



THE HERALD

The monthly newsletter from the churches of
St Nicholas Stevenage + St Mary's Graveley



www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk

www.stmarysgraveley.org.uk

Dear friends,

May 2023

Well, spring has really sprung, and as I write this I'm looking into our garden, and what a change from just a month ago. It is really quite dramatic, everything is bursting into life. We've also changed the layout of our house by removing a wall between the kitchen and living room, something we planned since moving in, and it gives a very different feel to the house and how we use it, both changes are welcome changes, but not all change is welcome or comfortable.

It's not rocket science to say that Life is continually changing, some brought about by ourselves and some by others and our circumstances, we may not be able control change but our reaction to change is important, and what about our life in following Jesus, as his disciples, is there not a call for us to become more Christ like? Through the Holy Spirit at work within us, those changes can be big changes or sometimes more subtle changes.

We all react to change in different ways, most of us, myself included, are not comfortable with change, unless it's something I, or we, want. This thinking about change lets me to look at how God's people in the past reacted and dealt with change.

When God called his people out of Egypt all went well to begin with, it was all going well, then times got tough, and the natural desire when things get tough is to look backwards. This is often with rose coloured spectacles, so the Israelites looked back to their life in Egypt and as it says in Numbers 14: 4 'they said to one another, let's appoint a leader and return to Egypt' forgetting all that God had done for them, and his promises to them, or how they were treated in Egypt!!

We can also become really comfortable in the place where we are, and resist any sort of change, that's because it takes us out of our comfort zone, but that means that in reality we are staying still, so we see in Mark 9: 2-9 which speaks of the Transfiguration of Jesus, and Peter's reaction was to say let's build three shelters, is Peter is speaking being of somewhere comfortable, that he would like to stay and do we react that way particularly in our walk with God, when we have had an experience of God's goodness to us.

So if we're not going backwards, are we standing still? We always need to be moving forward as individuals and as a church. We are entering a new season in the life of our churches, a time when there will be change. God has graciously provided us with a new Rector Edward (and his wife Hannah) to outwork with us God's plan for both St Nicholas and St Mary's.

So how will I, how will you, look to embrace those changes as we are led not just by Edward, but by God's Word and his Spirit, times might be testing, there might be times of comfort, but we can be assured that as we seek to follow Jesus, we have the promise of Jesus as it says in Matthew, 28:20, 'I will be with you even until the end of the world, and Deuteronomy 31:6 says Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

So whatever changes we are currently experiencing in our lives or will experience in the future, we can be assured that Jesus is with us every step of the way. We may have times when we want to go backwards, we might have times when we want to be in that place of comfort, but our call is to follow Jesus through all changes, led by the Word and the Spirit, and within that we should help and encourage each other through whatever changes and challenges there are.

Love and Blessings

Mike Wilton – Church Warden, St Nicholas

EVENTS THIS MAY

Coronation of King Charles III – Sat 6th May

Quiz Night at St Nicholas – Sat 13th May at 7pm.

Come along for a fun evening of fellowship together. Sign-up sheet in church at St Nicholas. Bring your own drinks and nibbles, tea and coffee will be provided.

St Nicholas Annual Parochial Church Meeting – Sun 14th May at 11am after the morning service.

Anyone who is on the Church Electoral Roll may vote at the meeting, but even if you are not on the Electoral Roll you are warmly encouraged to stay and listen.

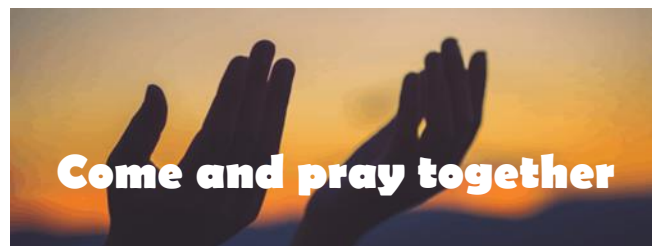
Flower arranging - please see Chris Chambers for more details – full training given. Thurs 10am-12pm, & 6.30pm-9pm at St Nicholas. More info and meeting dates are on the notice board in the parish room.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Licensing of Revd Edward Keene as the new Rector of the Benefice of St Nicholas and Graveley - Monday 19th June at 7.30pm at St Nicholas Church. Numbers will need to be restricted so please RSVP to the churchwardens if you would like to attend.

PATTERN OF SUNDAY WORSHIP: Unless otherwise stated, both churches will have services of Holy Communion on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, and Services of the Word on 1st and 3rd Sundays. 5th Sundays will be joint Services of the Word - starting at 10:30am, with the venue moving between the 2 churches.

Just for MAY, this pattern will be reversed – Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays and Service of the Word on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.



Every Wednesday, there will be an Act of Prayer at St Nicholas Church – either a Benefice Prayer Meeting at 7.30pm, or a service of Evening Prayer at 7pm – check the church calendar for details:

[Calendar – St Nicholas Church \(saintnicholaschurch.org.uk\)](https://www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk).

Every other Wednesday, on the same week as Home Groups, there will be an Early Morning Prayer meeting on Zoom.

*St Nicholas will also be open for **visitors and private prayer** on Tuesdays from 2-4pm, Wednesdays from 12noon-2pm and Thursdays from 10am-12 noon*



7th May Luke 7: 1-17 14th May Luke 7: 18-35

21st May Luke 7: 36-50 28th May Luke 8: 1-15

Preachers for May:

7th May: Revd Nigel Ward (HC)

14th May: Ben Epps (MW)

21st May: Revd David Miller (HC)

28th May: Philip Walker (MW)

KEY CONTACT DETAILS

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CHURCH WARDENS:

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