



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

Sunday 17th March 2024

Passion Sunday

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 17th March	8am	Said Mass
	10am	Sung Mass
Wednesday 20th March	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday 24th March	8am	Said Mass
	10am	Sung Mass for Palm Sunday

426

436

316

499 (omit vv 6&7)

### **Panfield Church**

Sunday 17th March	6pm	BCP Evensong
Tuesday 19th March	5pm	Office Hour/Evening Prayer
Sunday 24th March	11am	Holy Communion for Palm Sunday

## Gospel Acclamation

*I am the resurrection and  
the life, says the Lord,  
whoever believes in me  
will never die.*

## NOTICES

**Charity of the Month** - In March, the monies given at tea & coffee after the main service at St Mary's will go to Essex Air Ambulance. The total raised for Farleigh Hospice last month was £97.

**Stepping Stones** - Our next season of Stepping Stones will run through Lent, continuing March 19th at 7pm in church, note not this Tuesday! The remaining session will be March 26th. All welcome.

**Easter Lilies** - Please speak to Pat Thomas if you would like to donate to the cost of the Easter Lilies this year in memory of loved ones. Thank you.

**Murder Mystery Play** - Bocking Theatre Club are about to begin rehearsals for Jacky Mitchell's latest murder mystery play to be performed in the coming months. The play will be staged in the Church Hall with profits split between the Theatre Club and the Friends of St Mary's. If you would be interested in joining the cast then please speak to Pru Page.

**Friendly Friday Cafe** - The Café continues to run in the Church Hall from 12noon onwards, but there is just one session left, as they finish, THIS FRIDAY, March 22nd. Re-starting after Easter on April 19th.

**Rotas** - In the next few weeks, the latest rota will be issued for servers, sides-people, as well as those who organise tea and coffee after the service. We thank all those who support St Mary's in this way week by week. If you would like to join the rota for one of these roles, or maybe feel now is the time to step back, then please speak to Fr Rod.

**Coffee Morning** - The last coffee morning to raise funds towards the flowers for this year's Flower Festival will be on Friday April 5th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.

**Electoral Roll** - If you have joined St Mary's recently it is likely you are not on our Electoral Roll. Indeed there may be others who have been meaning to do so, but not taken up the chance. Ahead of the APCM on May 19th, we are inviting you to join now. A short form is at the back, which is easy to fill in.

**Monday May 6th** - May Day Fayre helpers needed! We know it is early but please save the date and help us make this the most successful year yet. Pru, Margaret or Jo look forward to hearing from you if you can give us some time on the day. The more volunteers we have, the more stalls/games we can run.

**Prayers** - We keep in our prayers Brenda Dunstone, Barry and Janice Goody, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Jo Meech, and Tony & Ann. 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 Dorothy Shaw, John Copley, Leslie Nottage, Hans Fick, Percy Lewis, Fred Wiffen, Florence Spink, Walter Burch, Eric Ashbridge and Stanley Lee.

### The Collect for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

Most merciful God,  
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
delivered and saved the world:  
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
we may triumph in the power of his victory;  
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 - Hebrews 5:5-10**

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'; as he says also in another place, 'You are a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek.' In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

### **Gospel Reading - John 12:20-33**

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour. 'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say— "Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

## Address

Good morning and welcome to FRET tours. I hope you slept well and are looking forward to a great first day on our tour of Jerusalem. Please keep your items close at hand as there are pick pockets in the area. I also ask that you don't lose sight of me, let's stay together.

We will start our tour in the Greek part of the city so you may well hear familiar words as we make our way to the Temple. It has been a very exciting time, a few weeks back this man called Jesus came preaching and teaching, upsetting the locals and leaving his mark. On one occasion at the Temple causing havoc by overturning the tables, coins everywhere! He is quite the celebrity and drawing something of a crowd.

In fact, here he is, can you see him? Wow this place is packed today. The heat, the dust and all these people, we'll be lucky to get back to coach let alone see anything of the Temple or hear this man Jesus! What are we going to do?

Ever been on a tour like that? Surrounded by tourists piling in? Cameras out, pushing past and it seems there is a very good chance you might miss the main event? Well for the Greeks on the FRET tour they think the same. For these Gentiles this was an essential stop on their tour. They knew they couldn't go into the Temple itself, but they could go to the Court of the Gentiles, the scene of the tables being turned with the market and uncleanness that went with it.

So, the guide gets them to the Temple, but they can't see a thing. Intrigued by the pulling power of Jesus they want a way in. And then they spot one! Like seeing someone you know who is a security guard and can get you up the front. They hear Philip, (a Greek name) speaking and think he could be their ticket. We want to see Jesus they say, and it would seem they do get further forward.

So would it be worth it? How transformative would his words be? Encouraging, loving and nurturing. Might they even bring them to faith?

Well indirectly his words were all those things but on the first hearing what they and the whole crowd heard was shocking. 'We must die before we can live', and he uses the analogy of the seed that must be buried, effectively dead to all around it, for it to grow, shoot forth and bring life. I am going to have to die to have life? Not on the surface the most appealing invitation to join this new movement.

So don't be under any illusion, those words were shocking then, and they are to us now. Jesus chooses them because he knows his time is coming. Now he must speak plainly, even if it is uncomfortable for people to hear. His message is clear. He knows that the hour for his death is coming, and the hope of the life that follows and so he shares that powerful message.

We are about to begin another walk to the cross with the events of Jesus triumphant return to Jerusalem when the crowds were even bigger. Palm Sunday begins that final part of the journey, one that leads from death to life.

We do so with those words ringing in our ears, anyone who holds onto life just as it is, will not see it grow. But those who let that life go, to be reckless, to come and die, they will see their life grow. So, shall we be defiant and stand with Jesus, let that life go, but when it comes to the dying bit just let Jesus do that?

No, that just isn't going to be enough. Dying must be part of our lives if faith is going to mean anything. I was reflecting on what must die in my life, and I realised many times over this week, it is my control of things, it is when I try to bring order to chaos. Instead of realising that it is God who brings order to chaos.

Unfortunately, I don't mean that he can tidy my chaotic and messy study, but instead guide me through the chaos and mess of day-to-day life.

I had one such day this week, my plan for the day was in ruins, meetings changed, unexpected phone calls, extra services picked up, none of it in my plan, it felt like plate spinning that had gone wrong. Not quite chaos, but at each turn I kept trying to pin down my will. This is what I can do. This is where I will go, and then I stopped, in this near chaos of what should have been an ordinary day, I stopped. Let go, it will be okay.

They day took on a new path and at each and every turn, as if to ram home the point, I knew I was where I was supposed to be. The unplanned visit to the airport to do some chaplaincy led me to speaking to a group of Nuns. They had seen pictures of the chaplaincy team, presumed I was the most Catholic looking and prayed I would visit them, and I did. Unbeknownst to me, but that was God's plan. I later agreed to take a funeral helping a local colleague. After phoning the funeral directors, not a local funeral directors either, I ended up speaking to a friend I knew in my early days here, we haven't spoken in years. God's plan. There are more links too from that one day which I won't share but again and again, my plan not yours, I needed to let go. That's hard, what if God's plan isn't as good as ours? Well, that isn't possible, but what if God's plan is harder than we like? That is possible.

The Greeks needed to die to community, to die to their limitations of God's love, to know that God is not just about rules and laws but life. That theme of chaos and order again. Indeed, right the way through John's gospel he seeks to use Jesus as the one to bring order.

For when things fall, like the seed, they fall with no control. No idea where they will land, tossed about along the way as we hear in this passage. This is then immediately contrasted with the order of Jesus being lifted up, and to further clarify this order, God speaks. Indeed, each time he is lifted up, whether at his baptism or the transfiguration, God speaks. Those are moments of order, moments where it had to be this way, no accident, no leaving this to chance. We too must put ourselves, our self-preservation aside. An invitation to find the things in us that must die to give us life.

So I invite you back to FRET tours. You are back in the crowd, the sun beating down, people jostling, you can see the locals, the Greeks, the Jews, the temple authorities and you are there too. You like the Greeks are close enough to hear. You can see Jesus. So much noise, then you hear those ridiculous words, we must die before we can have life? That uneasiness we feel in hearing them, what does that mean for us? What do we need to let go of, and say what in me needs to die today? Amen.

## Post Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us  
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you:  
give us the will to be the servant of others  
as you were the servant of all,  
and gave up your life and died for us,  
but are alive and reign, now and for ever. Amen.

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