



# St Paul's Church

Dear all,

In the annual cycle of the life of the church we have now left the Epiphany season which ended on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February with Candlemas, a feast day that has been celebrated since the 4<sup>th</sup> Century as the day when the church candles were blessed. This all connects with the Christmas story and the coming of the Christ child as a light to all people.

We now enter into something of an 'in between' time prior to the arrival of Lent on Ash Wednesday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, when the focus shifts entirely to the other end of the life of Christ. In this 'in between' time (the technical church term is 'ordinary time' – because nothing special is going on) we do encounter the widely known feast day of St Valentine on the 14<sup>th</sup> February. How his name became associated with a day dedicated to courting couples is purely speculative at best and various stories abound, nevertheless it does provide an opportunity to reflect on the 'power of love' (whilst resisting the temptation to burst into the song by that name).

The word 'love' can have different meanings, certainly in biblical terms, depending on the Greek word that is used. 'Eros' means sensual, or romantic love, 'Storge' means familial love, and 'Philia' means brotherly/sisterly love. But there is one more and that is the highest love of all, 'Agape', which means God's love for humanity, or to quote John's gospel, **'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'** (JOHN 3:16)

As we journey towards Lent let us take time to consider the depth of God's love that will become apparent in the unfolding events that lead to the pain and agony of the cross, the ultimate symbol of divine love.

Blessings,

Rev Chris

## **ASH WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY**

There will be Holy Communion services at both St Nicholas and St Paul's on Ash Wednesday. Each of these will offer the opportunity for 'ashing' for those that wish to participate.

10am St Nicholas – Rev Julian

7pm St Paul's – Rev Anthea

## **FORTHCOMING SERVICES**

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

### **SUNDAY 5<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – 3 BEFORE LENT – Candlemas**

10 am Café Service – Gwyn

### **SUNDAY 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – 2 BEFORE LENT (ZOOM)**

10 am All-Age Communion – Rev Chris

### **SUNDAY 19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT (ZOOM)**

10 am Celtic Worship – Rev Anthea & Jenny Clifton

### **WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY – ASH WEDNESDAY**

7 pm – Rev Anthea

### **SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – LENT 1 (ZOOM)**

10 am Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

## **EVENTS**

### **SATURDAY 4<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>TH</sup> 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 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**

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

## **FOOD BANK**

The next food bank delivery will be on 10<sup>th</sup> February.

## **NOTICES**

The Funeral of the late Hazel Howard will take place at Vinters Park Crematorium on 14<sup>th</sup> February @ 1:15-2:45 pm and will led by Robin Williamson.

## **PALM CROSSES**

Please bring in any palm crosses you may have at home for ashing. Many thanks

## **PRAYER RESOURCE**

### **week beginning Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

*'Prayer transforms our vision of the world, and makes us see it... in the light of God.'* (Thomas Merton)

This week we give thanks for:

- The wonder of prayer; and when darkness dulls our wonder, may the light of Jesus lead us on.
- The example shown to us by God's faithful servants, Simeon and Anna, and pray that we too may have the same patience and trust.

Please pray for:

- All people to know that the love of God reaches out to every part of our world.
- Those who work to care for, and improve our world – monitoring our planet and its resources – and whose decisions have a direct effect on people's lives.
- Our nation, knowing that hope lies in our capacity to look to the future in a spirit of openness towards each other, even amid great challenges and changes.
- Those working in education; gift them with the art of teaching complex subjects in accessible ways.
- A deepening of our prayer life as a church and to be obedient to God's call, and grow in us wondering souls, alive to the joy of discovery.
- 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.
- As we start a new month, let us pray for God's blessing on our lives, our activities and work, on our relationships and as we rest.

**You may like to use this chorus as you pray this week:**

***Lord, the light of your love is shining.***

***In the midst of the darkness, shining.***

***Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us.***

***Set us free by the truth you now bring us.***

***Shine on me, shine on me. Amen.***