



St Paul's Church



Dear all

As we approach the end of the Easter season and look ahead to Pentecost, we'll be diving into Jesus' 'Farewell Discourses' this weekend in the run up to Ascension Day which is next Thursday.

A quick Google search for images of the Ascension will reveal some pretty whimsical works by various artists over the centuries, including dozens of paintings of Jesus' feet sticking out of a cloud while the disciples look on, simultaneously terrified and awestruck. Do we imagine that's literally how it was, and if we do, given that we no longer believe in a three-tiered universe (a flat earth sandwiched between heaven and hell), where do we think Jesus floated off to? It's all a bit confusing, not least because Luke gives us two different accounts of the Ascension to choose from (Luke 24:44-53 and Acts 1.1-11).

Well I don't know what to make of it all really if I'm honest, but I am pretty sure that there is something very important that Luke wanted us to consider about the Ascension, however we imagine it. We have to remember that Luke was preaching not reporting, and I think that he was interested in the growth of the Church after Jesus was no longer present to lead his people. You could say that he was more focused on what happened to the *disciples* rather than what happened to *Jesus*, and he uses the Ascension as the hinge point between the end of his Gospel and the beginning of Acts. Luke is trying to explain how a fearful, anxious, bewildered group of people became filled with the energy, courage and imagination to continue the work that Jesus started in the world.

Perhaps they realised after witnessing the Ascension, that the time had come for them to stop staring into space and just get on with it. And there's a very clear message here for us too isn't there? After all, we are not called to be spectators but to carry on and carry out the ministry begun by Jesus.

*God of love,
help us to remember that Christ has no body on earth but ours,
no hands or feet but ours.
Ours are the eyes that see the needs of the world.
Ours are the hands that bless our friends and neighbours.
We are the people Christ will use to build his kingdom.
May we be guided and strengthened in our task.
Amen*

Rev Anthea

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

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

SUNDAY 14th MAY – EASTER 6 (ZOOM)

10 am All Age Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 21st MAY – EASTER 7 (ZOOM)

10 am Experimental Sunday – Gwyn

SUNDAY 28th MAY – PENECOST (ZOOM)

10 am Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 4th JUNE – TRINITY SUNDAY

10 am Café Worship – Café Team

EVENTS

THURSDAY 18th MAY @ 10.30 am

Fellowship - Summer outing to Rochester

FRIDAY 2nd JUNE @ 9.30 am

St Paul's Baby & Toddler Group

FRIDAY 2nd JUNE @ 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm

Chicory Tip at Boxley Church - £8.00 per person. Pay in advance or on the door. Nibbles in the interval and bar available. Car parking available. For more information please contact Martin or Penny 01622 687652, Janet or George 01634 323749. All proceeds to St Mary and All Saints, Boxley. Thank you for your support

FOOD BANK

The next delivery will be on 2nd June.

PRAYER RESOURCE

week beginning Sunday, 14th May 2023

'There is nothing that makes us love someone so much as praying for them.' (William Law)

This week we give thanks for:

- St Paul's and for all who help, in whatever way, to keep our doors open.
- The knowledge that God is here among us, ready to listen to our prayers and eager to respond, ever faithful and always true.

Please pray for:

- Peace, and an end to fighting in countries affected by violence and unrest, remembering this week the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Ukraine and the continuing drone and missile attacks on the country, and Sudan where many refugees and Sudanese people are trying to flee from the violence into neighbouring countries.
- Protection and relief for those who have been experiencing severe heat waves, especially in large parts of Asia.
- Assistance for those people in Rwanda as the heavy rains damage crops and farms; pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones due to the flooding.
- The needs of our Parish, of Maidstone and of Kent as the newly-elected Council Members assume their responsibilities.
- Our Church family, especially for all who are struggling; and for Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Maureen, Sandra and Brenda; and for Ruth, Helen and Meaghan.
- God's wisdom, protection and peace for our new King and Queen.

You may like to use this prayer for yourself during the week:

Lord, bless me and keep me; Lord, make your face shine on me and be gracious to me; Lord, turn your face towards me and give me peace. Amen.

Prayers written by Café Worship congregation on 7th May 2023 for Their Majesties King Charles 111 and Queen Camilla

May King Charles' environmental efforts achieve recognition and fruition.

Be strong and vocal for our world.

Give them strength to carry out their obligations in humility and love.

I pray that God may guide King Charles and Queen Camilla to rule wisely and under God's blessing.

Dear God, I pray that Charles and Camilla may always look to you.

Dear Lord draw them deeper into you, so they really know you and serve you.

Please Lord Jesus bless and keep their majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla. Give them wisdom in all things.

Please help them to pray together to their KING.

A prayer for our monarchs. May peace and joy be with them as they reign.

May they dutifully serve the people and God. Give them strength to persevere.

Give Charles and Camilla the strength and humility to 'rule' the full scope of cultures in our kingdom.

Pray that God will guide you to serve and fulfil all your wishes.

Dear Jesus, Bless Charles and Camilla. Keep them safe and help them to lead our nation with respect, humility and love. Amen

I pray that you will lead King Charles in everything he does and says. I pray that you will give Camilla love and grace for everyone she meets.

O Lord, Hold King Charles and Queen Camilla. Help them to serve you in all that they do. Amen

Dear Lord, please guide King Charles and Queen Camilla as they begin their reign together.

Dear God, please help Charles and Camilla to recognise you and honour you, Lord. Please help them to do their work with compassion and help us to have compassion for them too! In Jesus name. Amen

May God bless and keep you and help you during the coming days.

Dear God, Bless the King and Queen. May their lives be happy and Glorious. Amen

THANK YOU ALL FOR THESE PRAYERS.

Annual Parish and Annual Parochial Church Meetings Sunday 14th May 2023 at 11:30 am in church

The Annual Parish Meeting is held to elect the churchwardens and can be attended by anyone who lives within the parish as well as those on the church electoral roll.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting is open to all members on the electoral roll. At this meeting we will be

- electing four members to the Parochial Church Council
- electing two members to the Deanery Synod
- and conducting essential church business

If you are interested in being a member of the PCC or a churchwarden and want to know more please speak to one of the clergy or myself. Nomination forms are available at the back of church.

The Annual Report and Audited Accounts will be available from

7th May 2023. If you would like to receive this report by email please let me know your email address.

Jenny Turner

PCC Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer