



Weekly News

Sunday 2nd May 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Knowing, loving and following Jesus

Parish Church of St Richard

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Worship this week at St Richard's

All Masses this week will be celebrated in church and streamed live on Facebook.

Tuesday 4 th	Mass	19:00
Wednesday 5 th	Mass	19:00
Thursday 6 th	Mass	11:00
Sunday 9 th (6 th Sunday of Easter)	Mass	10:00

The Ascension of the Lord and Pentecost

This year we will be celebrating the 'Ascension of the Lord' at the 10:00 parish Mass on Sunday 16th May'. Additionally, on Saturday 15th at 4:30pm we will have our first very informal family Eucharist in church, primarily aimed at families with children of all ages, but everyone is welcome!

Weather permitting, our Pentecost celebrations on Sunday 23 May will take place outside in the car park.

Reading in church

As you may have noticed, we have returned to having the readings read live at Masses in church. New readers are welcome – no past experience necessary! If you are interested, please do let Fr Chris know.

Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who has donated items for the car boot sales, over £200 as already been raised for St Richard's since car boot sales have reopened. And thank you and well done to Anne Redfern and her helpers for doing the selling!

Foodbank donations

The church will be open to take donations for the Foodbank on Tuesday at 10:00 – 12:00 and Friday 14:00 – 16:00.

Hall redecoration

Last week saw further progress made with the redecoration of the hall. Due to the generous giving of time and talents over the past couple of weeks, work will begin this week on the entrance lobby and toilets, along with finishing the painting of the main hall. There is still plenty of work to be done, but we are getting there!

Thank you to everyone who has helped so far, and if anyone else is willing and able to spare a few hours just call Fr Chris (07880 890477) to ensure the hall is open and you can be briefed on what needs to be done.



A couple of people have asked if they can donate financially to the work the hall, and if so, what is needed. Below is a list of some of the items that still need to be purchased, for example:

- 7 curtain rails approx. £45 each
- 8 dimmable LED tube lights approx. £35 each
- 2 toilet seats approx. £50 each
- 2 mirrors approx. £20 each
- 2 toilet locks approx. £15 each
- Fire exit push bar mechanism approx. £120
- Wi-Fi access point and fittings approx. £100
- Mounting bracket for LED screen approx. £25

Donations can be made by cheque or cash placed in an envelope labelled 'Hall redecoration' or by online bank transfer, again please put a reference of 'Hall redecoration'. Thank you to everyone who has already made a donation!

Electoral Roll and APCM

The revision of the parish Electoral begins today and will finish on 16th May. After revision, the Roll will be displayed in church for a period of 14 days. If you have any questions on the Electoral Roll, email the Electoral Roll officer, Carolyn Brading (carolyn@brading.net).

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) and meeting to elect churchwardens will take place after Mass on Sunday 30th May in church. If you are interested in joining the PCC, please contact Fr Chris.

200 Club Draw – April

After Mass this morning Fr Chris made the 200 Club draw for April.

The winning numbers are:

3rd Prize – #94 – Dcn Rebecca

2nd Prize – #79 – Anne Williamson

1st Prize – #80 – St Richard's Church*

Prizes will be given as soon as possible.

Congratulations to all the winners!

** There are currently a few unassigned numbers, of which #80 is one; it was decided that if an unassigned number is drawn, the prize would be 'given' to the church.*

Of your charity, please pray for, those in need:

Mimi Palmer, Hannah Hales, Paul Moore, Christopher Grimwood, Linda Miller, Sheila Jobson, Doreen Sparks, Pauline Caffin, Fr John Edwards, Adrian Taylor, Pamela Waugh, Una Wade, Jean McCarthy, Pat Longhurst, Michael Langford-Jackson, Fr Michael Gudgeon, Stella Law, Margaret Trafford, Tony Dawson, David Wallis, Hilary Fowler, Jean Padgham, Richard Parker, Betty Tester, Gillian Smith, Shirley Swyer, Alex Leaney, Halcyon Clarke, Tony Heald, Mary Hart, Geoffrey Billington and Becky.

Those who have died recently and those whose anniversary falls around this time of year:

2nd) Philip Barrett (pr), 3rd) Mabel Lovell, 4th) Bessey Knott, 5th) Annie Roberts, 6th) Ernestine Smith, Alexander Clarke, Norman Pocklington, 7th) Stanley Martin.

*If you would like anyone added to the prayer list, or would like someone prayed for, but **not** added to the list, please submit your prayer details using the form on the website www.strichards.co.uk/prayer.*

Dcn Rebecca's Homily – 2 April

One of the most enduring and popular board games is Guess Who? Each player chooses a mystery character card and then using yes or no questions they try to figure out the other player's mystery person. As you narrow it down, you flip down pictures of various characters. So, if you'd asked whether the character had a beard and the other player said 'no' you'd flip down all the pictures of characters who had beards.

Almost at the end of his gospel John gives us his purpose for writing: 'These (words) are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name' (20.31).

Throughout his gospel, John therefore spends a significant amount of time teaching us exactly who Jesus is and what this means for us.

John does this in a variety of ways, but key is the seven 'I Am' statements that are spaced through the gospel. Last week Fr Chris preached about 'I am the Good Shepherd'. Today's gospel includes the final 'I Am' saying: 'I Am the true vine'.

To fully understand what these mean we must go back to the OT. The English translation of 'I Am' doesn't do full justice to the meaning because the Greek actually means 'I, I Am'. This is significant because it takes us immediately back to Exodus 3.14 where God reveals himself to Moses: "I Am who I Am.'...you shall say to the Israelites 'I Am has sent me to you.'...this is my name for ever, and this is my title for generations.'

God reveals who he is and what he is like. He is the 'I Am', the eternal, unchanging one, infinite and glorious and above all created things – in other words, he's God. We see echoes of this again in the final book of the NT, also ascribed to John, the book of Revelation. The one seated on the throne says: 'I Am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end'(21.6).

My son Nick as a young child had a killer theological question which he liked to ask people: 'when was God born?' and he enjoyed seeing them flounder before saying that 'God wasn't born – he just 'is'.

In John's gospel, when Jesus makes the 'I Am' statements he does so to people who knew exactly what 'I, I Am' meant. Jesus is saying that he's God – not just a great teacher, healer, or miracle worker, but the eternal God.

The Jews listening would have been clear about exactly what Jesus was claiming, which is why in chapter 8, verse 58 when Jesus says: ‘before Abraham was, I Am’ the Jews immediately pick up stones with the aim of killing him. To them his claims were sacrilegious and blasphemous. God’s name was too holy to speak or write – never mind claiming you were God!

All the ‘I Am’ statements focus not just on Jesus’ identity, but the life he brings to those who believe in and follow him.

This is key for us as Christians because our faith isn’t just a cerebral belief in God, but it animates us and our lives – it gives us the gift of eternal life and the life-blood of God’s presence in the Holy Spirit.

So, today’s Gospel reading contains the final I Am statement, ‘I Am the true vine.’ The prophet Isaiah used the symbol of a vine for Israel, God’s chosen people. Isaiah described Israel as the desolate vineyard, but Jesus says God’s people have life and fruit by being in him.

Jesus isn’t simply saying that Christians will be fruitful by resting in him. Whereas the old Israel withered and didn’t bear fruit, Jesus is saying that he is the new Israel and is the one in whom God’s people can find true, flourishing and fruitful life.

John’s links each of the ‘I Am’ sayings with one of Jesus’ signs and the accompanying discourses. In this case, we can make links with the first sign, when Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding at Cana in Galilee.

This was followed in chapter three by the discourse about what this new life means. Now, in this final I Am statement, Jesus makes clear that he is the true vine and its through him that the life of the new Israel comes to birth.

In western society, truth has become a subjective thing; that we can decide on our own truth and belief. The I Am sayings challenge this – it’s not for us to decide who Jesus is because he is the Great I Am – the beginning and the end of everything and he’s unchanging. God is truth and we as Christians must worship him in Spirit and in Truth. We don’t have to search around looking for truth because in Jesus Christ we find our true identity and share in the gift of his new and eternal life. It’s this relationship which will bring us deep joy and fruitfulness.

Alleluia, alleluia! Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty. Alleluia!