

Prayers for the Month of March

Sunday 1st March:

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled
with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days
to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sunday 8th March:

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery
of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way
come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sunday 15th March:

Eternal God,
give us insight
to discern your will for us,
to give up what harms us,
and to seek the perfection
we are promised
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sunday 22nd March:

Merciful Lord,
you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives
and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid
and turn us back to you again;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sunday 29th March:

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord..

Otherwise, we're always a 'sitting duck' to the temptations brought our way by our own sin, the lure of the world, and the schemes of the enemy.

So, as you practice the disciplines of fasting, giving and praying, may you bear more fruit of the Kingdom. And, despite many temptations, as you walk the road to the cross - *as every true follower must* - thank God for Jesus' faultless resistance to temptation and remarkable endurance in the wilderness. Because without that initial victory in the desert, He would not have been able to go through with the cross for us, and open up the way to salvation.



'THE BULLETIN'

St Paul's Church

Part of the Great Baddow Team Ministry

Our vision: 'to love Christ and make His love known.'

A warm welcome to St Paul's
and we hope you enjoy your time with us.
After the service, do stay around and meet our church members.

Sunday Services for March

Sunday 1st March:

The First Sunday of Lent
10.00am Holy Communion with Children's Groups
Preacher: Phil Sheldrake
Reading: Matthew 4.1-11

Sunday 8th March:

The Second Sunday of Lent
10.00am All Age Worship
Preacher: Phil Sheldrake
Readings: Genesis 12.1-4a
& John 3.1-17

Sunday 15th March:

The Third Sunday of Lent
10.00am All Age Holy Communion
Preacher: Mary Cottee
Reading: John 4.5-42

Sunday 22nd March:

Mothering Sunday
The Fourth Sunday of Lent
10.00am All Age Worship
Preacher: Jo Brown
Readings: Exodus 2.1-10
& Luke 2.33-35

Sunday 29th March:

The Fifth Sunday of Lent
10.00am All Age Worship
Preacher: Phil Sheldrake
Reading: John 11.1-45

Contact Us:

Rev'd Phil Sheldrake:

email: revphilsheldrake@gmail.com **or** tel: 01245 269026

[Phil's day off is Thursday]

St Paul's email: stpaulsbaddow@yahoo.co.uk

Web Page: www.stpaulsgreatbaddow.org

Social Media: facebook.com/stpaulsgreatbaddow

Noticeboard:

'Wellspring': Monthly prayer - Mon 2nd March, 8pm at *The Vicarage*.

Lent Course: Wednesdays in Lent, 8pm at The Vicarage. Alternatively, do consider attending the Lent Lectures which the Diocese are hosting, with a specific focus this year on the environment and climate change. All details are found on diocesan website.

Next PCC Meeting: 9th March 7.45 for 8.00pm at St Paul's Church.

Next 'Messy Church': 21st March, 10.30-12.30pm.

'Last Orders': Next meeting on 30th March, 9pm at *The Running Mare*.

'Easter Experience': Please pray for our two schools visiting us w/c 23rd, and sign up if you can help on any of the four sessions that week.

Our Parish Prayer Focus for March: Please pray that God will direct us to move in the power of His Spirit within our church and outside its walls. And pray for families & friends on that huge, long and winding road: *Beehive Lane* (the whole of it, from Deadman's Lane to the bottom!)

'Vicar's Thoughts' for March

Just a few days ago we enjoyed a really powerful Ash Wednesday Team service here at St Paul's, as we marked the start of Lent together. Roger Matthew's teaching was excellent. He reminded us that the three key secret things we do as Christians (fasting, giving and praying) are done in order to show God how dependent we are upon Him, and then also, the fruit of the Kingdom that grows within us when we engage in these disciplines, is then to be offered to the world. Discipline always bears fruit; whether that is practicing a musical instrument, immersing yourself in a foreign language or 'pushing-into God' with an intention to really seek Him. Nothing is ever wasted! But of course, there are many temptations to stop us growing in our spiritual maturity and therefore also stopping the work of the Kingdom through us.

We begin March's services looking at Jesus' time spent in the desert, immediately after His baptism. We see how Satan was trying to thwart the in-breaking of God's kingdom in Jesus, and yet we see his inability to secure a victory over God-in-the-flesh. The desert wouldn't be the final time Jesus would face temptation: there was more to come as He followed the road to the cross. Yet at every point in His public ministry, Jesus relied on the truth of the Jewish scriptures and His vocation to be the 'Light of the World'.

So how do we follow the road to the cross? How do we battle temptation? It's not wrong to be tempted, but what spiritual weapons have we been given through faith, in order to resist it?

Firstly, as with Jesus, God's word is our weapon against temptation: a mighty weapon! And yet you'd be surprised how little people bother to use it. But if we feed off God's word, it not only nourishes our faith, but it comes back to our minds at times when the inevitable voices of temptation try to sidle up to us. We need to 'hear...read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest' the scriptures, as the Book of Common Prayer has reminded countless worshippers over the last few centuries. Being immersed in truth helps us to live it out!

Secondly, we need to keep focussed upon God. Yes, this is achieved through prayer and through Bible study, but also through Christian fellowship, regular worship and... (*this next one can be really hard for us, with our human pride and desire not to appear 'weak'*) ... genuine accountability to each other. Part of belonging in Christian Community, is that we're honest with one another - we should be "doing life" together, not hiding our weaknesses or pain from one another. How we need our Church family on the Christian road of faith!

please turnover...