

Lent 4 to Holy Week and Easter

This Sunday 14th March, Mothering Sunday

Our Mothering Sunday service will begin at 10 am this Sunday, 14th March. It is designed to be all-age and younger members will be taking part both in person and by recording. The address will be for all ages and we'll use an alternative format for the creed and Eucharistic Prayer. Flowers will be available to take away for mothers/ grandmothers/ carers.

The Weekly sheet is on the website.

During the week:

Eucharist on Tuesday at 11 am on Zoom

Night Prayer (Compline) on Wednesday at 8 pm on Facebook. Please feel free to listen at a suitable time as all services remain on Facebook and the service could be treated as a podcast.

Prayer group on Thursday at 7 pm

Holy Week

A list of services is attached to this Newsletter. During the week services will be online; Zoom or Facebook. Palm Sunday and Easter day will be under one roof and broadcast on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/AllSaintsPeterborough/posts/1713304028843155>

I would like request readers for these services. We read the passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday so we have plenty of available readings both long and short. This will be my eighth Holy Week at All Saints' and as it is the high point of the church year it would be really good if as many of the church community are involved as possible. So I need readers for:

10 am Sunday 28th (readers of the Passion from Mark's gospel)

Thursday 7pm

Friday noon (readers of the Passion from John's gospel)

Saturday 8 pm (readings need to be recorded using a mobile phone and emailed to me for this service)

Maundy Thursday at 7 pm and Prayer Group at 7 pm, the Zoom link is the usual:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81607057704?pwd=eUlnNnhHNzRndzF1RUFPNERtMnBEQT09>

Meeting ID: 816 0705 7704 Password: 412317

Good Friday service at noon and Tuesday Eucharists, the Zoom link is the usual:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2069378522?pwd=WkVWMUpZR01ieXE3dFFVK2ZVcHVkQT09>

Meeting ID: 206 937 8522 Password: 025232 Zoom is free and easy to install.

Holy Saturday 8 pm, the service will be broadcast from church on Facebook. Recordings of readings are most welcome. Contact me for the words.

Orders of Service will be sent to the email list before the service and copies will, as usual, be on the website.

<https://allsaintspeterborough.org.uk/covid-19/>

Financial life of the Church.

I write to seek your generosity yet again. Thankfully, the hall should start to generate some income again, and we have been very fortunate indeed with the sums raised through fundraising initiatives and donations whether by text, cheque or bank transfer. All are much appreciated. As we approach the first anniversary of lockdown I ask those who are able to consider making a donation to support the church at this time. We didn't pay the full share last year, as I mentioned in a previous newsletter, but hope to raise 100% this year and indeed, to make a back payment.

Could I ask that we think about what we might have added to the collection bowl, put in envelopes, spent at events or preparing for events and make a donation to the church at this time?

Donations can be made:

Text ALLSAINTS to 70470 to donate £5

Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Thank you for whatever you are able to give to keep our church financially viable and paying its way.

Other amounts up to £20 are possible, so for instance text

ALLSAINTS10 to 70470 to donate £10

ALLSAINTS20 to 70470 to donate £20

Texts cost the amount donated plus one standard rate message.

We also invite donations online to our bank account and by cheque. Thank you for whatever you are able to give to keep our church financially viable and paying its way. The bank details are:

Bank: NatWest

Account 97257656

Sort code: 54-21-38

Account name: the PCC of All Saints Church Peterborough

We suggest using your own name as the reference,

And cheques, payable to 'All Saints' Church Peterborough PCC', can be sent to

**The Church Wardens, c/o All Saints' Vicarage, 208 Park Road,
Peterborough PE1 2UJ**

Thank you very much indeed.

Events

This list of Events for the year is attached and is also on Facebook and the Whats On page of the website.

<https://www.facebook.com/AllSaintsPeterborough/posts/1713018698871688>

Online

The new angle of the camera in church means that we can see the reader and intercessor. I believe it makes the service a little more engaging to

see that others are involved. As always offers of help are welcome together with offers of how the online provision can be developed.

This new angle does mean that the backs, but not faces, of people are seen as they come up for communion. From my review of what others churches are doing this is common in churches that have a congregation and it shows that the people who attend are diverse. However, if anyone has concerns about this for when they are in church then please do speak with me.

Address

Last Sunday we heard the ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) read as the first lesson. The address aimed to show how they support the spiritual life of Christians:

There is a phrase that some people use to describe their approach to faith: Spiritual, But Not Religious. The younger someone is the more likely they're to say it than older people. Can someone be the opposite: religious, but not spiritual? It is easy to assume that if someone goes through the motions — attending church, serving on committees, donating — then surely, they must also be spiritual.

What is the difference anyway between being religious and being spiritual?

There is a sense that being religious has more to do with external things like particular actions, agreement with a set of beliefs.

Spiritual may be thought to be about *experiences* of transcendence, belonging, and connection: spirituality is about relationship.

Lent is a time when we focus on personal *experiences*. We aim to make space in our lives so we can open ourselves up to God and open ourselves to encounter one another and the divine through reading the Bible and meditating on it, spiritual reading, prayer whether corporate or individual. The Lenten "disciplines", despite their stern-sounding name, are more about spirituality than religion. Self-examination, "changing our hearts and minds", prayer, fasting, reading and meditating on God's Word—are all available to us as ways to approach God, who is loving, liberating, and life-giving.

Yet the first reading may well remind us of those things that we associate with 'religion'; obeying laws and not crossing the boundaries into sin. We heard one version of the 10 commandments. Today's reading from Exodus offers an invitation—an invitation to reclaim the Ten Commandments as a set of teachings that guide us into a life-giving spirituality. The teachings metaphorically construct a space for those

experiences we long for: experience of the transcendental, belonging, and connection.

The commandments lay a foundation for spirituality to develop out of religion, for transcendence to arise from tradition. These teachings provide a foundation for spirituality in at least **three ways**.

The first commandment is "You shall have no other gods except me." But the words have a preface: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." This preface is necessary as it frames the intention of all that follows.

- The LORD who longs for us to abide by the commandments is the same One who heard the cry of his people in Egypt and is committed to liberating people from every kind of captivity.
- And the LORD has taken action by intervening to rescue the oppressed. The LORD is the One who keeps doing this whatever the empire, or political or economic system that seeks its own well-being over the flourishing of others.

We realize that we worship a God whose desire for our wellbeing *transcends* our small-mindedness, resistance, and selfishness.

That is the One before whom we should have no other gods. The LORD is eager to *encounter* us and raise us from our brokenness and weakness.

The second to fifth commandments, about

- not making or worshipping Gods other than the LORD,
- revering God's name and not using it in vain,
- resting on the Sabbath, just like God did after creating us, and
- honouring our parents, so that our days may be long in the land,

are all about connection. These commandments provide life – connecting us to what nourishes us, energizing us so that we can discern and accomplish God's good purposes for our lives.

We may not talk much about idols; yet there are so many that demand the sacrifice of our time, energy, financial resources. Idols are those activities that compete for our ultimate allegiance, demand our attention, and we put first. They could be sporting activities, music, social media, gaming, making money, work.....**none are bad in and of themselves**,

but they can easily take up more space in our lives than they ought, reducing what we can give to caring for ourselves (souls and bodies) and our communities.

It's as if there are too many devices on the wifi or internet and so we lose the connection to what is really nourishing, life-giving Godly.

The commandment about sabbath rest is a wonderful gift. An opportunity for a regular slowdown - When we rest, we can lay down for a while our worries, fears, and anxieties and are invited to trust that God will attend to them while we are simply "being," rather than agonizing about them.

As I look back over 7 years one good memory is of the summer BBQs in the vicarage garden; people "rested", young people playing together / bouncing, enjoying each other's company, telling stories, sharing food. An example of sabbath rest - it's a command to enjoy, to focus on being present in the moment and enjoying what was has, with space to breathe, to receive that nourishment that God has prepared.

And thirdly, the final five commandments are all about *belonging*.

We can't feel as if we belong if we are worried about staying physically safe, or someone stealing our cattle, or catalytic convertor, or bank log in details. You can't feel belonging if worried about someone seducing your spouse; lying about you; or viewing all your property with an acquisitive eye? Trust is the foundation for any sense of belonging.

If we don't experience a basic level of trust in a community, there is no way we'll ever feel safe enough to show up as we actually are, much less learn that we are worthy of belonging...as we actually are.

Lent began with Ash Wednesday as we say the Litany of Penitence as part of that service. After each petition we respond with a prayer for God's mercy, implying rightly that they have failed to abide perfectly by these commandments.

(We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven. Lord have mercy)

When we hear them, they are not to induce guilt or serve as a test of how good a Christian we are; rather, they guide us into a genuine spirituality that God wants for us: to experience the transcendent, connection, and belonging.

But we'll finish with the way the Psalmist puts it:

'The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul. The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple. ☩ The precepts of the Lord are right, they gladden the heart. The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes.