



# WELCOME TO ST PETER'S ASH



*THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT ST PETER'S IS CALLED TO CELEBRATE, LIVE AND REFLECT THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST*

**15<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2021**

**BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

<b>READINGS FOR TODAY</b>	<b>PARISH OFFICE:</b> Please use e-mail to make contact TEL:01252 331161; e- mail: <a href="mailto:office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk">office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk</a> <b>BOOKINGS OF WEDDINGS &amp; BAPTISMS</b> – phone for an appointment on 01252 321517 or 01252 331161 <b>WEBSITE:</b> <a href="http://www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk">www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk</a>
Revelation 11 v 19 to 12 v 6	
Galatians 4 v 4 - 7	
Luke 1 v 46 - 55	



*'My soul magnifies the Lord'*

\*\*\*\*\*

**COLLECT FOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

Almighty God,  
who looked upon the lowliness  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
and chose her to be the mother of your only Son:  
grant that we who are redeemed by his blood  
may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom;  
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.

**POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

God most high,  
whose handmaid bore the Word made flesh:  
we thank you that in this sacrament of our redemption  
you visit us with your Holy Spirit  
and overshadow us by your power;  
strengthen us to walk with Mary  
the joyful path of obedience  
and so to bring forth the fruits of holiness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

\*\*\*\*\*

**READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK – TRINITY 12**

Joshua 24 v 1 – 2a, 14 – 18; Ephesians 6 v 10 – 20;  
John 6 v 56 - 69

\*\*\*\*\*  
**BIRTHDAY GREETINGS** – our prayers and good wishes go  
to all who are celebrating their birthday at this time.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Please pray for the souls of the recently departed: **TREVOR BRODRICK; PHYLLIS HODGKISS**  
\*\*\*\*\*

**COVID PRECAUTIONS**

The wearing of face coverings is no longer mandatory in church, but to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus, even by those double vaccinated, we encourage their continued use during services for the present. Likewise, hand sanitiser will continue to be provided and attendees encouraged to use the QR code or let us record your name.

Please respect others desire to keep their distance – if you do not wish to have someone occupy the seat next to you there are 'Please leave this seat empty' signs for you to use.

Congregational singing is now allowed, but we are keeping to only 4 hymns. You may wish to wear a face covering while singing – although this is a matter of choice.

Holy Communion, bread only, will continue to be administered to you at your seat. There will be no sharing of the peace for the time being as physical contact with other households is not advised.

After the service people are welcome to use the Rectory Garden to chat. We will review having coffee in the Centre in September.

Please do not come to church if you have Covid symptoms, have been in close contact with someone who has got Covid or are waiting for Covid test results. Thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*

**AUGUST STUDY GROUPS**

All are welcome to come along to St Peter's Centre for these sessions – 7 – 30 pm to 8 – 30 pm. Refreshments afterwards.

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> August – Hymns – music, background and discussion: Mrs C F Alexander etc

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August – Psalms – an exploration.

Each session is a 'stand-alone' so just come to as many as you can!

\*\*\*\*\*

**ST PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN** - If you would like prayer for yourself or somebody else please phone: 01252 322292 or 01252 323037. This is a confidential service.

\*\*\*\*\*



## SERMON FOR TODAY FROM FR. KEITH

I believe that today's festival of Mary is a celebration of potential. Across the world Christians will be acknowledging the entry of Mary into heaven – God's free gift to her after a life of devoted service to Him here on earth.

Of course, Mary is regarded today as someone very special, but we must never forget that she was a human being just like the rest of us. How we look on her now is the result of what her faithfulness to God allowed her to achieve, rather than being down to any difference to us, in her fundamental being.

In her Song of praise to God, which we call the Magnificat, Mary says that God '*has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant*' and that '*the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is his name*'. She recognises that the fact that all generations will call her blessed, is not due to her own strengths, but to what God was able to do through her, as a result of her free choice to obey His will in all things. Her 'yes' to God enabled her to become a key player in God's plan of salvation for the world, no less!

In that ordinary girl from Nazareth, then, God saw great potential. And as we give thanks for Mary today, we should be thinking about the potential that lies within us, to do great things for God. If we, like Mary, put ourselves at God's disposal, he will be able to use *us* to make a difference to the world around us, and be part of his plan of salvation, too. Now, I know that that may sound a bit too ambitious to us. How can we possibly think of ourselves as being in the same bracket as the Mother of Jesus? True, none of us will ever be asked to give birth to God's Son, but, we *can* play our part in the 'birth of God's Kingdom', if we echo her 'yes' to God's will. We really do have 'potential' to be of service, but thinking that we are not 'holy' enough, can hold us back. The people we read about in the Bible can seem too far above us, and the world we inhabit, too ordinary compared to theirs.

The other evening, I watched a programme about artists who have painted the Holy Land. The presenter was an artist himself – Lachlan Goudie. A few years ago, he went to the Holy Land and did lots of sketches of the places we read about in the story of Jesus' passion, as they are today. He also talked about some of the paintings of those places done by the great Masters of past centuries – none of whom had actually visited the Holy Land. What they painted was set in the places they were familiar with like Italy or the Low Countries. The point that he was making was that, beautiful though these works are, they don't convey the full flavour of the reality of Jesus' story. They create a 'holy' image that is distanced from the actual sights and sounds and the people of the place – they make the real world seem all too perfect.

The world that Jesus' lived in was not any more 'holy' or perfect than ours is today. The sounds, sights and smells of Jerusalem 2000 years ago would have been as 'ordinary' as any other hot middle eastern city of the time, and it would have had much in common with the hustle and bustle of those places now. When we think of biblical scenes and characters, the title - 'Holy Land' can actually get in the way of us appreciating them for what they really always were. It is easy then for Mary and the rest to seem so different to us, in our imaginations, that we feel that there are very few points of contact with them and us in our 'ordinary' lives. They are seen as special, whereas we are not. We may look up to them and admire them, but we believe we can never hope to be like them. The reality is quite the opposite though because they were just as human as us.

As I said earlier, I believe that today is about 'potential' – our

potential to act in God's service. Mary shows us what faithfulness and obedience to God can unlock, in just an ordinary human being. Why should we doubt the potential in our own lives if we say yes to Him who, as Paul says to the Ephesians - '*is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us*'. (Ephesians 3 v 20)?

Writing to the Galatians, as we heard in this mornings' first reading, Paul talks about the fact that because God sent his Son, *born of a woman*, we might be redeemed and receive adoption as children, no longer slaves. Moreover, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, so that we can call God 'Abba' – Dad. Because of what Mary did, in being obedient to God, our relationship with Him is restored to the closeness that God intended for us from the beginning, but which our sinfulness had prevented for so long.

So, what potential do we have, I wonder to make a difference to people's lives for good? What part in helping to bring to birth God's Kingdom, has he in mind for us to play – as individuals and as a church? When we read our Bibles it might help us to consider that, if we picture a 'real 'world, rather than a 'holy place' that bears no relation to reality either back then or for us now? What the Bible has to teach us is very relevant for us today, but for it to speak to us fully we have to recognise the real humanity behind the 'holiness'. We will then be more open to hear the things that will help us recognise the potential for transformation that lies within each of us , ordinary folk that we are.

Mary is special not because she is by nature a 'Superwoman', but because, in her humility she allowed God to 'do great things for her'. Let us pray then, that we may have the courage to follow Mary's example of trust and commitment to God, and let's ask her to help us to do that through her prayers. He *can* do great things for us too, because Holy is His Name. Amen.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHURCHES TOGETHER PICNIC

So that we can get to know each other better, Claire has invited us, and St Mary's, to bring a picnic to St Paul's Vicarage for a fun afternoon on:

## **SUNDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST at 3 pm**

\*\*\*\*\*

The Archbishop of Canterbury will visit the diocese from 24-27 September 2021. There will be a number of opportunities for you and your guests to hear and question the Archbishop and all events are free to attend – go to the Guildford Diocesan website to book:

An Evening with Justin Welby - Lakeside Country Club near Camberley on Friday 24 September at 8pm

This is our main diocese-wide event with the Archbishop and is intended for clergy and congregations rather than for guests from outside the church. There will be worship, prayer for the weekend, celebration of all that God is doing in our parishes, a key address from the Archbishop on the future of the local church, and an extended time of Q and A.  
\*\*\*\*\*

## SOME DATES FOR THE DIARY

Sat 18<sup>th</sup> September – Walking Quiz around Ash  
Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September – Harvest  
Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> October – Children's Society Coffee Morning  
Sat 16<sup>th</sup> October – Quiz Evening in St Peter's Centre  
.....

.....