

Wherever you are, we extend a very warm greeting to you, especially if you've recently discovered St Mary's

This Week at St Mary's

5th March 2023

SERVICES COMING UP

SUNDAY 5th Mar: Legal Service 10.45am

SUNDAY 5th Mar: Choral Eucharist (BCP) 6.30pm

WEDNESDAY 8th Mar: Choral Evensong 6.15pm

THURSDAY 9th Mar: Holy Communion 12.45pm

THURSDAY 9th Mar: Evening Prayer (Skype) 5.30pm

SUNDAY 12th Mar: Choral Eucharist 10.45am

SUNDAY 12th Mar: Choral Evensong 6.30pm

ST MARY'S is OPEN for private prayer & reflection
11.00-2.30 Monday-Friday

WORKPLACE WEDNESDAY at St Mary's, each week, a third space to work away from home & the office. 9am-12pm, no fee or booking.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR

Estelle Barks Jan Buckland
Jenny Du May & her husband Peter
Stephen Morris Kirsten Solway
Oliver Webb & Helen Latham

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DEAD WOMAN STANDING

It's one of the better known stories about Jesus. The terrible scene of a woman about to be stoned for adultery is described - evoking its ghastly contemporary equivalent in somewhere like Saudi Arabia or Iran. She would have known death was inevitable. What happens is that by the intervention of Jesus of Nazareth her life is spared - "he saved me from death", she would rightly celebrate.

The parallels between what is described in this story (John 8.1-11) and what would shortly after happen to Jesus are striking, deliberately so. The woman finds herself *alone* on a charge before the authorities at *the Jerusalem Temple*, just as was to happen to Jesus. Both were made to *stand* - Jesus before Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate.

Put on the spot, realising an intended trap, the story describes how Jesus 'bent down' to write something on the ground. He then straightened up, rising to his full height, saying 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her'. He then bent over again to continue his writing. One by one, the oldest first, all the accusers depart. Left together, Jesus tells the woman 'neither does he condemn her'. A dead woman standing, free to go her way and live a new life, free of sin.

It paints a powerful picture of the gift Jesus Christ offers all of us. 'Bending over' is synonymous with death, 'straightening' with new, resurrection life. This is what happened to him and it is his gift to us so that with the woman, we too can say "he saved me from a certain death". By faith, we say we 'have died with Christ'. Free of the guilt of sin and the fear of death, we dead people standing now go our way, for and with Jesus Christ living a new life.

Tom Gillum

GET OUR BELLS RINGING AGAIN

The gap is narrowing—very many thanks to all who have so far responded. £85,500 has now been given or pledged, just under 50% of the £180,000 we need to raise. Let's all now give what we can, so that the bells can be rung on 6th May. To donate online, please use the QR code on the right.



OUR MEDIEVAL ALABASTERS

Dr Joanna Martin, Associate Professor in Middle English and Older Scots at the University of Nottingham, writes:

The congregation and clergy of St Mary's are justly proud of the church's precious alabaster carving, once richly decorated, of St Thomas à Becket. Hidden under the church floor to escape damage, either during the Reformation or Civil War, the alabaster's survival mirrors that of the famous Flawford sculptures - the Virgin, St Peter, and an unnamed Bishop - which were similarly hidden under a church floor just down the road in Ruddington. These statues are now in the care of Nottingham Museums and Galleries, along with an internationally significant collection of alabasters depicting scenes from the life of Christ, and the Virgin, as well as from popular saints' lives. St Mary's alabaster is of special importance because it retains its meaning as an object of devotion and spiritual inspiration, escaping both destruction and appropriation into the international art market. If you wanted to purchase your own alabaster, you might need at least £12,000, judging by the guide price in a recent auctioneer's catalogue for an alabaster of the Magi!

Some alabasters were made for the private household, rather than an ecclesiastical setting, the focus of family or personal prayers, of the sort exemplified by poems in the so-called 'Findern Manuscript', now in Cambridge University Library, a verse anthology compiled in fifteenth-century Derbyshire, close to the location of the alabaster mines which supplied Nottingham's industry.

A team at the University of Nottingham are working to bring together local medieval prayers addressed to the Virgin, Christ, and popular saints, including St Zita (the patron saint of housework!) with locally made devotional alabasters, such as that at St Mary's. The team is making recordings of Middle English poems from the Findern Manuscript, and local books in the Wollaton Library Collection (now part of the University's archive) for a free online resource. It is the start of a larger project designed to give audiences for these beautiful art works a contextualised and multi-sensory insight into late medieval devotional culture.

Our alabaster carving of St Thomas à Becket can be found in the Chapel, to the right of the altar.

OPEN MEETING SUNDAY 12TH MARCH, 12 NOON.

You are warmly invited to attend an open meeting to find out about our new Parish Profile and the Strategic Development Funding which has been awarded to St Mary's from the Church of England. The Parish Profile is a document that celebrates the life and vision of the church and was produced to support the recruitment of the new vicar. The Strategic Development Fund is administered by the Diocese with the overall goal of supporting major change programmes and activities that make a significant difference to the mission and growth of the Church. St Mary's has been in receipt of income from the Fund since 2017 when we stopped being a joint parish. In the past two years the PCC has been working with diocesan representatives to formulate a new bid with the object of developing our building and increasing our congregations. At the Open Meeting on Sunday 12th March you will hear how the funding will be used to support re-ordering works to the building and the recruitment of two new posts.

LAST WEEK AT ST MARY'S

SATURDAY UK Premiere of Richard Prior's *Stabat Mater* by our Choir and the Orchestra of the Restoration. Richard was previously in our Choir and it was a delight to welcome him back for this wonderful performance, which was very well-received.

MONDAY Hannah from NottsTV came to film some pieces about our newly-gilded angels—they really seem to have captured the city's imagination.

CONCERT Sun 5th March, 3pm, St Edmund's Church Holme Pierrepont. The Neville Consort (includes some members of our Choir) perform music for Lent and Easter, featuring Lotti's *Crucifixus*. Tickets £10 on the door, £8 in advance Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/crucifixus-tickets-534907722397>.

INTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY Monday 13 March, 7pm, online. A workplace chaplain is an intentional presence to offer a listening ear to workers of all faiths and none. If you are interested, you will need to have the support of your incumbent or PCC. It is also a way to refresh your understanding for anyone who is already a workplace chaplain. [Learn more.](#)

MOTHERING SUNDAY SERVICE Sunday 19th March is Mothering Sunday and worship will be led by our Children's Choirs for our 10.45am service. All welcome.

INSIGHT MEETING 22nd March, 12-1.30pm. Marking 70 years of Nottingham Playhouse. Chief Executive Stephanie Surr and Head of Participation Martin Berry will give an insight into the participation programmes run by the theatre.

THE NOTTINGHAM PASSION 31st March & 1st April, 7.30pm. Tickets at www.TicketSource.co.uk/nottinghampassion, Nottingham Tourist Office, or St Peter's Church Office. Adults £5, U14s £4. Friday 31st SOLD OUT, only 80 tickets left for Saturday 1st – so act fast!

ST MARY'S BOOK GROUP 11am 6th April (*Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart). All welcome.

SIR DAVID LUMSDEN Organist and Choirmaster of St Mary's 1954-56 and renowned musician and academic died last week at the age of 94. Our prayers are with his family.

MEADOWS FOODBANK please support with especially: jam, UHT milk, tinned potatoes, shaving foam, deodorant, washing powder, meat soup, tinned vegetables, chocolate spread, peanut butter, bags for life. Tues 5.30-7.15, Fri 10-12, Sat 11-1pm NG2 2JD

DONATIONS - from members and friends are a vital part of our income. Please prayerfully consider how you might so be able to help.

Options for making a donation. **Online banking** (NatWest 56-00-61, St Mary's PCC a/c 00834602); cash or cheque in the donations chest; the **card reader**; via the **website**, or **standing order**, using **Gift Aid** if you are a UK tax-payer.