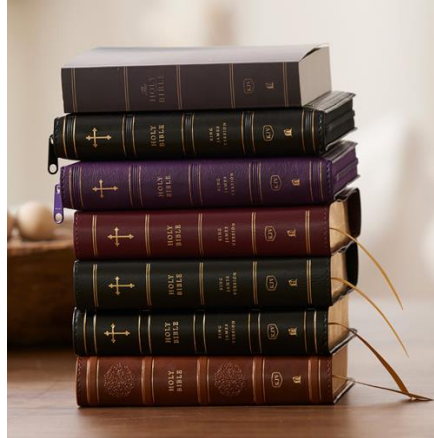




St Paul's Church



Dear all

This Sunday is 'Bible Sunday', a day set aside by the Church to help us to honour the sacred text that guides our faith. It is a moment to pause and reflect, to be grateful for the richness and inspiration of Scripture. It serves as a reminder of the transformative power of Scripture, and invites us to explore the drama, the narrative and the poetry contained in its pages. When we read the Bible well, it challenges us to be advocates for the marginalised, champions of social justice, and beacons of compassion in an often-turbulent world.

But, for Christians, we need to remember that the basic point of the Bible is to follow Jesus, not to become fixated on the verses that seem to provide the best evidence for our own biases or preferred worldview. (We call this 'proof-texting'.) I read something this week that explains this idea perfectly, but I recognise that it could be seen as controversial. I have paraphrased it below so that you can make up your own mind:

People say that the Bible is like a love letter to humanity. But imagine if someone gave you a love letter and, instead of loving the person, you became obsessed with the letter and ignored the person who sent it. This can be what we sometimes find ourselves doing with the Bible, and this can't be right; surely we are called to love Jesus more than we love the Bible. Is it not more important to be Christlike rather than 'biblical'? (Stephen Mattson)

This takes nothing away from the idea that the Bible is a divinely inspired collection of books which we absolutely should celebrate, but it is far too important for us to get obsessed with taking every word literally without any understanding of context or social history. If nothing else, I hope our preaching at St. Paul's has helped our congregation to understand something of this, and has nurtured their imagination to see the Bible in new ways.

Rev Anthea

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

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

SUNDAY 29th OCTOBER – LAST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (ZOOM)

10 am – Family Service - Gwyn

SUNDAY 5th NOVEMBER – 4th before Advent

10 am Café Worship – Café Team

SUNDAY 12th NOVEMBER – 3rd before Advent (ZOOM)

10 am All-Age Worship & Remembrance Sunday – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 19th NOVEMBER – 2nd before Advent (ZOOM)

10 am Celtic Worship – Rev Anthea & Jenny C

EVENTS

FRIDAY 27th OCTOBER @ 7 pm

Church Crafts

FRIDAY 3rd NOVEMBER @ 9.30 am

Baby & Toddler Group

THURSDAY 16th NOVEMBER @ 2.30 pm

Fellowship: Sue Spiel talk on Victoria Wood and Joyce Grenfell

FRIDAY 17th NOVEMBER @ 7 pm

St Mary All Saints, Boxley 'A Career in the Police Force' A Talk By Julie Parker

£5 per person Licensed Bar Parking All proceeds to the church

FRIDAY 25th NOVEMBER @ 7 pm

Church Crafts

FOOD BANK

The next collection will be on 10th November.

PRAYER RESOURCE

Weeks beginning Sunday 22nd & 29th October 2023

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

This week we give thanks for:

- God's faithfulness through challenging times and for His justice and mercy; may we look with His vision and act with His wideness of compassion.
- Syrian churches who continue to offer sanctuary to so many people following the earthquakes in that region.

Please pray for:

- All who are grieving and devastated by the violence in Israel and Gaza: pray for a breakthrough to bring an end to this recent escalation, and for churches, Christian communities and faith leaders across the region to help others and bridge divides; we ask God to bring peace to the wider Israel-Palestinian conflict.
- Those impacted by the earthquake in Afghanistan: pray for rescue workers as they continue to respond to urgent needs and further assess the scale of impact, and for all who have lost loved ones and are grieving.
- Myanmar as the monsoon floods, together with the result of ongoing conflicts, continue to cause displacement and damage.
- Help to be faithful stewards of God's creation, and to continually give thanks for all that is beyond our understanding.
- Our Church family, especially for Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Maureen, Sandra and Brenda; and for Ruth, Helen and Meaghan.

You may like to use this prayer by Julian of Norwich during the week:

Lord, you know what I want. If you think it right, may I have it. If you do not think it right, Lord, do not be displeased that I asked, for I don't want anything that you don't want. Amen.