

REFLECTIONS

Ashamed of Jesus?

In every age the Christian faces the challenge that is expressed in our Gospel reading this week, and in our Baptism services.

'Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified...'

Every week we affirm our faith as we recite the words of the Creed, but it is one thing to do so in church [or on Zoom nowadays!] it can be more challenging to 'own' our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ when as a youngster we are in school, or as an adult in an office or a shop, and for some it isn't always easy to do so at home. The apostle Peter knew from a painful experience of a threefold denial that we can easily be caught off guard, as it were. Later in one of his letters he wrote,

'in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do so with gentleness and respect.'

1 Peter 3.15

I was very struck by a story that I heard many years ago of a young boy called John who was about 12 years old, but who had become very self-conscious of his mother's badly scarred and twisted hands. In earlier times he had brought his friends home to play but on becoming more aware of her hands' he stopped inviting them home. His father noticed this and questioned why the friends no longer came but the embarrassed boy couldn't say. His father perceived the problem and thought that time had come to tell him that when John was a toddler he had pushed away a fireguard when his mother's back was turned and his clothes had caught fire. He screamed and his mother had raced in and rescued him. At great cost to her hands. On hearing this John went away quietly. Next week he invited his friends in again, and this time he said to them, 'Look at my mother's hands, she burnt them because she loved me so much.....'

Every now and then, sometimes quite unexpectedly, we may find ourselves questioned about our faith- and we don't always know what to say! Let us pray for each other that if and when these times come, we may at least not be ashamed of the Lord, but quietly and with respect, show our love and gratitude to the one 'who loved me and gave himself for me' [Paul's words in Galatians 2.20]

John Risby

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES ONLINE

Services in church remain suspended until further notice. The following services are available across the team - full details on the website and the email bulletin. They will all take place on Zoom unless otherwise indicated.

SUNDAY

St Mary's Saffron Walden

10.00am Holy Communion President: John Sibson
on Zoom and YouTube

St James' Swards End

9.30am Simple Worship Service Leader: Chris Bishop

St Botolph's Hadstock

9.30am Holy Communion President: Paula Griffiths

All Saints Ashdon

9.30am Holy Communion President: Caroline Curren

St Mary's Debden

9.15am Holy Communion President: John Saxon
Preacher: Pete Gray

Cam Villages

10.00am Family Communion President: Alex Jeewan

TUESDAY

5.00pm Evening Prayer Leader: Joe Hordern

WEDNESDAY

9.30am Holy Communion President: Chris Bishop

7.30pm Institution, Induction and Installation of
Rev. Jeremy Trew as Team Rector and Area Dean
by the Bishop of Colchester and the Archdeacon of
Stansted on YouTube

See St Mary's Church, SW, website at
www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org to find out more.



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www.facebook.com/saintmaryschurchsaffronwalden

The Grapevine

COVERING THE PARISHES OF SAFFRON WALDEN,
WIMBISH, DEBDEN, ASHDON AND HADSTOCK.

Welcome to our services today
Second Sunday of Lent
28th February 2021

Collect

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: Romans 4.13-25

The promise that Abraham would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'). Abraham believed in the presence of the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations,' according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him,' were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Gospel: Mark 8.31-38

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.' He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Post Communion

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Jeremy and Alison Trew and their family as Jeremy takes up his new ministry
 In February please pray for: **Our Lady of Compassion Roman Catholic Church, St Thomas More School**
 Those who are unwell: **Wendy Nicolson**
 The family and friends of those who have died recently:
Mary Mileson, Gwen Pearce

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Back in 1678, John Bunyan wrote 'Pilgrim's Progress' a famous allegory of the Christian life. Bunyan had his own lockdown for a time in Bedford Jail. Some of us during Lent this year are considering together 'What on earth is the church for?' and I found myself musing about a possible modern allegory of church life. It concerns football. [I have probably lost more than half my readers already!] We have a coach in our Lord Jesus Christ, a coach who signs on new players who turn to him and accept his terms of forgiveness and a new life after repentance and putting their trust in him. Our coach then seeks to develop the gifts that each player has, with the aim of deploying them for the benefit of the team and its purpose. In our situation we are pleased that in the current transfer window we have signed a new midfield player from the south coast whose task is to coordinate and facilitate the team! [We warmly welcome Jeremy Trew and his family!] In the coming days the church, sorry the team, looks forward to 'press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.' [Philippians 3.14]. Yes we do have a goal. The church's goal is to seek to love and please the Lord at home or away, to work to produce mature and fruitful Christians, and to share the good news of Christ's love and purposes for the world. There is always an opposition, all the more reason for every player to keep spiritually fit, keeping in touch with the coach and his instructions, and aiming to play in unity with the rest of the team! The good news is that our coach guarantees victory even if there are times when the going is difficult. 'Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

With love and prayers,

John Risby

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Teach us, O Lord, that in this season of Lent, we may learn to hate sin, to overcome temptation, and to grow in holiness, that our lives may be strengthened for your service and used for your glory. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

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| Mon 1st Mar | Morning Psalm 32 & John 6:41-51 Evening Psalm 74 |
| Tue 2nd | Morning Psalm 50 & John 6:52-59 Evening Psalm 52 & Hebrew 2:1-9 |
| Wed 3rd | Morning Psalm 35 & John 6:60-end Evening Psalm 3 |
| Thurs 4th | Morning Psalm 34 & John 7:1-13 Evening Psalm 71 |
| Fri 5th | Morning Psalm 41 & John 7:14-24 Evening Psalm 6 |
| Sat 6th | Morning Psalm 25 & John 7:25-36 Evening Psalm 23 |

NEWS

INSTITUTION, INDUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF REV. JEREMY TREW AS TEAM RECTOR AND AREA DEAN on Wednesday 3rd March 7.30pm by the Bishop of Colchester and the Archdeacon of Stansted. This service will be livestreamed from St Mary's, Saffron Walden. YouTube details and the Order of Service are available on the church website.

ONLINE SERVICES are listed on the back page. Full joining details are available on the weekly email bulletin and on the website. Please email Dawn if you would like to be added to the bulletin distribution list.

LIVE WORSHIP by phone - you don't need a computer or tablet to join our services from home. If you would like to know more please contact Judith Hasler on 525041 or John Saxon on 541619.

PRIVATE PRAYER St Mary's, Saffron Walden is closed during the current lockdown. All Saints, Ashdon, remains open every day. St Botolph's, Hadstock will be open by appointment only.

LIVE LENT Booklet of Daily Reflections still available from the Parish Office - contact Dawn if you would like one.

A LENT ZOOM QUIET MORNING Saturday 13th March from 10am (Zoom opens from 9:50) to noon led by the Rev Hilary Davey. **LOVE IN THE TIME OF COVID:** finding God's Hope in difficult times. This will be an opportunity to reflect on our personal experiences of Covid, on what we have learnt and want to retain, and find hope for a still uncertain future. Please sign up at the Parish Office with your 'phone no. or email address. All are welcome. *Sue Walker*

THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE scheduled for 5th March cannot take place, collectively, this year due to Covid restrictions. However, service booklets can be delivered to your home by 'phoning 01799 501381, in order for you to read this personally and share with the ladies of Vanuatu who prepared it. You may wish to join a Zoom or YouTube service by entering wdp.org.uk and typing in "Cambridge". Should you wish to make a donation to WDP, please use the envelope provided in the book or a plain envelope. These will be collected by 'phoning the above number, and sent to WDP as gifts from Saffron Walden Churches. *Ruby Parsons*

MANY THANKS to everyone who purchased my homemade marmalade. As a result, I have been able to donate £228 for church funds. Please note that there are still pots for sale priced at £2.00. *Lesley A Green (01799 521356)*

THE MARCH EDITION OF PARISH NEWS is available on the website at <http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews>

COPY for the next edition of **PARISH NEWS** may be sent to the editor andycoblebrooke@gmail.com by Sunday 7th March.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS The Parish Administrator is available by phone or email on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9.30am - 12 noon. The office is not currently open to personal callers.

All items for the **GRAPEVINE** should be sent to secretary.swrectory@ntlworld.com by 9.00am on Wednesday

MINISTRY TEAM

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| Revd Dr Caroline Curren | 01799 584839 |