



St Paul's Church

Dear all,

I just want to take the opportunity to build on Anthea's words from last week. In her update she talked of the discernment process as St Paul's draws together information for the Parish Profile, and the complexities of the task as the church goes into a period of interregnum.

This can be unsettling, understandably so, as we all prefer to know what is going to happen and when – it gives us a sense of security. However please be assured that all those carrying the task of maintaining worship, and other activities, will do their very best.

Thursday 2nd February is the feast day of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. The scripture reference is from Luke chapter 2 where we read about the infant Jesus being brought to the temple in accordance with the custom of presenting first born boys for the rites of purification. We encounter the characters of Simeon and Anna, both elderly and faithful worshipers who have patiently waited for the promises of God to be fulfilled and instantly recognize that this has come to pass in the Christ child.

Patient and faithful waiting was rewarded with joy at all that came to pass. In the same way, for St Paul's, the patient and faithful waiting of the coming interregnum will be rewarded with a whole new realm of possibilities. The words of St Paul (how appropriate!) come to mind as he places his priority on Christ and not the things of this world;

"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." PHILIPPIANS 3:7-14

Every blessing,
Rev Chris

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

All services are in church, zoom is available for some services.

SUNDAY 29th JANUARY – EPIPHANY 4 (ZOOM)

10 am Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 5th FEBRUARY – 3 BEFORE LENT – Candlemas

10 am Café Service – Gwyn

SUNDAY 12th FEBRUARY – 2 BEFORE LENT (ZOOM)

10 am All-Age Communion – Rev Chris

SUNDAY 19th FEBRUARY – Next Sunday before Lent (ZOOM)

10 am Celtic Worship – Rev Anthea & Jenny Clifton

EVENTS

SATURDAY 4th FEBRUARY

6.30 for 7pm - Quiz Evening - Teams of 2-6 - £5 per person.

Prizes for winners (prize donations gratefully received - please liaise with Brian)

BYOB - Nibbles, tea & coffee provided.

Contact Anthea 07764 587976 for more information

SATURDAY 11TH FEBRUARY

7 pm for 7.30 start Murder Mystery Night - The George V Memorial Hall, Manor Rise, Bearsted, ME14 4DB

Tickets £8 per head Nibbles on the tables, Bar available All proceeds to St Mary and All Saints, Boxley

For tickets please contact Janet 01634 323749 or Penny 07734 409140

SUNDAY 12TH FEBRUARY

Farewell bring and share lunch for Chris and Sarah after the service.

FOOD BANK

The next food bank delivery will be on 10th February.

NOTICES

The Funeral of the late Hazel Howard will take place at Vinters Park Crematorium

on 14th February @ 1:15-2:45 pm and will be led by Robin Williamson.

PRAYER RESOURCE

week beginning Sunday, 29th January 2023

'Father God, thank you for the examples you have given in your word to help us pray.'

This week we give thanks for:

- All who teach and preach God's word in order that we can continue to grow in our faith and discover ancient truths and new ideas.
- Churches in our Deanery: for their faithful leaders and congregations.

Please pray for:

- Countries weary of war and unrest and that have fallen into poverty and despair; pray for peace, for compassionate leadership, and for help from richer nations.
- All who are experiencing trauma or a serious crisis in their lives.
- Anyone who, through ill-health or infirmity, are finding the day-to-day tasks more difficult to achieve; pray that they may find help and care from neighbours and friends.
- God's healing touch on those who have recently been bereaved; in their sadness may they know God's comfort and hope.
- The residents and staff at Maidstone Care Centre, remembering the grieving family of Dorothy who died last week.
- Our Church family: all who are struggling; and for Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Maureen, Carol, Sandra, Brenda and Charys; and for Ruth, Helen, Meaghan and Libby.
- God's guidance in ways that are either unexpected or disappointing that we fail or refuse to hear him; may we come to him with open hearts and minds and listen again for his response.

You may like to use the words of this hymn as a prayer during the week:

O let me see thy footmarks and in them plant my own.

My hope to follow duly is in thy strength alone.

O guide me, call me, draw me, uphold me to the end.

And then in heaven receive me, my Saviour and my Friend. Amen.