



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



Sunday 23rd July 2023  
The Seventh 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 23rd July	8am/10am	Said Mass/Sung Mass
Wednesday 26th July	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday 30th July	8am/10am	Said Mass/Sung Mass

466

Morning has Broken

414

### **Panfield Church**

Sunday 23rd July	11am	Holy Communion
Tuesday 25th July	5pm	Evening Prayer/Office Hour
Sunday 30th July	11am	Holy Communion

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## Gospel Acclamation

*May Christ enlighten the eyes of our  
minds, so that we can see the hope  
his call holds for us.*

## NOTICES

**Junior Church** - Our Summer Term will finish **TODAY**, with a session on stained glass windows! We look forward to seeing as many as can make it. 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 TODAY** 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 **THIS SATURDAY 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.

**Childrens' Society** - It is that time already, please can those with donation boxes return them to Caron Francis over the coming weeks. Thank you.

**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 lefts. 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.

**Friendly Friday Cafe** - The Summer Sessions have now come to an end. They will re-start on Friday October 6th after those involved have had a well earned break.

**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 Edward Butcher, David Mumford, Roy Lanham, Betty Cotton, Pauline Hammind, Betty Huffman, Joyce Parkinson, Harry Poulter, Gladys Winterbottom, Mike Nock, Sheila Skinner, Robert Tullett, and John Whiskin.

### The Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Lord of all power and might,  
the author and giver of all good things:  
graft in our hearts the love of your name,  
increase in us true religion,  
nourish us with all goodness,  
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;  
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 - Romans 8:12-25**

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

### **Gospel Reading - Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43**

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.'

He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

## Address

Can you complete the catchphrase?

It's nice to see you... to see you, nice!

What do points make? Prizes!

It's goodnight from me... and it's goodnight from him

What about this one ... Let anyone with ears... listen.

You see what I did there. The closing verses from this week's gospel passage are also the same as last weeks too. It could be something of a catchphrase. More importantly, it is a valuable and important question to ask. Do we listen? Do we really take in?

I recently heard the story of a Baptist minister, Howard Finster who worked out that he had delivered 4625 sermons, 400 plus funerals and 200 weddings. He decided to audit what those listening had taken from his words. No-one could remember a single thing from them.

Now in fairness, research has shown that in 2000, our average attention span was, 11 secs! By 2015, that was down to 8 secs. Concentrating for just 8 secs, certainly makes me think differently in how I approach a sermon. Let's test you... what was the name of the Baptist minister?

Maybe Jesus knew this about us because if Howard had told 4625 stories, more might have been retained. For parables are just that, stories.

If last week's Parable of the Sower was familiar and generally accessible what do we make of this week's parable? For me, it is both less well known and deeply challenging. It is hard to get our head around it. For example, we could argue this parable is an irrelevance until those end times when it will be God and his angels who sifts out the weeds from the good seed and therefore as we don't know when that will be why bother now. The command, the catchphrase though is to listen. Not to think about listening, but to listen.

In our world today, it can feel like everything isn't going as it should be and that the weeds are rife, taking over and limiting the good seed who are doing all they can. We touched upon some of this last week, and I know it resonated for you. Why would God who loves us allow so many weeds, so many bad things? Well, I was struck by one response to that this week that tried to delve deeper into what it really means to love something.

Bishop Roger says this, 'I am a dad and I have two girls - now grown up - but, in my own faltering way, I have learnt a lot about what it means to try to be a loving father. So, when they were younger and one of them asked me, 'Can I ride my bike down the road?', I could have said 'no' because I love them so much and would hate for them to come to any harm.

Or I could have said 'yes, but first let me wrap you in bubble wrap and cotton wool and let me walk at your side all the time.' But they might have accused me of being a little over-protective. No, I knew that the loving thing to do was to give them the space to be themselves and to say 'yes, but please be careful' - even though saying 'yes' contained within it the potential for tragedy.'

The Christian writer WH Vanstone, in his book *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, says: 'The activity of God in creation must be precarious. It must proceed by no assured programme. Its progress, like every progress of love, must be an angular progress - in which each triumph contains a new potential of tragedy; and each tragedy may be redeemed into a wider triumph, control is jeopardised, lost, and, every endeavour is ever poised upon the brink of failure...' The creation is 'safe' - he says, 'not because it moves by plan towards a predetermined goal but because the same loving creativity is always exercised upon it.' God loves you - and in this fallen, broken, messed-up world, this world of wheat and weeds, of good and evil, there will always be stuff that happens that breaks our hearts. But God never stops loving us.

Like the farmers, we might want all the weeds removed but the reality is we live amongst one another. Trying to do all that we can, from where we are knowing God loves us, and instead of hoping it will be okay in the end, we are then called to listen and to act.

We can recognise the good we offer, we can look to stand up to all that is wrong, we can seek to model something different. By listening for his word, by listening for his teaching God will continue to shape and nourish us. By listening, by really listening, we will see more than the weeds, we can find the beauty, the miracles, the joy that exists. Our world so rarely wants to revel in success, or happy endings, let alone triumphant feats but they happen all the time. Just this week, that amazing team of rowers who in just 44 days circumnavigated the UK, setting a new Guinness World Record, or the rescue of a man in Australia who somehow survived in his boat at sea, with his dog, for 3 months, as well as so much more, closer to home too.

One final catchphrase, I've started... so I'll finish.

So, it's tough - it's hard - this Christian life. And stuff happens. And while God will, one day, sort it all out and heal what is broken, until that day we have to live in the midst of the brokenness and the pain, carrying within ourselves the attitude of forgiveness, of love - mercy and grace. Where to begin? Maybe we can start by doing what he commands, let anyone with ears, listen. Amen.

## Post Communion Prayer

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life,  
ever giving himself that the world may live:  
may we so receive within ourselves  
the power of his death and passion  
that, in his saving cup,  
we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love;  
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.