



Parish of St Peter & St Paul, Abington
- the Church in the Park -
Welcome to our April Newsletter 2023

Rector's Pastoral Letter

Last week, I attended The Bishop's Bible Day. This year we focused on Psalms and our guest speaker was Rev. Dr. Isabelle Hamley, who is a well-known Old Testament theologian and the Theological Adviser to the House of Bishops.

She gave an excellent talk about Psalm 23. If you are interested then you can watch it online on Peterborough Diocese Youtube Channel or [Here](#).

She recently wrote an article about the Jesus Prayer, and since our focus for this Lent has been on prayer, I thought it would be appropriate to share her reflections on the Jesus Prayer with you here.

The Jesus Prayer is one of the ancient prayers that has been passed down through generations in Christian communities. You simply say the following phrase over and over again. You can use this prayer anywhere, at any time, whether you are walking or sitting down. The only important thing about this prayer is that you have to say it rather than just thinking it.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Reflection on Jesus prayer by Revd. Dr. Isabelle Hamley

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This short prayer, often called the Jesus Prayer, is something like the spiritual equivalent of an earworm: you pray it a few times, and it starts burrowing into your soul. It is an old prayer, developed and widely used by the Desert Fathers and Mothers. You can see the simplicity and austerity of the desert in its 12 short words. Over time, it has become a central practice in Eastern spirituality. The prayer is said, slowly, rhythmically, again and again. And it just . . . stays with you.

Like all prayers used regularly, it is an invitation to learn to inhabit the words — to let them seep into the soul, prick the conscience, and fashion us into the likeness of Christ. And so, naturally, it is an uncomfortable prayer, which brings us face to face with God, and with ourselves. In a world in which we are often more likely to ask for understanding than for forgiveness, praying regularly “Have mercy on me, a sinner,” is radically countercultural. In a world that often tells us that we have to make our decisions, find our own ways, a world suspicious of power, to start with “Lord” is equally counter-cultural.

There is no equivocation about who Jesus is, no equivocation about the claim that Jesus has. “Lord” is an uncomfortable title today, because of the myriad ways in which human beings have used it — oppressively, unjustly, abusively. Nevertheless, the title remains, in our scriptures and in our prayers. To call Jesus “Lord” is to recognise Jesus’s power and authority; and yet recognising Jesus’s power and authority can happen only when we look at the story of his birth, life, death, and resurrection.

It is a story that subverts all the ways in which human beings misuse power. Jesus’s power is directed towards the well-being of the whole of creation. It is not self-seeking or oppressive, but liberating and transformative. And it is, unmistakably, power. In praying “Lord”, we acknowledge both this power and the disparity between ourselves and the Holy One. There is no equality or parity: it is an encounter with the One who loves perfectly and knows more — and better — than we do.

It is precisely the perfect love and wisdom of Christ, revealed in his life and ministry, which makes the second half of the prayer possible. It is because God is all-powerful and all-loving, both at once and in equal measure, that we can come before God as we are, without fear, knowing that our prayers and requests will be held gently and compassionately.

The prayer continues with a rather bold and yet humble assertion: “have mercy on me!” There is no “please”, no “I just want to ask. . .”, simply a bold petition for mercy. It is because God has already revealed Godself in love in the past, and because God has promised to care for all eternity, that human beings can stand firm on the twin grounds of memory and promise. The boldness of the prayer is not rooted in human merit, but in human belovedness.

“Have mercy” is a cry that resonates throughout our scriptures. It is the cry of those who beg, those who are hurt, those who are rejected in the Gospels. It is the cry of the people of Israel throughout the Old Testament. Often, they do not

even cry out to God, but simply cry out or groan in pain. And, again and again, God sees, God hears, and God has compassion.

Time and again, it is compassion that shapes God's response to a broken world. Whatever our petition is — whether it is for ourselves, or another; whether it is for something that we have done, or something done to us; whether it is rooted in our choices and sin, or in pain for which we bear no responsibility — “have mercy” calls on the compassionate heart of God to respond. There is no need to tell God what to do; no need to offer elaborate solutions; no need to bargain. The prayer is not verbose: what we need is for God's mercy and compassion to transform us and our world.

Having started with God in Christ, and connected God to humanity through mercy, we finish with “me, a sinner”. It could be a negative note. But it is also liberating. The Kingdom of God is not a meritocracy: it is a kingdom ruled by love, into which every sinner is invited. The prayer invites sober self-awareness. Whatever we pray for, we recognise that we — with our choices, and our frailties — contribute to the brokenness of the world, and that this part of us needs transforming.

Most human beings struggle with knowing themselves fully. We often feel guilt and shame for things that are not our responsibility, while failing to notice the things that are. Simply asking for mercy makes a generous space into which to bring the whole of ourselves, and invite the Spirit to work within us in ways that we may not be able to foresee, understand, or put into words.

Ultimately, this is a prayer of trust, that God will know how to answer the cry of our hearts when all we can say is “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Services during the Holy Week

Monday, 3rd of April at 7.30 pm: Holy Communion

Tuesday, 4th of April at 7.30 pm: Holy Communion

Wednesday, 5th of April at 7.30 pm: Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday, 6th of April at 7.30 pm: Holy Communion with Watch

Good Friday, 7th of April at 10 am: Walk of Witness (starting at St. Alban's)

*finishing at the Abington churchyard at around 11.45 am with refreshment.
at 2 pm: Good Friday Liturgy

Easter Eve, 8th of April at 3.30 pm: Easter Egg Hunt and Crafts
at 5.00 pm: Holy Saturday Reflection and Prayer

Easter Sunday, 9th of April at 10 am: Easter Liturgy
with Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Sharing the Special Experiences of the Holy Week

Did you know that we have made significant changes to our services during the Holy Week?

Our Good Friday Liturgy now focuses on the dramatic reading of the Passion of Christ accompanied by wonderful contributions by Tim, the choir and other musicians.

Our Holy Saturday Service has not been very well attended in Abington in previous years. The service is going to be very different from how it used to be. It will start at 5 pm while it will be still bright. It will be much shorter and simpler, taking less than an hour and focusing on praying, praising and reflecting on the messages of the cross and the empty tomb. There will be contributions from various musicians. Those who came to this service 4 years ago, found it very moving and powerful.

Our Maundy Thursday Service will focus on the stripping of the altar.

There will be holy communion from Monday to Wednesday.

We hope that you can share the special experiences of the Holy Week with us.

This month's preachers

2nd April, Palm Sunday: Passion Gospel

6th April, Maundy Thursday: Revd. Jun

9th April, Easter Sunday: Tracy Pegram

16th April, Easter 2: Liz Kelly

23rd April, Easter 3: Prester Coleman

30th April, Easter 4: Alison Barnes

Readers and Intercessors for this month

2nd April, Palm Sunday: Readers: Passion Gospel

Intercessor: Hilary Hodge

6th April, Maundy Thursday: Readers: Jenny Parkin & Bob Purser

Intercessor: Liz Kelly

7th April, Good Friday: Readers: Douglas Rutherford & Tony Sawford

Intercessor: Rhiannon George

8th April, Easter Saturday: Readers: Alan Sutton & Dianne Ward

Intercessor: Pam Norman

9th April, Easter Sunday: Readers: Owen Warr & Chris Waters

Intercessor: Jenny Parkin

16th April, Easter 2: Readers: Alison Barnes & Jan Abel

Intercessor: Bob Purser

23rd April, Easter 3: Readers: Fiona Crook & Matthew George

Intercessor: Alan Sutton

30th April, Easter 4: Readers: Rhiannon George & Prester Coleman

Intercessor: Alison Barnes

Palm Sunday Service: Sunday, the 2nd of April

Please note that we will gather in front of the main door of the museum in the park at 10 am and **NOT at the church!** We will have a procession from there to the church with instruments and acclamations of our faith. There will be Palm Crosses and newly updated sheet for the procession.

Prayer Ministry in the Lady Chapel during Communion

From this coming Sunday onwards, there will be space in the lady chapel for you to pray during communion. There will be Prayer Ministers who will be happy to pray together with you and/or for you if you wish. But you would be equally welcome to just light the candle and sit quietly there if that is what you would prefer.

You would be welcome to come to the lady chapel either before or after receiving communion. For example, if you are to receive communion later then it might be better idea for you to come to the lady chapel to pray first and then go to the high altar to receive communion. But if you are to receive communion earlier then you can go to the lady chapel after receiving communion.

It is our hope that this prayerful space can be held while holy communion is taking place.

Coronation Parish Prayer Walk: Mon the 8th May from 10.30 am to 11.30 am

We would like to welcome you all to a parish prayer walk on Coronation Bank Holiday Monday, 8 May from 10.30 am. We will walk around the parish with prayer stones that we will paint to celebrate the coronation. Let's bless our parish and have a fresh air as we walk together around the parish. We will finish at the churchyard and have picnic there.

If you are interested then please speak to either Cathy or Melissa.

Church Fete: Saturday the 1st of July from 2-4 pm.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do speak with Melissa, the chair of Community and Outreach Committee

Tracy's Ordination

Tracy is due to be ordained Priest on Sunday 25th June, 11am at Peterborough Cathedral. It would be helpful to have an estimate of how many people from the parish might attend the service, and to organise transport to and from Peterborough for those who need it.

If you would like to attend the service please add your name and contact details to the sheet at the back of the church or contact a member of the team to add you if you are unable to come into the church yourself.

Please remember Tracy in your prayers as her ordination approaches.

There will be still Parish Eucharist at Abington on the same day.

Patronal Festival: Sunday the 2nd of July at 10 am

This year we will celebrate our Patronal Festival one week later due to Tracy's ordination. We are delighted to share the news that our friends from Park Avenue Methodist will worship together with us. This will be Tracy's first Sunday as a presiding priest at the Eucharist.

Children and Youth Missioner's Update

Little Fishes, the Church Preschool Group for Babies and Young Children, continues to grow! We meet on Monday mornings at the Parish Rooms at 10 am and recently we welcomed 20 children with their parents, grandparents and carers! The sessions are always very happy occasions and it is a wonderful way to support families. We have regular volunteers who help serve the refreshments (thank you Sandy, Lizzie, Jim, Malcolm & Jill and Liz C) but **I am now looking to supplement the team!** It would be really good if we could have a few more volunteers to support the group every three weeks. If this is something you might be interested in doing, I would love to hear from you! All those who come along are very appreciative of the group and it would be great if a few more people from the church could help me with this outreach opportunity.

We are looking forward to the **Easter Eve Activity Afternoon and Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday 8th April** in church from 3.30 pm to 4.30 pm. We will be sharing the story of Good Friday and Easter Day, and there will be crafts for the children to enjoy. We also hope there will be a special guest! So do encourage families to come along! To help with the planning I would be grateful if you could let me know if you wish to join us, but families are welcome to just turn up on the afternoon. For information the event that we had planned for Maundy Thursday has been postponed for this year.

It was lovely to welcome the **Rainbows, Brownies and Guides** to our Mothering Sunday service in March. Thank you again to the Guides for making the lovely posies and to all the children and young people who participated in the service. It was encouraging that the number of people attending the service was up by about 22 on last year.

Cathy Tinsley Tel. **07516 979223** or children@abingtonchurch.org.uk

St Peter and St Paul Abington "the church in the park" invites you to join their...

Children's craft afternoon and Easter egg hunt

 **Saturday 8 April 2023**
3.30pm to 4.30pm
in church 

 Come and learn what Easter is really all about

 Open to everyone and free to enjoy

 Craft activities

For more information, or to contact us, please see details on our website

 www.abingtonchurch.org.uk

We look forward to welcoming you.

Sharing of Talents Afternoon

On Sunday 18th June we are hoping to organise an afternoon of 'Sharing of Talents' in church. Many of our church family are very talented, for example some enjoy singing, playing an instrument, reciting poetry etc. and we thought it would be lovely to provide an opportunity for sharing these gifts with others. If this is something that you would like to take part in, please would you see Cathy Tinsley (or contact me on cathytinsley18@gmail.com) by 28th April 2023 so that a decision can be made whether this event takes place. Thank you very much.

Northampton Historic Churches Trust

Ride and Stride in our County raises money for the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust, as well as your local church, and the Trust gives out money in grants to help maintain our wonderful church buildings. The Trust Secretary has been Ruth Fitch who has also been involved with Ride and Stride as an Area Organiser; she has recently retired and we are looking for someone to take on this voluntary role.

The main tasks of Secretary to the Trust are organising two meetings per year (always in April and November), taking and distributing minutes and administration for the Trustees. Internet access is essential, but it really isn't an onerous job!

We were hoping that you, or someone you might know of, would be interested in this role – do ask them to contact us to discuss it.

Our Treasurer, Eddie Byland, would be really pleased to give you more information - Tel 01536 790707

Thank you so much,

Liz Doherty 07713396130 and Val Hartley

Ride and Stride County Organisers

[Draft Minutes from the last PCC Meeting](#)

Please click the title above to access the link.

Zoom Compline

This is a weekly service at 7.00pm on Tuesdays. In case you don't know, Compline is a quiet, reflective service at the end of the day and includes an open prayer time, so we shall be able to continue to support one another as we have become used to over the last two years. The joining details are: Meeting I.D. 815 8020 8528. Passcode 409450 Please talk to Liz Kelly if you want to know more about this and to receive a weekly invitation by email, which enables one-click joining. Her contact details are: lizmk@outlook.com or telephone on 07745 604591.

News from the Pastoral Team

The Pastoral Team continues to support parishioners through regular telephone calls, prayer, and pastoral visits. Home Communion is available too. If you, or anyone you know, would like someone from the pastoral team to get in touch, please contact Liz Kelly, Lay Pastoral Minister and Anna Chaplain. Her contact details are lizmk@outlook.com and telephone 01604 636947 or 07745 604591. We offer a listening ear, someone to pray with, bereavement support, or a friendly visit. Thank you all for your prayers for the Pastoral Team, and for the staff and residents of Abington Park View and St Christopher's Care Homes.

News from Abington Park View Care Home

Liz, accompanied by Jackie, took in the Reserved Sacrament for a service of Holy Communion on 1st March. We thought about the meaning of Lent and heard the story of Jesus being tempted by the devil in the wilderness. This reminded us of the importance of reading the Bible to help us resist our temptations by listening to God's word. Six residents, and one family member, received communion at the service, five received in the Lounge, and two in their rooms. Three members of staff also took communion and others received a blessing.

On 15th March, Liz, Jackie and Pat, led a Songs of Praise Service dedicated to St Patrick. We read the story of how he was captured as a boy, was a slave in Ireland, and after escaping back to England he became a priest, and then felt called by God to go back to Ireland to preach to the people there. He is famous for using a shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity.



We sang the wonderful hymn, 'I cannot tell' to the tune of 'The Londonderry Air' and then ended by listening to Irish folk music, which had everyone tapping their feet!

Mothers Union

The next Mothers' Union Forum is on Saturday 15th April at 10 am at St Mary's Church, Wollaston (NN29 7RJ). If any MU member would like to attend, please see Sue Harrison or Cathy Tinsley for more information.

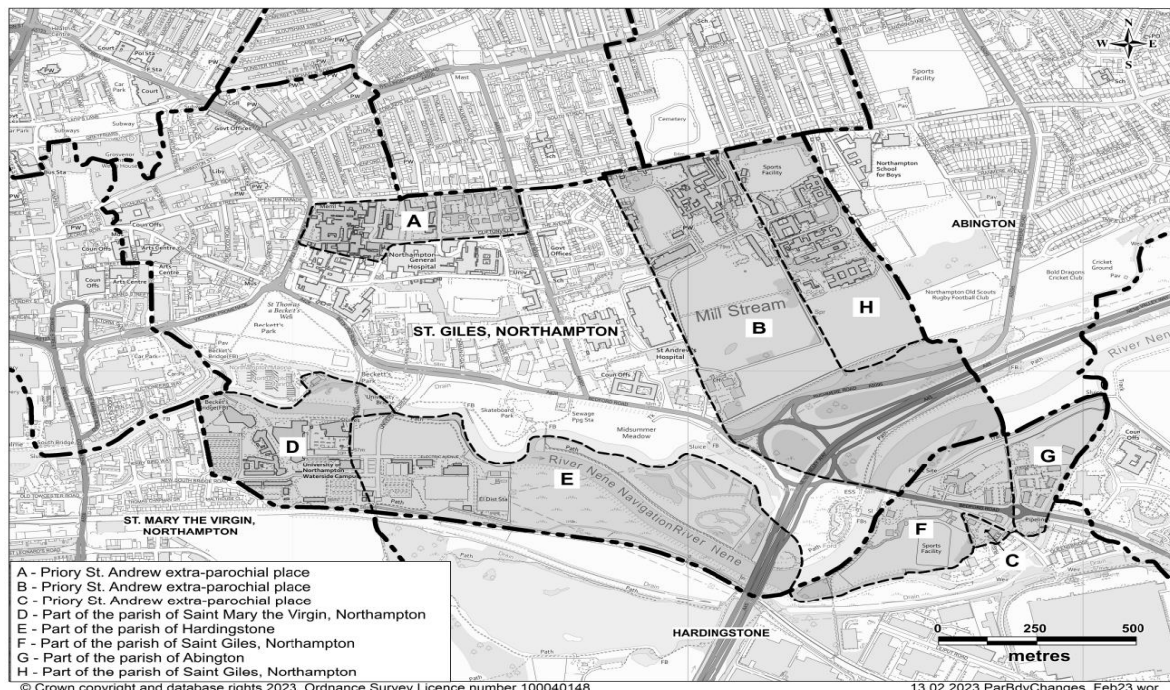
Parish Boundaries Change Notice

A notice regarding the change of parish boundaries is displayed on the notice board. If you look at the map below, there is area marked as G. Historically, that was there the River Nene was which was why the parish boundaries were drawn there. Now the river has been moved and the A45 is running there instead. So the NAMPC(Northampton Archdeaconery Mission and Pastoral Committee) proposes that the area marked as G is transferred to the neighbouring Hardingstone Benefice from Abington. If you have any further questions then please do speak to Jun.

The following is an announcement that is required to be made public prior to the change is being made.

“Notice giving the objects of proposed pastoral reorganisation affecting this parish is displayed near the main door and on the Church of England website. The Notice includes the last date by which representations regarding the proposed reorganisation may be made to the Church Commissioners.”

Proposed Parish Boundary Changes in Northampton
Diocese of Peterborough



Abington Antiques,
Vintage & Collectors Fair

Saturday 1st April 2023

10am — 3pm

**Abington Church Rooms,
Park Avenue North,**

Books, Coins, Stamps,

Old Bottles, Jewellery, Collectables, etc

Enquiries: 01604 622497

**How to get your contribution or event into the next Abington
Newsletter**

Please send content to Matthew George on abingtonbulletin@outlook.com by the 21st of the month for guaranteed inclusion in the next edition. If you send it after the 21st, it may not be included. If you wish to have a printed version delivered to you, please contact Bob Purser 785836. There will also be a small number of copies in church for visitors.

www.abingtonchurch.org.uk

If you no longer wish to receive the Newsletter from Abington Church, please email
bob.purser@abingtonchurch.org.uk