



March 24th 2019

**Welcome to St. Peter's, we hope
you enjoy your time with us.
Please stay for some
refreshments afterwards!**

Compelling others to believe?

Earlier this month, I was preaching from Luke 14 about Jesus' parable of the Great Feast where the servant goes out into the streets and countryside to compel people to come. Is this 'compelling' approach an appropriate form of evangelism today?

Rohan Silva was a Marxist postgraduate at LSE when he read the philosopher Karl Popper and found his entire belief system overturned. Everything he had thought about human motivation was wrong. "It was a night of genuine epiphany. Popper was saying that human behaviour and society were more complex than we can comprehend. I felt this safe edifice with all the answers falling away. People smarter than me had caused damage and pain through enacting Marxist belief."

It was a painful experience for Silva because everyone he knew was on the political left. "My friend remembers me saying, 'I still believe everything I did about poverty, but now I'm on this other side.'" He lost friends. Years later he became an adviser to David Cameron but remained uneasy about being labelled a Tory.

This experience shows how disruptive changing core beliefs can be, risking the loss of certainties, identity and groups. It's not surprising we're reluctant to accept new views when we might lose so much in exchange.

In *The Influential Mind*, neuroscientist Tali Sharot writes, "Data has only a limited capacity to alter the strong opinions of others. Emotions usually override them because our survival for millions of years has depended on trusting our fears, hopes and desires. Our brains are built to prioritise them. Data came later."

Dismissing facts that threaten our existing understanding is practical. In a world bursting with data it would be impossible to examine all counter-evidence. On average, says Sharot, we are right to believe what confirms our views because data that contradicts what we already know about the world is unlikely to be true. Elephants are not pink, cars do not fly, Mars bars aren't a healthy lunch!

What makes data even less convincing is that there is now a surfeit of it, validating any position. Our brains get a thrill every time they encounter a supportive fact. Our mistake is to expect that thrill to be replicated in our opponents, when in fact scans show our brains literally slow down in an attempt to bypass unwelcome information.

What then works? A shock causing reassessment can be transformative, sweeping old certainties away: politicians' failure to agree a form of Brexit, personal crisis, finding common ground, understanding others' concerns rather than insisting they adopt ours. Frontal attacks are pointless because mental barriers go up. So with the Gospel, compel carefully, sincerely, humbly, honestly, respectfully and prayerfully.

Paul

Coming soon

Today, 12.15pm, Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Immediately following our 10.45 service we have this important meeting. Forms announcing this and election forms for churchwardens and PCC members are on the Tower notice board and will be taken down before the meeting.

PCC members serve a 3 year term, and are nominated by those on the electoral roll. Churchwardens serve a 1 year term, but can be elected to serve another term, and are elected by those on the electoral roll as well as anyone living in the parish.

We have 4 vacancies on the PCC because Lesley Kitson, Katy Lake, Neil Harvey and Uche Anyanwagu have completed their 3 year term. They can become PCC members again if they are proposed and seconded.

We also have 3 vacancies on the PCC for members to represent St. Peter's on the Deanery Synod, the Derby City Deanery of Derby Diocese.

All nominations must be proposed and seconded, but don't forget to discuss this with the person concerned before the forms are filled in.

Tuesday, April 2nd, 2.30, Afternoon Tea

With a different theme each month, come and enjoy a tea that has been described as *'just like at The Savoy!'* This is followed by Service of Evening Prayer at 3.45-4.00. Future dates are May 7th, June 11th.

Saturday, April 6th, from 8.00 – 10.00am, Prayer Breakfast

This is our monthly prayer breakfast, all welcome. The next date is May 11th.

Sunday, April 7th, lunch together after the service

You are invited to this 'Bring and Share' lunch after church when we shall say our farewells to Darren and Jo and the family. Please see the sign up list and we would be grateful if you could bring some food to share.

You may be interested in this

Leonardo Di Vinci: A Life in Drawing, Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Free

The Royal Collection holds one of the world's greatest collections of drawings by Leonardo da Vinci. A selection of these exquisite drawings has travelled to Derby for a special exhibition marking the 500th anniversary of the Renaissance Master's death. Never-before seen in the city, the works have been gathered together to reflect the full range of Leonardo's interests, from painting, sculpture, architecture, music, to anatomy, engineering, cartography, geology and botany. Exhibition ends on May 6th.

Responding to Lent

Read a Lent book

Finding the right Lent book through this season can be tricky. Do you feel called to expand your horizons and engage with God in the wider world? Are you seeking encouragement in personal discipleship? Is your prayer life a concern? Please check out the Lent books in our lending library.

Give up plastics

Use less plastic over Lent. This is the message from the Anglican Communion's Environment Network. They have produced a set of daily challenges, which include going for large sizes of shampoo, requesting retailers to use zero plastic packaging & implementing a 'No more bottled water & cool drinks' water policy at church & home.

Canon Rachel Mash, Environmental Co-ordinator for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, called attention to the fact that only 10–13% of plastic items are recycled worldwide. "The nature of petroleum-based disposable plastic makes it difficult to recycle and they have to add new virgin materials and chemicals to it to do so.

Additionally there are a limited number of items for which recycled plastic can be used. Petroleum-based plastic is not biodegradable and usually goes into a landfill where it is buried or it gets into the water and finds its way into the ocean. Although plastic will not decompose into natural substance like soil (biodegrade) it will break down into tiny particles after many years (degrade). In the process of breaking down, it releases additives that were used to shape and harden the plastic (toxic chemicals) which make their way into our food and water supply. These toxic chemicals are now being found in our bloodstream."

Bishop Thomas Oommen, Moderator and Primate of the United Church of South India, endorsed the green message, saying. "If we live a life committed to avoiding all kinds of disposable plastics, the manufacturers would be forced to avoid all disposable plastics, and we would be contributing towards a lesser carbon footprint. If Lent is a time we think about how to foster life rather than destroying life, it is our spiritual commitment to avoid plastics since it 'kills' life. As I hope that Lent would be a meaningful time to reflect, repent, reorient and rededicate our lives to accomplish God's will, I ardently pray that God would enable all of us to continue our life in an eco-spiritual pilgrimage fighting against all causes of ecological catastrophes, particularly the disposable plastic catastrophe."

Prayer ...

People wearing a 'Prayer Team' badge would be glad to pray for you. Do not hesitate to ask for prayer, this can be for any concern you have, it needn't be a crisis! We all face difficulties and challenges, and prayer works! Or maybe you would like to thank God for answered prayer. 'Whatever your situation, we'd love to pray with you! In an emergency, call Bren (07967 183601), and those on the prayer chain will pray for you.

IN THE WEEK

Monday to Friday, 10.00-3.00: Church is open

Tuesday and Friday, 11.00-12.30: refreshments are served

Friday, 12.30: Lunchtime Service

Space to take notes from today's readings, prayers and sermon.

St. Peter's in the City Staff:

Vicar: Revd. Canon Paul Morris
paul@stpetersderby.org.uk

Curate: Revd. Darren Howie
darren@stpetersderby.org.uk

Building Manager: Melvyn Wood
Kitchen Supervisor: Gillian Wood

Associate Priest: Revd. Anita Matthews
anita@stpetersderby.org.uk

Administrator: Hilary is on maternity leave
office@stpetersderby.org.uk

Church Wardens: Kate Ellis & Sung-Hee Lee
Inside Out Team: Wayne Haycock

We are a community of faith, hope and love in the heart of the city
Follow us on Twitter: @stpetersderby
www.stpetersderby.org.uk

St. Peter's Centre office (01332 360790) is open:

Monday to Thursday from 9.00-2.30

Parish Safeguarding Link: Revd. Anita Matthews