

14th May 2023

WELCOME TO ST. PETER'S! WE
HOPE YOU ENJOY WORSHIPPING
WITH US TODAY

Mustard Seed Faith

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches. Matthew 13: 31 - 32

This week is Christian Aid Week, and as every year, we are challenged to reflect on the needs of our wider world, to reflect on our complicity in the imbalance between those who have wealth and those who have nothing, and to be inspired to make a difference! This year's resources on the Mustard Seed include this reflection:

"When Jesus speaks of the 'kingdom of heaven', he is not thinking of some world of the afterlife. Rather, Matthew places this phrase in Jesus' speech because of the Jewish custom of not saying the word 'God'. But for Jesus, God is encountered upon the earth. The kingdom (or perhaps the family kin-dom) of God is 'rooted' in the soil, in the places and the peoples of the Earth. If, as he later tells Pontius Pilate, Jesus' kingdom is 'not of this world', he simply means that its heart of justice, peace and joy, contrasts with a world dominated by values of power, violence and oppression.

Contrary to their religiously idealised image, mustard trees were rarely a welcome addition to a garden. Mustard was seen as a weed that consumed valuable agricultural soil and would often be torn up and burned. But what the world fails to value is very often the very plant, place or person that God chooses to inhabit.

Perhaps this is why the metaphor of mustard seeds (along with bread making, ploughing and fishing) is so appropriate. Instead of a military messiah enthroned over a kingdom of riches and power, the like of which was longed for by many people of his time, Jesus' kin-dom of heaven begins as a small and vulnerable community. It starts with a carpenter and his following, one that was hardly perceptible to the ruling powers of society. And yet, like the mustard seed, this community will grow into a radical movement of the church, whose branches offer belonging to all, and whose fruit begins to nourish and transform the world. We say 'begins', because clearly there is more justice and joy to be harvested, within the church and in the wider world. But each seed that is planted contains the potential of all that kin-dom will bring."

We may not have much to spare at the moment, but small everyday actions, generosity and prayer can have a massive impact on communities around the world who are in the grip of poverty. This week may our 'mustard seeds' of prayer and hope play a part in bringing transformation to our world.

With my prayers and love, *Anita*

Dates for your Diary:

14th May: Annual Parochial Church Meeting

During our service today we will hold our Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). This is an opportunity to reflect on the past year, to give thanks, and to appoint our Churchwardens and PCC.

Sunday 14th May: Bell Sunday

Alan Rowe writes: *14th May has been designated as 'Bell Sunday' - an initiative supported the Bishop of St Albans to highlight the use of bells in the church. We are launching a booklet on the history of ringing at St Peter's - please help yourself to a copy. There will also be a small display of items from the tower archives in the church.*

You are always welcome to come up to see the Sunday ringing, and there is lots of information on the tower website: <http://dccb.uk>

Monday May 15th, May 22nd, June 5th: Welcome Space at St. Peter's

9.30 – 12.30 in the Function Room. We offer a simple hot meal each week, tea and coffee, and a space to chat. Please spread the word! (Please note we are closed on Bank Holidays).

18th – 28th May: Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Kingdom Come is a worldwide prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost. Please pick up a free “Thy Kingdom Come” prayer booklet from the back of church. It includes daily readings and reflections for each of the 10 days.

Tuesday 6th June: Afternoon Tea

Afternoon Tea takes place on Tuesday 6th June. Sandwiches and cakes will be served in the church at 2.15pm, followed by a short service of Evening Prayer. All are very welcome – please call Margaret on 01332 239134 if you're planning to come for catering purposes. Hope to see you there!

Sunday 11th June: Church Lunch

On Sunday 11th June we will enjoy our monthly lunch together after the service. More details to follow but please put the date in your diary now!

Praying for the Persecuted Church: Syria

Syria has about 603,000 Christians, about 3.1% of a population of 19.4 million. The number of Christians in the country continues to decrease, as many have fled conflict and persecution. Christians in Syria still grapple with daily persecution that may become violent, despite the public threat from so-called Islamic State having largely subsided. In areas where Islamic extremist groups are active, any public expression of faith is dangerous. Sharing the gospel is very risky, and church buildings have often been completely destroyed. The abduction of church leaders continues to have a considerably negative impact on Christian communities. As the Christian population of Syria has diminished due to the civil war, more and more Syrian Christians come from a Muslim background. This makes them additional targets – including from their

own family, who may attack or reject converts. A Christian woman who converts while married to a Muslim is likely to face divorce and losing custody of her children, since Sharia (Islamic law) dictates that rights are given to the Muslim parent.

Additionally, every Christian in Syria lives with the constant knowledge that Islamic extremists have not necessarily left Syria – they've just retreated into the shadows, and they may return to public life again in the future. “The church was bleeding,” says Pastor Edward, looking back at the decade of persecution, war and pandemic that continues to have a severe impact. “We lost over 60% of our members; they left Syria. It was so hard. Many of them had positions of leadership in the church.”

All Syrians and Iraqis have experienced hardship in the past decade, but Christians have faced more than most. In many regions, they were targeted by Islamic militants – losing their jobs, their homes and even their lives. Many had to flee, displaced either within Syria or abroad. Those who stayed either had no choice, or decided – like Pastor Edward – to courageously remain with the church. He says: “It’s very important and meaningful for us, as Middle Eastern people, to see the church stay – to do the work of Christ here, like a light in the darkness.” That’s exactly what he has done ever since. At Pastor Edward’s Centre of Hope in Damascus, a lot of community connection was fostered by distributing emergency food and medicine. “The church has distributed relief items to the neediest. We brought love and care to the people in need, in the name of Christ. We are the ambassadors of Christ in the country.”

Syria has risen three places on the World Watch List mainly because of an increase in violence. Last year, three Christians were killed because of their faith and at least five were kidnapped. Dozens of churches, monasteries, Christian cemeteries and other buildings vital to the Christian community were attacked, damaged or looted in the west and northeast of the country, mostly due to intense shelling by Turkish forces, or by criminals. Please pray for our sisters and brothers in Syria.

Prayer Meeting Don’t forget our weekly prayer meeting every Tuesday at 11am via Zoom! Please do come along if you can. For more details, please contact Geoff.

Prayer Please do not hesitate to ask for prayer for any concern you have. We all face difficulties and challenges, but prayer makes a difference. In an emergency, call Bren (07967 183601), and she will ask those on the prayer chain to pray.

Giving at St. Peter’s

See below for the QR code to make payments via your smartphone. Hover the camera on your phone over the QR code. It creates a yellow hyperlink which if you tap on it will take you to St. Peter’s Give a Little Campaign giving page.



Zoom Joining Details for the 10.45 Service of Morning Praise:

On a Computer, Laptop, Smart Phone or Tablet: Click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/450891605?pwd=czNCTTJuaUJpQ3VlOVlnUm1zS0tKQT09>

Alternatively:

1. Open Zoom and select 'Join' or 'Join a Meeting'
2. Enter the Meeting ID: **450 891 605**
3. Select 'Join'
4. When prompted for the Meeting Password, enter **73837**
5. Select 'Continue' or 'Join Meeting' and you will be connected

By Phone – these are the numbers you must now use:

1. Pick any one of the numbers below (doesn't matter which), if one doesn't work, pick another: 0330 088 5830; 0131 460 1196; 0203 481 5237; 0203 481 5240; 0203 901 7895; 0208 080 6591; 0208 080 6592
 2. Dial the number and when prompted for the Meeting ID press: **450 891 605#**
 3. You will then be prompted for a Participant ID, just press **#**
 4. Finally, you will be prompted for the Meeting Password, press: **73837#**
- You will be connected and able to hear everything that is happening.

St. Peter's in the City Staff

Acting Vicar/Associate Priest: Revd. Anita Matthews

anita@stpetersderby.org.uk

Curate: Revd. Nick Parish nick@stpetersderby.org.uk
(currently on Placement at Repton Benefice)

Vicar's PA and Church Administrator: Hilary Streek
office@stpetersderby.org.uk

Inside Out Project Worker:

Wayne Summers wayne@insideoutderby.org.uk

Building Manager: Melvyn Wood

Church Wardens:

Tim Benson, Liz Runcorn

Kitchen Supervisor: Gillian Wood

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

Parish Safeguarding Officer: 07828 280455

Please note that copies of the Safeguarding Policy are available in the Church Office or at www.derby.anglican.org/safeguarding

The church office is currently open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 9.30am and 1.30pm. Tel: 01332 360790