstep.

In our Gospel reading from John, we are witnesses to just such a goodbye. In fact all of chapters 13 to the end of 17 are a goodbye – they could be called “the long goodbye”, a good name for a film perhaps. Sandwiched between the raising of Lazarus – an echo of what's to come – and Jesus' betrayal and arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, these chapters are charged with the emotion of a painful but necessary farewell, a goodbye.

Jesus talks about what he has done, and what it all means – not always, it has to be said, with great clarity though. Jesus knows that they will not have time to say goodbye later, so now he talks of how the disciples are to behave, of how they will be bound together into a community of love, and that this will give them their distinctive and attractive nature as the people of God. He tells them that things will not be easy without him, but that they will be empowered by the Holy Spirit when he leaves.

And in chapter 17, Jesus rounds it all off with a prayer. And what a prayer it is! The first part of the prayer cements Jesus' credentials. It's not just a matter of being received by God in heaven. Jesus is returning home to the glory he had with God in the beginning (remember those famous opening words to John's Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God...”). Jesus has told them before that he and the Father are one; now he again claims God's glory as his own.

Then he prays for his followers: those who have believed that he is the Son of God, and who very soon will find themselves the keepers and tellers of the message. Jesus' oneness with God is extended to the believers. Somehow, this little band of rather dubious humans have become bound up with God in Christ. From that point on there is an unshakeable bond between God and humankind – something wholly different about the way that human beings relate to God.

And then it all gets much simpler: a prayer for protection. Jesus must know that the hatred that he is about to experience will soon be extended to them. They haven't always been shining examples of steady faith; how will they cope without him?

Things move on, of course, and when the time comes really to say goodbye, everything is too chaotic, too dangerous, too tortured, to say any of these things. So, over supper, Jesus says his farewells. Perhaps the disciples understand, perhaps they don't, but at least they have had the chance to hear

Jesus' goodbye, and store it up as treasure for the future. This beautiful farewell, this beautiful prayer speaks to us as well. In many ways, Jesus expands on the Lord's Prayer, the prayer he earlier gave to his disciples, and fleshes it out in these verses, for them and for us.

And here we are, all these years on. Somehow, the emotion and urgency of the moment in the upper room are gone, and it's hard to imagine just what it felt like. We can but try to put ourselves in the sandals of the ones who were there; try and look into Jesus' eyes and hear his words afresh. But that prayer still stands; still echoes across the centuries. A Galilean peasant claims to be one with God, and something in the fabric of the universe shifts.

Humankind and God are bound together when they were once set apart, and an unshakeable bond is formed that cannot be broken by human frailty and petty mistakes. Things are possible that were never possible before. Things will change that we never thought would change. The message here for us in this goodbye is that we are loved by God. How? Well, in exactly the same way that he loves his Son.

That knowledge, those words are not hidden away like Terms and Conditions. Those words are not just informative, thanks for the heads up, similar to other advice like bring a broly. They are astounding, life changing, universe altering words. You are loved by God, in the same way he loves his Son.

Does that mean we will be shielded from everything harmful? No, Jesus his son was certainly not. Does it mean we can be protected from the pain of the world? No, again Jesus, nor his followers escaped that. But, it does mean that all will be well in the end. It does mean that through all life can throw at us, in our hellos and goodbyes, God loves us. That offers us freedom to be brave, to be courageous, to love others in the same way. A transformative love, and one the world really does need right now.

So, there are many more goodbyes to come for us all in the lives that lie ahead of us, but amongst all those we need never be parted from God, in all that is to come, he will be there.

Nothing is impossible with God, he calls us to be his disciples and we shouldn't be afraid of what that will mean for us if we keep those words of protection ringing in our ears. "Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

Called then to be a community of love, as the distinctive people of God. For the adventure that is still to come, and in God's love, may we glorify his Name today and always. Amen.

## Post Communion Prayer

Eternal God, giver of love and power,  
our Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world  
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:  
confirm us in this mission,  
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

You can scan this QR code with  
your phone at anytime and  
make a donation to the church.

Open your camera app, hold it  
over the QR code and then  
click 'open link' *Thank you*

