

# Pews News

**Sunday 30th June**

**10am Parish Communion, St Peter's**

**Zoom**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88201774610?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88201774610?pwd=RmVNY2k1aVoxd1pNcVdock11dUlqUT09)  
pwd=RmVNY2k1aVoxd1pNcVdock11dUlqUT09

**Collect**

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Please remember in your prayers**

**The sick:** Marilyn Bailey, Sandra Baxter-Brown, Dennis Evans, Ginny Fraser, Stacey Medalyer, Christine Miles and Jacky Williams

**Interregnum Prayer**

Dear God, your love for us is unchangeable. You have welcomed each of us into the family of your Church; in Jesus, you call us to be His Body in this place. Send down your Holy Spirit upon us at this time of uncertainty and change, to fill us with vision and energy and faithfulness in prayer, that we may be true to our common Baptism, and bring new life to our Parish community. Guide with your heavenly wisdom those appointed to discern the way ahead and a new Incumbent for this Parish, that we may receive the priest you have prepared for your people: ready to serve us with joy, to build us up in faith, and lead us by example in loving obedience to your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.



**INVITATION to A CHARITY CONCERT IN AID OF ST PETER'S CHURCH & THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MUSICIANS**

**SATURDAY 3rd AUGUST AT 7.30PM AT ST PETER'S CHURCH HASCOMBE**

This concert is the 23rd Hascombe charity concert, to be performed by the Chamber Ensemble of London led by Peter Fisher. The programme theme is Echoes Across the Centuries: A Musical Journey celebrating the following composers' births: Smetana, Marcello, Monteverdi, Maria Theresia von Paradis, Vivaldi, Bach, Saint Saens, Faure , Puccini, Mancini

Tickets are available at £15.00 per person in addition to which we are asking for a suggested voluntary donation of £15.00 per person with 75% to St Peter's Church and 25% to The Royal Society of Musicians. We are restricted to 100 tickets, from Roger & Tammy Wood, High Leybourne, Hascombe Road, Godalming, Surrey GU84AD – tel 01483 208559 / 07778213337 or email to [roger.wood3337@gmail.com](mailto:roger.wood3337@gmail.com)

Payment is preferred by InterBank Transfer to Hascombe PCC  
Sort code 60-09-04 Account no 62028952 or by cheque payable to Hascombe PCC together with a Gift Aid Declaration (if appropriate).

Supper from 6.00pm onwards could be around the pond or at The White Horse – tel 01483 208258 or email: [whitehorsehascombe@youngs.co.uk](mailto:whitehorsehascombe@youngs.co.uk)



## **My Grace is sufficient**

### **John Beauchamp on his 30 years as a blind priest**

It wasn't until I was 23 and working as a music teacher, that Retinitis Pigmentosa was noticed and diagnosed, and I was given the news that I had already lost over 50% of my sight and would continue to lose it until I was blind. That is exactly what happened over the next 10 years and by the late 1980s I was registered as blind, had given up my teaching job, and was feeling pretty hopeless.

It was in the middle of this that God began to whisper a sense of calling to ordained ministry. A feeling that at first I tried to push aside but, when I eventually found the courage to share it, was surprised to find that others responded with support and encouragement. I began my diocesan discernment process and was surprised at every stage when I was recommended to continue.

My first selection conference, something I approached with confidence and expectation, was though not what I expected. I was not recommended for training for ordination. Had I heard right? Was the sense of calling I felt just my imagination? Was it just wishful thinking? Or had God led me to a place only to abandon me? It seemed to me that if ordination was God's calling, God would have to heal me as ministry was not possible as a blind person. So, caught up in charismatic healing ministry, I looked for the healing I believed I needed.

However, services, conferences, prayer and laying on of hands seemed to do nothing. I always left as blind as I was when I arrived and in fact my sight continued to deteriorate. After a while I began to run away. To run away from calling and to run away from this God who seemed to promise so much but deliver so little. Although eventually I found myself in a service in Southwark Cathedral. All around me the sound of singing ebbed and flowed but all I felt was anger. Anger at the God who seemed to have abandoned me. Suddenly though I began to feel exhausted, and in that exhaustion I suddenly felt as if I was being held in the most loving of loving embraces. And words seemed to echo in my head somehow. 'John, do you think that I am so small as to need to heal you to include you?' And in that moment I suddenly knew that everything I had been seeking and striving for was completely wrong. For my whole life I had seen myself as inadequate and, since my diagnosis, had believed that the thing I needed most was healing, the restoration of my sight. But, as those words echoed in my head, I realised that this was completely wrong. What I needed to do was to accept myself as I am, because that is exactly how God accepts me. All I need to be is 'me'. It is as a blind person that I reflect something of the image of God in the world and that it was as a blind person that God was calling me to the priesthood. St Paul's moment of revelation suddenly leapt off of the page. 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness!'

I returned to a selection conference with a very different attitude. No longer trying to prove anything, but seeking to be the most genuine version of me that I could. The result was recommendation for training at Wycliffe Hall, and in 1994 I was ordained at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

Since then 30 years have gone by. Over 20 years of parish ministry in Suffolk, 6 years of parish ministry in Islington and nearly 3 years of my current disability Ministry Enabler role in London. With my wife Natalie's support and several guide dogs at my side, I hope that I have managed to bring something of God's kingdom down to earth for people of all ages and all abilities. And I believe that being a blind priest has not detracted from my ministry but added a unique and personal dimension to it. Through my blindness and my experience of vulnerability I have been able to connect with others, who are suffering difficulties.

In the kingdom of God all people are of ultimate worth because our worth is not rooted in ourselves or others but in Jesus Christ. Every person, regardless of their physical, sensory or cognitive shape, brings gift into the church and every person adds to us becoming a more complete representation of the Body of Christ in the world today. A body that, risen from the tomb, still bore the marks and scars of human disability in the wounds of nails and spear and thorns. I hope that my 30 years of ministry has brought something of this reality into the world and I look forward to continuing to breathe this truth for as long as I am able.

