



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church



Sunday 4th February 2024
The Feast of Candlemas
Staying in Contact

The Very Revd Rod Reid - Incumbent (*usual rest day Monday*)

Email: bockingchurch@gmail.com Call: (01376) 324887 www.stmarys-bocking.com
or on Facebook, search for 'St Mary's Church, Bocking', or 'Panfield Church'

Forthcoming Services

Hymns

St Mary's, Bocking

Sunday 4th February	8am	Said Mass
	10am	Sung Mass on Candlemas
	5pm	BCP Evensong with Felsted School
Wednesday 7th February	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday 11th February	8am	Said Mass
	10am	Sung Mass
Wednesday 14th February	9.30am	Said Mass with Imposition of Ashes

See
*special
booklet*

Gospel Acclamation

*The light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory
of your people Israel.*

Panfield Church

Sunday 4th February	11am	Holy Communion
Tuesday 6th February	5pm	Office Hour/Evening Prayer
Sunday 11th February	11am	Morning Worship
Wednesday 14th February	7.30pm	Communion with Imposition of Ashes

NOTICES

Parish Meal - For those who have booked a place for the Parish Meal on Friday February 9th at 7pm in The Retreat, please see the menu at the back of church and add know your food choices to the list.

Choral Evensong - THIS EVENING, February 4th at 5pm there will be Choral Evensong at St Mary's, Bocking, led by the Senior Chapel Choir of Felsted School. All are welcome.

Sunday Coffee - Charity of the Month - Throughout February, the monies donated at tea and coffee following the main service at St Mary's will be going towards 'The Dean Rogers Million Penny Fund'.

Stepping Stones - Our next sessions of Stepping Stones will run in Lent, beginning on February 20th at 7pm. The remaining sessions will be February 27th, March 5th, March 19th and March 26th. More details will follow in a few weeks time, but we wanted to give you the dates as soon as possible. All welcome.

Lent Soup - Just to let you know that on Sunday March 3rd following the 10am service at St Mary's there will be a Lent Soup Lunch in the Church Hall. More details will follow soon.

Save the Date - The next Friends event will be a Quiz Night in the Church Hall with Fish & Chip supper, Saturday March 16th, 6.30 for 7pm. Tickets available from today.

Friendly Friday Cafe - We are pleased to say that the Friendly Friday Café is back in the Church Hall from 12noon onwards, and now running each Friday up to, and including Friday March 22nd.

Stargazing Evening - On Friday March 1st from 7-9pm our friends from the North Essex Astronomical Society will be running a free stargazing session in the church grounds. All are welcome.

World Day of Prayer - The local World Day of Prayer service will take place at Braintree Baptist Church on Friday March 1st at 10.30am, the service created by the women of Palestine. All welcome.

Online Donations - At present, the card reader in St Mary's is out of action, but you are still very welcome to give online. You could do this by scanning the QR code at the end of this Notice Sheet or you'll find it in church, you scan the code using the camera on your phones. On most phones it will then ask you to 'open the link', from there you can give via the website. Some older phone models may need an additional app to scan the QR code. Alternatively you can go straight to the following website <http://givealittle.co/campaigns/8e6670a3-8911-43d2-bcc3-4b29613d6573>

Prayers - We keep in our prayers 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 week Gerald Bonner, Henry Phillips, Amy Edwards, Leslie Hornsley, Christine Vaizey, Christina Hartland, Thomas Dunstone, Maurice Hutchins, Joan Bull, Keith Stevens, Joan Agate, Chrissie Sawyer, Mark Heksel, Madeline White, Thomas Cooper, Catherine Scott and John Smith.

The Collect for the Feast of Candlemas

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ 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 2:14-end

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Gospel Reading - Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him

what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Address

‘Are you the owner of the golden Mokka, reg ending KZG?’ Yes, that’s me I reply. You guessed it, I had taken the car for its MOT, and rather than Mr Reid, Revd Reid, or even Rod, it was, ‘are you the owner of the golden Mokka?’ After three hours of waiting, no use of my name at all. Still at least he didn’t refer to the colour of the car as orange.

Later that day, something similar, No 58? No 58? Yes, that us over here. Table 58 as the food is brought out, again after a while of waiting.

Maybe it hasn’t always been that way, I’m not sure, but certainly today there is so little effort made to speak properly, or politely to people. The use of names or titles seems to be disappearing, we are simply a number, or a car reg.

While that thought niggled me somewhat, I also had the passage from today’s gospel in mind. I am not sure I have noticed before, but the use of names seems to be very important here too. We are told about Simeon and Anna, they are named. By contrast, Mary is mentioned by name once, poor Josph not at all. The rest of the time they are the child’s parents. Jesus as well is mentioned by name once, throughout the passage he is the Messiah, or even the first-born male. It strikes me, what is key, is that their time had not yet come, a phrase Jesus uses throughout his ministry, indeed we last heard it at the Wedding in Cana. Mary and Josph’s faith would have a number of moments, but this one was Simeon’s and to a certain extent Anna. Therefore, it must be important that we find out so much about them, both had been waiting for this time to come. A lifetime of faithfulness, of witness.

In scripture the use of names is key, and still very much the case. Knowing someone’s name, and a little of who they are builds that connection, and a deeper connection. A connection I definitely didn’t have when I collected my car! Here, that connection makes this all the more important. It seems to me that Luke who wrote this gospel would have known Simeon and Anna, he would have been used to seeing them at the temple. Regular features, and his connection bleeds into this passage. In sharing all this detail, we feel we know them both a little more, and of course makes the passage all the more poignant. You can feel the emotion of Simeon as he holds the Messiah, having waited all his life for this, it was more than just making sure the customary rites were fulfilled, but most importantly that his time of waiting was over, his time had come, and we share in that even all these years later.

Here, in this time, well I am afraid we will keep waiting for all sorts of things in day-to-day life. We may even sit in a queue, oh how we love a queue. An orderly queue at that. Thankfully, eventually whatever we have been waiting for will be ready, its appointed time will come.

That is of this world though, when it comes to our faith, however fragile or small we might describe that faith, our time is now, there is no waiting. We are called to bring light and love, to serve one another through kindness and more, each and every day. We are not called to wait, nor to wait in the church, but to be active now, sharing who we are.

For we are full of light, but in the midst of our everyday it is all too hidden. In the midst of the gloom and the heaviness of our world right now, that light is diminished. At Candlemas we are called to shine, to shine as individuals and to shine as the body of the church. For we know that with our little light, when we put them together, we really can dispel the darkness, transform how people see things and we pray give one another the light we need to truly see Christ in our world. So this feast of Candlemas, for me today, is a call to be counter to this world, and to find our way to shine.

We do so in the knowledge that while few may know our names, God does. He knows you, the struggles, the joys, when it goes well and when it doesn't. He knows you, and that isn't to scare us but to comfort us, that in the midst of this life, when we can feel alone, and unknown, that he holds us, and cares for us.

The moment for those around Jesus being presented in the temple was an ordinary one, this was customary, it happened all the time. While for Mary and Joseph it was their child being presented there would have been a normality to this moment too. That is for everyone except Simeon and Anna, for whom we know what an impact it would have.

As we seek to shine in this world, it is far more likely to be in the ordinary, the normal, the day to day, let us be open to that. You never know, it might even be when you take the car for its MOT!
Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,
who lived to welcome the Messiah:
may we, who have received these gifts beyond words,
prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes
to bring us to eternal life;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
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*

