

# St George's Newsletter

No.151

Sunday 19th February 2023

Sunday Next before Lent

10.00am Parish Mass

Baptism Today: It is with great joy that Hallie will be baptised during our main service today. Alongside her parents, sister, godparents, family and friends, we welcome her into God's family at St George's. Let us keep them in our prayers

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Dear Friends,

The mystery of the Transfiguration has its own feast day on 6th August and yet each year, on the Sunday before Lent, we read the relevant Gospel account of this event. This is fitting for it casts a guiding light throughout Lent when we enter more deeply into the events of Christ's suffering where the glory of his divinity seems to all but vanish in the frailty of his humanity. While Jesus' divinity is vindicated in his resurrection, we must not treat this victory at the expense of his and our human existence. Rather, the Transfiguration says, there is never a moment when Jesus' humanity is not suffused with the fullness of his divinity. And there is never a moment, however dark things are, when God's presence is not at work in our lives, calling us to the restoration of our full humanity.

To many people, however, and perhaps understandably given the history of the church, the tenets of Christianity seem to be mere humanly devised myths or a matter of personal wish fulfilment that, at their worst, are forced upon others. The writer of today's second reading answers this by evoking Peter's eyewitness account of the transfiguration of Jesus, stressing the visceral kind of transformative knowledge that comes from an encounter with a reality greater than oneself. The truth of this is deeply personal but never merely private or made up. Indeed, it shines more brightly when shared. As the letter states: "You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." To entrust yourself wholeheartedly to the light of a reality greater than yourself, indeed, the reality of God, is much like handing yourself over to one you love, knowing they are no myth but gloriously real in their familiar unfathomability. Here our love becomes more real and truer the more we share it with our beloved and others; the more we let it shape our lives and relationships and the world around us; the more we discover how the light of love moves others too and how it cannot be contained whether by human miscomprehension or even death itself. We have had a sense of this recently both in relation to the decision of General Synod to approve church blessings for same sex relationships where any limit on the love shared between people has been seen as unconscionable by many; and also for the huge outpouring of solidarity towards the people of Syria and Turkey in the aftermath of the earthquakes.

Though the Transfiguration is often overlooked in Western Christianity, Archbishop Michael Ramsay was a notable Anglican exception (a beautiful stained-glass window of the Transfiguration is dedicated to him at Durham Cathedral). He was also a strong advocate of human dignity and social justice, including the decriminalisation of homosexuality. The Transfiguration stands, Ramsey says, 'as a gateway, to the saving events of the Gospel, and is as a mirror in which the Christian mystery is seen in its unity. Here we perceive... that the Cross and the glory are of one, that the age to come is already here, that our human nature has a destiny of glory.... Such a gospel transcends the world and yet speaks directly to the immediate here-and-now.' In this direct-speaking glory, notes Ramsey, senseless pain, corrupt knowledge and a duplicitous world are transfigured as the site of divine recreation through the divine love revealed in Christ. Only in this transfiguring light of love can the deep divisions, hatreds and tragedies that scar humanity be judged as wanting and overcome. But this light is also one that escapes the bounds of both church and secular society to touch all human hearts, lifting them beyond human-imposed limits and reminding us that our destiny to glory can be fulfilled only when fearlessly shared with others, especially with those who suffer and with those we fear and persecute, even to the point of suffering willingly ourselves in the name of love. Let this be the light that illuminates our journey and our hearts throughout the coming season of Lent.

With my prayers and blessings,

Fr Angus

Friday is my day of rest unless the matter is very urgent.

**The Rite of Reconciliation** (also known as the Sacrament of Confession) is available to anyone by appointment with Fr Angus.

**Retiring Collection for Syria and Turkey: We will again be taking a retiring collection today after the service to help raise funds towards the Disasters Emergency Committee's appeal for Turkey and Syria (you can also go to <https://www.dec.org.uk/>). This is our final retiring collection for now. Thank you to all who donated so generously last Sunday.**

It is now possible to donate to St George's using your smartphone by scanning the QR Code shown on the right. If you are unsure on how to use it, please seek advice from our Treasurer, Alison Davis, or Fr Angus.



## **This Week's Diary - February**

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> - St George's Tots in the Centre – 10:30am to 12:00pm

Tuesday 21<sup>th</sup> – Church Choir rehearsal in the Centre @ 6pm  
WRAP Community Choir meet again @ 7.30pm

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup>- Ash Wednesday Mass with the Imposition of Ashes in the Lady Chapel - 11.30am  
Holy Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes Mass – 7.30pm

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> - Said Mass in the Lady Chapel - 9.30am

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> – Parish Breakfast in the Centenary Centre, 10-12pm [see below]

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> – Parish Mass - 10.00am

**Stations of the Cross:** This will now run from 2 March to 23 March (instead of to 30 March).

**Wednesday Lent Group: Psalms of Lament and Praise** – Our Lent Group this year will be exploring the Book of Psalms. The psalms transform every human experience into an expression of profound prayer. During each session, we will be delving into the rich and challenging language of psalms and connecting it to our own experiences. Participants will need to bring a copy of the bible (copies also available in church). **There will be four sessions held at 7:30pm each Wednesday from 8th March to 29th March, meeting in the Centenary Centre.** Fr Angus will lead the sessions, but group participation will be essential! Sign-up sheets are available at the back of church.

**Launch of the Friends of St Mary's Churchyard:** This newly formed group has the aim of maintaining the churchyard and managing it for wildlife as well as raising its profile as a treasure house of local and family history. It will seek to draw in members and volunteers both from the church congregation and wider community. **The group will have its official launch on Saturday 11 March at 2 p.m. in the Centenary Centre.**

**Parish Confirmation Service:** Bishop Martin will be leading a confirmation service at St George's at our main service on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March. When he will confirm Ginnie, Sam and Emma. Though the service is taking place during Lent, let us celebrate the day as much as possible with our candidates and extend a warm welcome to +Martin.

Because of the confirmation service, the next All-Age service will move to 5<sup>th</sup> March.

**St George's Pancake Party** for families with young children this afternoon, beginning at 3:30pm and finishing around 5pm. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

All are welcome to our **Happy Cafe Breakfast** in the Centenary Centre, next Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> February 10-12pm Come and join us for lovely food and fellowship!

Book your places now! [See Jill Merry or Rosemary Lay] £10 per adult £5 per child (over the age of 5yrs)

**Repair Café is back,**-- Transition Chichester is holding a small Repair Café on the fourth Friday of every month at the Earth Café from 11.00 - 1.00 at The Guide Hall in Whyke Lane, starting on Friday February 24<sup>th</sup>, offering repairs to small electrical items, clothing and jewellery. Advice on using a sewing machine is also available. Bring items for repair and enjoy a cuppa and friendly chat at the Earth Café while waiting for your repair to be done. Donations for repairs are welcomed.

**WRAP-CHAT meeting – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 3pm in The Centre (£2)** - Ken Green, will be giving a fascinating talk on Chichester Cathedral, covering a brief history of the building, its monuments, and some personalities from the past who have made their mark there. Do come, your image of the Cathedral may never be the same!

**Collection of Milk Bottle Tops** – Thank you to all who contribute by way of putting clean milk bottle tops in the glass jar at the back of church. A tactful reminder that the collection is for milk bottle tops only, other plastic tops can cause donations to be rejected. Many thanks.

### **Contact details:**

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