

Rector's Letter - July 2023

The Reverend Christopher Harrison

On Sunday 2nd July we celebrate the patronal festival of St Peter's Church, when we give thanks for our patron saint, St Peter. At this service we welcome our link partners who work for the Church Mission Society in South East Asia, and hear about their work promoting the Christian faith in areas which are largely non-Christian. This can be particularly challenging in those parts of the world which remain hostile to Christianity, and indeed there are parts of Asia in which persecution is increasing.



St Peter was one of the first missionaries of the Church. In the gospels we hear how he was originally named Simon, but when he was called by Jesus to be a disciple he was given the name Peter because of its connection with the Greek word for 'rock'. Peter, however, has to learn by his mistakes what it means to be a follower of Christ. His faith falters when he is called by Jesus to walk out on the waters of Lake Galilee to meet him. He does not understand what is happening when Jesus is seen in glory on the Mount of the Transfiguration with the figures of Moses and Elijah, and offers to build shelters for them. At Caesarea Philippi, he tries to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem to be arrested and put to death, prompting Jesus to say, 'Get behind me, Satan'. Peter initially rejects Jesus' desire, at the Last Supper, to wash his feet, before he realises that this is the kind of servant ministry to which Jesus is calling all the disciples. When Jesus is arrested, Peter denies him three times.

In spite of all these moments, Jesus, after his resurrection, appoints Peter as the leader of the first Christians. He asks him three times if he loves him, and tells him three times to care for his flock. What we see, therefore, is that Peter was not discouraged by his failures, and also that Jesus shows understanding and forgiveness towards him. Jesus must have known that Peter has learned from his mistakes, and that this has given him the strength and wisdom which are necessary if he is truly to become the rock at the heart of the Church. After Jesus' ascension into heaven, Peter goes on to spread the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, and is finally martyred in Rome.

St Peter is a saint for everyone. He reminds us that God welcomes all people and has a purpose for all of us in spite of our shortcomings, weaknesses and errors. Whatever our past history, we can come to God in the knowledge that we will be forgiven and receive a new start. This is also exemplified by St Paul, who became one of the Church's greatest missionaries in spite of having previously persecuted the first Christians. There is good reason, therefore, for the Church's celebration of the feast of St Peter and St Paul on the same day, 29th June. This is the time when deacons and priests are traditionally ordained, in keeping with the themes of missionary discipleship and service to God which are typified by both these saints.

Petertide is always a good time for us to consider afresh how we serve God, the Church and the community. Maybe we have reached a point in our lives when we can do more to serve others. Do we have skills or qualities which will benefit those around us? Are we in a job which does not satisfy us, and so would it help us to find new ways of serving God? There are many ways in which you can volunteer to help St Peter's and All Saints' churches, so please do approach me, or the churchwardens, or our head verger Mike Chappell, if you think you have something to offer.

St Peter also reminds us that everyone has dignity and value in the eyes of God, whoever we are, and whatever our background. As we pray for a society whose values are in keeping with this, however, we need to be aware of all those factors which disempower people and make it more and more difficult for some to participate fully and to contribute. There are so many pressures in the fields of affordable housing, adequately paid work, access to good quality education and health care, not to mention the cost of living crisis; all of these are making life a real struggle for increasing numbers of people. Those just starting life in the adult world are facing particular challenges.

Let us therefore do our best to work towards a world in which mercy, compassion and understanding prevail, just as Jesus always showed understanding to his disciples. For this is the way to bring out the best in people, and to enable them to fulfil the purpose God has for everyone.

Services in July

Sunday 2nd	8.15 am 10.30 am 10.45 am 5.00 pm	Holy Communion Sung Eucharist Patronal Sung Eucharist* <i>Followed by a bring & share lunch</i> Mass in four voices <i>Byrd</i> <i>Tu es Petrus Duruflé</i> <i>Locus iste Bruckner</i> Holy Communion with prayers for healing	St Peter's All Saints' St Peter's St Peter's
Monday 3rd	1.15 pm	Meditation	St Peter's
Tuesday 4th	11.00 am 1.15 pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion	All Saints' St Peter's
Thursday 6th	11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Peter's
Sunday 9th	8.15 am 9.45 am 10.30 am 10.45 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Family Service Sung Eucharist Sung Eucharist Choral Evensong* Responses <i>Byrd</i> Gloucester Service <i>Howells</i> O Jesu Christ meins Lebens licht <i>Bach</i>	St Peter's St Peter's All Saints' St Peter's All Saints'
Monday 10th	1.15 pm	Meditation	St Peter's
Tuesday 11th	11.00 am 1.15 pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion	All Saints' St Peter's
Thursday 13th	11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Peter's
Sunday 16th	8.15 am 10.30 am 10.45 am 5.00 pm	Holy Communion Sung Eucharist Sung Eucharist* Mass in four voices <i>Byrd</i> Jesus Christ the Apple Tree <i>Poston</i> Taizé Service	St Peter's All Saints' St Peter's St Peter's
Monday 17th	1.15 pm	Meditation	St Peter's
Tuesday 18th	11.00 am 1.15 pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion	All Saints' St Peter's
Thursday 20th	11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Peter's
Sunday 23rd	8.15 am 10.30 am 10.45 am 6.00 pm	Holy Communion Sung Eucharist Sung Eucharist* Holy Communion <i>Leighton</i> <i>Ave verum Byrd</i> Choral Compline*	St Peter's All Saints' St Peter's All Saints'

Monday 24 th	1.15 pm	Meditation	St Peter's
Tuesday 25 th	11.00 am 1.15 pm	Holy Communion Holy Communion	All Saints' St Peter's
Thursday 27 th	11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Peter's
Sunday 30 th	8.15 am 10.30 am 10.45 am	Holy Communion Sung Eucharist Sung Eucharist* Holy Communion in E <i>Darke</i> Sacerdotes Domine <i>Byrd</i>	St Peter's All Saints' St Peter's
Monday 31 st	1.15 pm	Meditation	St Peter's

Coffee Concert at St. Peter's

Saturday, 15th July, 11:00am

St Peter's Church, Nottingham

10:15am Coffee / Concert 11am

Free Admission, donations suggested



Prayers for July

The Reverend John Henson

As those who can afford it start to think about holidays in other places, it occurred to me that there is often helpful stimulation to be gained from discovering how people pray from backgrounds far removed from our own. Looking out from Britain, here are some prayers from other parts of the world.

(from the Punjab)

O heavenly Father, open wide the sluice gate into my heart,
that I may receive your living water and be fruitful. Amen.

(from Japan)

May my mouth praise the love of God this morning;
O God, may I do your will this day.
May my ears hear the words of God and obey them;
O God, may I do your will this day.
May my feet follow the footsteps of God this day;
O God, may I do your will this day. Amen.

(from Ghana)

We seek your brothers and sisters
and find them only when we open our hearts to them.
We must speak your word to them aright. They must understand.
Come, Holy Spirit, prepare us to enter the huts of others. Amen.

(from Vanuatu in the Pacific)

O Jesus, be the canoe that holds me in the sea of life:
be the steer that keeps me straight;
be the outrigger that supports me in times of great temptation.
Let your Spirit be my sail that carries me through each day;
keep my body strong, so that I can paddle steadfastly on
in the long voyage of life. Amen.

(from Cameroon)

All things speak to us of your face:
Everyone's smile is a hint of your smile.
All tears, every wrinkle on the brow of those who suffer outlines for us your likeness.
Indeed, it is your face, O Lord, your divine face that we seek. Amen.

(from Egypt)

As the Nile sustains the people of Egypt
and washes the desert sands with the waters of life,
so sustain your Church in every land
and help her bring life and refreshment
to all whose hope has run dry. Amen.



Byrd 400

William Byrd died four hundred years ago this month, on 4 July 1623, and remains one of the finest composers England has ever produced. As an unapologetic Roman Catholic, his survival in these turbulent times was surely in no small part due to the exceptionally high esteem in which he was held by Queen Elizabeth I (who granted him and Thomas Tallis an exclusive licence to publish music). Here at St Peter's, we will mark this anniversary by including a piece of Byrd in each week of the month:

Sunday 2 nd	Sanctus from Mass for four voices
Sunday 9 th	Preces & Responses
Sunday 16 th	Kyrie & Agnus Dei from Mass for four voices
Sunday 23 rd	Ave verum
Sunday 30 th	Sacerdotes Domine

