



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



Sunday 16th October 2022  
The Eighteenth 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

### St Mary's, Bocking

Sunday 16th October

8am Said Mass  
10am Sung Mass

Wednesday 19th October

9.30am Said Mass

Sunday 23rd October

8am Said Mass  
10am Sung Mass

### Panfield Church

Sunday 16th October

6pm BCP Evensong

Tuesday 18th October

5pm Evening Prayer

Sunday 23rd October

11am Holy Communion

## Hymns

Angel voices ever singing

526

429

536 (omit part two)

## Gospel Acclamation

*Your word is truth, O Lord,  
consecrate us in the truth.*

## NOTICES

**Fellowship** - Join us in the Church Hall this coming Thursday from 12.30pm for lunch followed by our guest speaker, Shrimathi Susanna. Her talk is entitled 'Colours of Indian Dance'. All welcome.

**Road Closure** - Please be aware that there are planned works on Church Lane, by the new Polly's Field complex for Sunday October 23rd and Sunday October 30th. A short diversion, via Bailey Bridge Road, Glebe Avenue, Churchill Road, and then Deanery Gardens will likely be necessary.

**Thank you** - The recent Coffee Morning at St Mary's Church Hall raised nearly £180 towards next year's Flower Festival arrangements. A huge thank you to all who attended and supported it.

**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.

**Gift Aid envelopes** - Both churches use them, they are Blue at Panfield and White at St Mary's but they do the same thing. If you are a UK taxpayer, then by placing your donation/offering in one of these and importantly then filling in the details we can claim an extra 25% from HM Treasury at no additional cost.

**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, Sun October 16th.

**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 Sunday 6th November. 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 Betty Bloomfield, 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 Frank Hurry, John King, Kate Farthing, Peter King, Aubrey How, Kenneth Wilkinson, Emma Shorter, Violet Mears, and Elsie Goodchild.

### The Collect for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith  
that, forsaking what lies behind  
and reaching out to that which is before,  
we may run the way of your commandments  
and win the crown of everlasting joy;  
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 - 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5**

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

### **Gospel Reading - Luke 18:1-8**

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

## Address

In preparing for today's sermon, I was reminded of the following story of one particular army cadet, who developed a rather peculiar habit.

He went around the camp picking up bits of paper lying around on the ground, looking at them, and saying 'That's not it', and putting them down again. And it got worse. He did it everywhere, even going into the offices and picking up confidential documents, looking at them, saying 'That's not it', and putting them down again. They tried everything. They even put him on a charge, but he just did the same to the charge sheet: 'That's not it'. He got worse and worse, and after doing the same in the CO's office, 'That's not it', they considered that the end of the line had come and sent him for a Medical Board and to see an Army Psychiatrist. After close examination the Board decided to discharge him, and the senior officer wrote up the necessary release form and pushed it across the desk for him to read. The young soldier picked it up, looked at it and shouted 'That's it!' – and disappeared to a new life.

A story that fits our gospel passage because the widow of Jesus' story and the young soldier have this in common: they are both searching, and they are both persistent in their search. The soldier was constantly searching for his freedom, risking the wrath of his sergeant-major and even his CO. The widow was constantly searching for justice in her lawsuit, risking the wrath of the unjust judge who was known as someone who had little time for God or those who followed him. So, the soldier gets his discharge by feigning madness, and the widow gets justice from the petulant judge by the frequency of her appeals.

Jesus told the story to encourage his hearers to be persistent in prayer, and never lose heart. Not that he was likening God to the unjust judge: just the opposite. The judge in the story was influenced neither by religious principles nor by public opinion. No doubt he would have taken a bribe, but the widow had no money for a bribe, and no influential friends either. Her only weapon was her persistence. And the whole point of the story is that if persistence prevails with someone who cares only for their own peace and comfort, how much more will it prevail with God, the righteous judge, the champion of the needy and the oppressed, who listens even to our inarticulate and clumsy longings.

Are we persistent in prayer?

St Luke quite deliberately places this parable immediately after Jesus has given a pretty horrific vision of how the world will end. There is an urgency about his message which I think we somehow have lost.

We know we should pray for the needs of the world, but the world has so many needs and the needy are so far away. It is only when tragedy strikes us, or those near and dear to us that we are provoked into more persistent prayer.

Paul encourages Timothy in his second letter to him, saying we should: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.

This is why we should never put prayer into one compartment of our lives, and action into another. Prayer and action are one.

This is something Jesus' first disciples had to learn.

Remember, they were disciples before Jesus taught them how to pray and how to act. To be disciples they did not first have to achieve perfect lives. To be Christians they did not first have to understand everything. All they did – but it was all – was to link their lives to the life of Jesus Christ, and everything else followed.

They started from the fact that Jesus loved them, and from him they learned something about loving. And from loving him they learned how to love one another, and from loving one another they learned how to radiate the love of God to all with whom they had to do.

*Living followed on from loving.*

*Behaving followed on from believing.*

*Prayer and action becoming increasingly intertwined.*

And so it is for us. We don't, thank God, have to achieve some state of holiness or live a perfect life before God will have anything to do with us; we don't have to earn our place in the company of God's people.

All that has been achieved for us by Jesus Christ, who opened wide his arms for us on the Cross and brought us the love and the grace and the forgiveness of God. That love and that grace and that forgiveness are his gifts of love to us.

When we respond to love with love, then from that will follow a desire to live lovingly, and so to order our lives that they will continue to grow in love. Growing in prayer, and being more honest with ourselves about ourselves, then we will be more prepared for him to take us as we are and shape and fashion us into what he would have us be.

But, it takes persistence. It takes effort. That however tentatively and however hesitantly we put our hands in his hand and entrust our lives into his keeping, we will find all his love and grace and strength beginning to grow in us – and from that small first act of commitment will come a life empowered, a life transfigured, a life transformed. And for that, thanks be to God. Amen.

## Post Communion Prayer

We praise and thank you, O Christ, for this sacred feast:  
for here we receive you,  
here the memory of your passion is renewed,  
here our minds are filled with grace,  
and here a pledge of future glory is given,  
when we shall feast at that table where you reign  
with all your saints for ever. Amen.