February 2024

Dear Friends and members of St. Peter’s

How the time is flying. Christmas has now gone – all signs, including the crib, are removed at Candlemas on January 28th and in two short weeks, Lent will be upon us and Easter on the horizon. We have weathered the storms that have crossed the country and have to be thankful that we have not suffered the damage here that other areas have seen. We hold those who suffered such extensive problems in our prayers.

Andy and Kristi Elliott, who left us to take up their ministry in Burravoe on Yell in the Shetland Islands, have kept us posted (and feeling slightly envious) with photos of picturesque snow across the island and life in a warm and cosy parsonage surrounded by their cats. Luckily, they did know what they were letting themselves in for and seem to be in their element.

We held a Congregation Committee meeting on January 23rd, and one item we discussed was the church garden which is looking a little unkempt after the wet and unseasonable autumn and winter weather. A group is going to meet in a week or two to plan how best to tackle it. If anyone would like to join them, please contact me or Janet for more information.

As we know, the day before the start of Lent is Shrove Tuesday, this year on February 13th. We shall again be having a Pancake Supper in the Church Room, beginning at 6.30pm. For catering purposes, there will be a sign up sheet in church from Sunday January 28th, but if you can’t make Sundays but would like to come to the supper, please contact me so I can let the catering team know! Thanks.

Lent itself begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14th with a Eucharist, and the imposition of ashes at 7pm that evening. Please do join us for that simple solemn service.

As has happened previously, throughout Lent we shall be following the Stations of the Cross at 7pm on Friday evenings together with our friends from St. Etheldreda’s. We shall meet alternately at St. Peter’s and St. Etheldreda’s, beginning at St. Peter’s on February 16th.

There is also to be a short Lent course this year, for just the final 4 weeks of Lent, beginning at 7pm on Thursday February 29th and aiming to finish by 8.30pm.

We shall be in the Church Room, so warm and comfortable. The course will be based loosely on the hymn ‘When I survey the wondrous cross’, and we shall also be looking at some artists’ impressions of the crucifixion together with related Bible passages. I hope we shall appreciate time together to discuss and share our own thoughts and opinions.

Keeping Lent is very personal to everyone, but I always advocate trying to give up the negative aspects of life – anger, impatience, intolerance and so on – and to act more positively – donate more to charity, be more helpful, do some litter-picking, study the Bible more deeply etc. The choice is yours!

On Friday, March 1st at 1.30pm is the annual service for the World Day of Prayer. Last year we hosted this at St. Peter’s. This year it is taking place at St. Mary’s. Each year, the service is prepared by Christian women in one particular nation and it was the women of Palestine who put this year’s service together. Of course, it will have been prepared long before the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians began. This is what they told us about Gaza:

Gaza covers just 141 square miles. There are over 2 million inhabitants, nearly half of them children. Gaza is the 3rd most densely populated area in the world. There are fewer than 1000 Christians in Gaza, but there is a strong feeling of ecumenical belonging and service to the whole community.

We do not know if the women, who prepared the service we shall be using, are alive or dead. We do not know if their families or their homes have been destroyed. We do not know if they are living in horrific camps wondering if each day will be their last. It will be a very poignant service. Please do come if you can.

And then we come to Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday on March 24th, with the long passion reading. I hope we can have a dramatic reading as we did last year, so I shall be looking for volunteers to take part in that. St. Peter’s Singers will also be with us for that service.

On Maundy Thursday there will be a Sung Eucharist at 8pm followed by a voluntary keeping of the Watch until 10pm. You may stay at the watch for as long or as short a time as you wish or leave directly after the Eucharist.

Our service on Good Friday will be at 9am and kept quite short so that those of us, who would like to, can join the Walk of Witness at the Market Square and then move with the procession through the town to the cathedral for the service there, which is followed by refreshments in the Lady Chapel. Later at St. Peter’s, we shall have a quiet hour in the afternoon from 2pm to 3pm with reflective words and music as appropriate for that special time. There will be no service on Easter Saturday at St. Peter’s, but there will be joyful Easter celebrations at 9.30am on Easter Day. More of this in the next newsletter.

There will be no weekday services at St. Peter’s in the week following Easter Day. Services recommence the following Sunday, April 7th at 9.30am, with the Sung Eucharist as usual.

I do hope I shall see you at some of the services we have planned.

May you have a quiet and thoughtful Lent. With my prayers and every blessing

Ann.

**Services and Events at St. Peter’s in February and March**

Sunday February 4th 9.30am Sung Eucharist

Monday February 5th 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday February 6th 12 noon Holy Communion

Sunday February 11th 9.30am Sung Eucharist (preacher Rob. Henderson)

Monday February 12th 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday February 13th 12 noon Holy Communion

6.30pm **SHROVE TUESDAY** Pancake Supper

Wednesday February 14th 7.00pm **ASH WEDNESDAY** Eucharist with imposition of Ashes

Friday February 16th 7.00pm Stations of the Cross at St. Peter’s

Sunday February 18th 9.30am Sung Eucharist

Monday February 19th 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday February 20th 12noon Holy Communion

*Thursday February 22nd 6.00pm Meeting of Trustees*

Friday February 23rd 7.00pm Stations of the Cross at St. Etheldreda’s

*7.30pm Toppings event with Alexander McCall Smith*

Sunday February 25th 9.30am Sung Eucharist with St. Peter’s Singers

Monday February 26th 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday February 27th 12 noon Holy Communion

*Wednesday February 28th 7.30pm Toppings event with Nicholas Orme*

Thursday February 29th 7.00pm Lent Group 1

Friday March 1st 1.30pm World Day of Prayer Service at St. Mary’s.

7.00pm Stations of the Cross at St Peter’s

Sunday March 3rd 9.30am Sung Eucharist

*5.00pm Ely Youth Choir Concert (time to be confirmed)*

Monday March 4th 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday March 5th 12 noon Holy Communion

Thursday March 7th 7.00pm Lent Group 2

Friday March 8th 7.00pm Stations of the Cross at St. Etheldreda’s

Sunday March 10th 9.30am **MOTHERING SUNDAY** Sung Eucharist

Monday March 11th 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday March 12th 12 noon Holy Communion

Thursday March 14th 7.00pm Lent Group 3

Friday March 15th 7.00pm Stations of the Cross at St. Peter’s

Sunday March 17th 9.30am **PASSIONTIDE** Sung Eucharist

Monday March 18th 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday March 19th 12noon Holy Communion

7.00pm Congregation Committee meeting

Thursday March 21st 7.00pm Lent Group 4

Friday March 22nd 7.00pm Stations of the Cross at St. Etheldreda’s

Sunday March 24th 9.30am **PALM SUNDAY** Sung Eucharist with St. Peter’s Singers

Monday March 25th 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday March 26th 12 noon Holy Communion

Thursday March 28th 8.00pm **MAUNDY THURSDAY** Eucharist (washing of feet). Watch.

Friday March 29th 9.00am **GOOD FRIDAY** service followed by WALK of WITNESS

Sunday March 31st 9.30am **EASTER DAY SUNG EUCHARIST**