



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

25th JULY 2021

ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

READINGS FOR TODAY		PARISH OFFICE: Please use e-mail to make contact TEL: 01252 331161; e- mail: office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk BOOKINGS OF WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS – phone for an appointment on 01252 321517 or 01252 331161 WEBSITE: www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk
Acts	11 v 27 to 12 v 2	
2 Corinthians	4 v 7 - 15	
Matthew	20 v 20 - 28	



COVID RESTRICTIONS EASING

Following the announcement from the Government on 19th July, and in line with Church of England guidelines:

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 will be 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 3rd August – Exploring Prayer

Thursday 12th August – Bible study on the book of Daniel

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

Thursday 26th August – Psalms – an exploration.

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

COLLECT FOR ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

Merciful God,
whose holy apostle Saint James,
leaving his father and all that he had,
was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ
and followed him even to death:
help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world,
to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay;
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

Lord God, the source of truth and love,
keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK – TRINITY 9

Exodus 16 v 2 – 4, 9 - 15; Ephesians 4 v 1 - 16;
John 6 v 24 - 35

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS – our prayers and good wishes go
to all who are celebrating their birthday at this time:
ANDREW THOMPSON (27TH); SHEILA TAYLOR &
CHRISTINE BEER (30TH)

Please pray for the souls of the recently departed:
LAURENCE SHERRING; TREVOR BRODRICK; SYLVIA
MUTTON

NEW ROTAS - From the beginning of August we are
inviting people to join the rotas for readers, intercessors,
sidespersons, brass cleaners back again. Please sign up!

We are also need more Hall Managers – mainly to open up
the Centre for children's parties at weekends.

**SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF ST JAMES THE
APOSTLE BY FR KEITH**

Some years ago, I visited the shrine of St James in north-west Spain at Santiago de Compostela. In the middle ages there was a legend that St James had preached the gospel in Spain before his martyrdom at the hands of King Herod Agrippa, as recorded in Acts 12 v 2 which we heard this morning. After his martyrdom it was said that his body was then brought back to Spain and now lies in the church at Compostela. These days most scholars are sceptical about this legend, but that still hasn't stopped people making a pilgrimage to Compostela in their thousands every year. Most of them come on foot, walking hundreds of miles in the process, and they make it a time of reflection and prayer on the way. My visit was rather more prosaic – I went courtesy of Ryanair and a hire car! Nevertheless, however you arrive, you cannot help but be moved by a place that has been hallowed by so much prayer and devotion down the centuries. So, whether St James was ever in Spain, in a sense isn't that important – the fact that, as an Apostle, he was martyred for his faith, and can still inspire people to follow Jesus to this day, is much more to the point.

Like most of the Apostles we know very little about James' life. What we do know is that he was one of the first to be called by Jesus, together with his brother John. They promptly left their life of fishing to follow Him. Later, they were both chosen, along with Peter, to witness the Transfiguration of Jesus, and later still, the agony of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. So, it would seem that they were part of a kind of 'inner circle' within the company of apostles. However, if they, or their mother, as today's Gospel relates, thought that that should give them a privileged position in the coming Kingdom, they were mistaken. Their request for seats at Jesus' right and left hand is rebuffed, and Jesus gives them, and the rest of the Apostles, a lesson in what real greatness is all about for Christians. In the Kingdom of God, it isn't status in worldly terms that matters, but service to others and a willingness to follow Jesus' example of suffering, if necessary, for those you love. Ultimately James did that, he was the first Apostle to give his life as the price for keeping his faith.

What then, should this commemoration of St James say to us today? Well, first and foremost he is someone to be looked to as an example of commitment to Jesus, despite the danger that that put him in. He trusted that Jesus would see him through into the eternal Kingdom even though it cost him his life here on earth. How strong is our commitment, we should ask ourselves, when the going gets tough for us? Are we as ready to stick to the course, or do we make excuses and compromises? James had willingly given up his past life, for the sake of something of eternal value, and he wasn't about to go back on that.

The rebuke that he, his brother and his mother received from Jesus about privileged places in the Kingdom, did not put him off. He learnt from that experience and remained dedicated to the one who had called him and in whom he had placed his trust. Earthly ambition no longer counted, it was doing the will of God that was of sole importance to James for the rest of his life. But what about us? Do we still seek status and recognition from those around us, do we want to be looked up to for selfish reasons rather than as ambassadors for Christ?

Saints' days aren't there to make us 'ordinary folk' feel small or inadequate, but to remind us that when we truly walk with Jesus, we too can achieve greatness in God's eyes. The world may mock us and maltreat us, even our own families and friends can be less than supportive, but

we have Jesus' promise to be with us to the very end of time and that's what really counts. We are never alone.

We may never have people making pilgrimages to the place where our earthly remains finally rest, but that doesn't mean that we, like St James, can't be an inspiration to others to follow Jesus. If people see for themselves our commitment to Jesus and our service to others, we can help them to reach the Kingdom, no less than do the saints from of old. It's worth remembering that around us now are the saints of the twenty-first century. Their names may never be as widely known as those of the apostles and other 'greats', but their faithfulness and trust in God is no less real and we can be like them today.

St James is known the world over and there are many churches that bear his name, but, to God, the very humblest of followers of Jesus is just as well loved and important, and that means us!

So, we give thanks for St James, for the inspiration that he has been and still is. We remember the lesson about humility and service that he was taught, and we pray that we too may be faithful to our calling and have the courage to do what God wants us to do in His world today. Amen.

OUTDOOR FAMILY COMMUNION

**SUNDAY 8TH AUGUST
10 am outside St Peter's Centre**

Afterwards in the Rectory Garden – bring your own 'snack'. Games for the children.

CHURCHES TOGETHER PICNIC

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

SUNDAY 29TH AUGUST at 3 pm

Please bring you own picnic!

SOME DATES FOR THE DIARY

Sat 18th September – Walking Quiz around Ash

Sunday 26th September – Harvest

Sat 2nd October – Children's Society Coffee Morning

Sat 16th October – Quiz in St Peter's Centre

ST PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN - If you would like prayer for yourself or somebody else please phone: 01252 32292 or 01252 323037 This is a confidential service.

.....

.....