



# ST MARY'S WITH ST PETER'S BURY ST EDMUNDS

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seeking to **worship** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit; to **teach** the Bible in a way relevant to everyday life; to **grow** people in faith, understanding and love; to **equip** people to serve others; to **offer** people opportunities to meet Jesus and discover forgiveness and new life.

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From the vicar: Malcolm Rogers

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ

## ST MARY'S LETTER SEPTEMBER 2016

I do hope that you have had a good summer, and - for that you've settled into the new term. There is a great deal to catch up on so please forgive what has turned into quite a long letter!

Last Sunday we celebrated the Battle of Britain service, and our Sunday groups at 9.30 and our choir have begun again. We are currently interviewing for a new Choir Director (Adrian will continue as Director of Music and organist). We are going to miss DB, and I am grateful to him for all that he has done here. I am delighted that there will be a thanksgiving for Lizzy and DB's baby daughter, Larissa-Rose, this Sunday at the 11am service. We are also grateful to Christopher Moore for stepping in this term to help us out as an interim choir director, and to Penny for taking on the girls' choir. They've got a bit of work to do because in half term members from all our choirs (men and boys, girls, ladies) will be singing in Cologne.

On Monday 3rd October, Andrew Buttress and myself are holding the first of three sessions for some of our younger men (although I find that as I grow older, my definition of 'younger men' is constantly changing). If you think that the title applies to you and you have not heard from me, please do get in touch!

We have a very SPECIAL HARVEST WEEKEND coming up. On Saturday 8th October, Bishop Mike, the new bishop of Dunwich will be joining us at 9.30-12 noon, to lead us in a session helping us to spend time with the bible and let it speak to us, and also to help us as we begin to think about forming a vision for St Mary's. It is the sort of event that is accessible to everyone, and I do hope that you will join us for this.

The session will be preceded by a breakfast for those who wish, at 8.30am. We're offering a cooked breakfast and it will be the first time that the kitchen has been fully utilised. It is free (although donations towards the cost are welcome), but please do sign up on the sheet at the back of church if you are hoping to come.

Then on Sunday 9th October, we will have a HARVEST SERVICE AT 10.30am (combining our 9.30 and 11am congregations) when we will again be joined by the Benjamin Britten singers from Guildhall Feoffment school. Please do bring along gifts which we will be giving to the Storehouse food bank. They are particularly asking for tins of main meals. The service will be followed by a shared lunch of soup and rolls, which we will provide, but we are asking people to bring along 'bake off' puddings to share. The lunch will be free, but any donations will go toward the work of Tearfund.

On Monday 10th October we begin a new 7 week course called Life Explored. It is designed to help us think about the really important things in life that we are looking for. Details can be found on the website or please speak to Laurence or myself if you would like to find out more.

**CAR PARKING.** I am conscious that people can struggle to find car parking close to the church

on Sundays, especially with the building work going on at Guildhall Feoffment school, and even more so to find parking during the week. There is a map on the website showing where car parking is available, but note that at weekends there are spaces behind the police station, and for Sunday services (only) we can also use the spaces reserved for the Guildhall Feoffment Pre-school, which is accessible by driving through the Premier Inn car park. If all else fails, Ram Meadow car park is an easy 10 minutes walk away.

### **ST MARY'S BUILDING**

St Mary's committee currently are asking permission to hang the kneelers on the pews (as they were many years ago before we had the front panel heaters), and also to hang 12 banners, produced by Jane Cope, on the pillars. Currently there is a public notice about the kneelers and, if we are given permission from the Central Churches Building Council (who have to give the go-ahead for any new 'art installation' in grade 1 listed churches), there will be a public notice about that. If we do get permission to hang the kneelers, we are going to need a small team of people who would be willing to sew hooks onto the kneelers! If you are interested, please speak to Sylvia Chandler (704488).

We have also set up a small group to consider how we can smarten up the West End of the church, making it tidier, more welcoming, and to increase the space and improve the flow, so that we can better serve refreshments after services and events. We will, obviously, consult widely about any changes, but nothing too dramatic is being considered!

Our SMALL GROUPS continue to meet, and I would encourage you to consider joining one if you are not already in one. They offer great opportunities to get to know other people in the church, and to learn and grow together. We know that we belong somewhere when we are missed. Partly because we have grown, it is possible to not be missed at St Mary's on a Sunday morning, and if we are going to see the church continue to grow then we need to put more emphasis on our small groups. If you would like to join a group, please either approach a member of an existing group, or speak to Laurence or myself. If you are a member of a group, would you consider inviting somebody along with you?

We are thinking through our VISION FOR ST MARYS, and as part of that process I am asking people to answer four questions:

- What are our strengths as a church (or, what delights God about our life together at St Mary's)?
- What are our weaknesses (or, what saddens God about our life together)?
- What would you like to see happen in St Mary's in the next 5 years (or what do you think God - wants for us)?
- What changes, if any, would that require in the building?

I will be speaking about this at each of our congregations, and there will be sheets available

**EVENING SERVICES** at 6.30pm. We have used the subjects illustrated in the windows in St Mary's to guide some of the themes of our evening services, and this Autumn we will look at the 6 'mercies' that are shown in the large West Window (feeding the sick, giving drink to the thirsty, caring for the sick, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison and welcoming the stranger - based on Matthew 25). The BIG SUBJECT also continues with a look at Noah's flood (more than a myth?) on October 9th, and at the question: 'When will the Church of England be disestablished?' on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Finally can I remind you that, as well as the parish prayer meeting on the third Wednesday of every month, 7.45pm at the Hyndman Centre, we also have morning prayer on Friday mornings at 9am in St Mary's. We aim to finish by 9.30. All are welcome.

Congratulations on reading this far! There is a great deal happening and there is much to give thanks to God for. I am so grateful for the privilege of sharing in the ministry here with you.

With my love and prayer in Christ

Malcolm