

ST ANDREW'S ST BARTHOLOMEW'S

Vicar's Blog

This week we start our journey through Lent. We prepare our hearts and minds to fathom, once again, the relentless love of the Father in Jesus for humanity on Easter Weekend. Ash Wednesday coincided with another feast day, the feast of St Valentine. It was interesting to learn that Valentine was a single, celibate priest, living all-out for Jesus, and who was martyred in 269 A.D. for sharing the gospel with the Roman Emperor Claudius. Valentine was not just 'converted', but 'discipled', and living all-out for Jesus. That's what we're going to be thinking about this weekend as we continue our 'Church of Tomorrow' series – how can we be a disciple-making community, and be faithful to the great commission at the end of Matthew 28?

Thank you to all of you who filled out the 'discipleship survey'. 96% of you agreed with the question that you would like to grow in your discipleship which is amazing. To the remaining 4%, thank you for your honesty. I'm concluding that you are already so like Jesus that there is no room for growth, in which case, please can I meet you?!; or for whatever reason, it's not for you right now. Either way, we love you and want everyone to belong to our wonderful church family.

I've quoted Neil Hudson before, the author of 'Imagine Church', who challenges us with his statement, 'The ultimate test of fruitfulness and authenticity of any church, irrespective of its style or tradition, is the quality of disciples it makes.' Do you believe that this is true? Similarly, C.S. Lewis writes, 'The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men to Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose'.

This is one of the reasons we're also journeying, this year, through a series called 'Healthy habits that keep God at the centre of everything'. Whatever we do as a church, let's keep the main thing the main thing! Let's be focussed on becoming 'little Christs', disciples who become disciple-makers. The crisis in the church today is nothing less than a crisis of discipleship, the lack of maturing of her members. Let's take steps this Lent to take Jesus' commission over us seriously, as we seek to 'become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ' (Eph4:13).

Sunday 18th Feb

Church of Tomorrow – Eph 4

9am Communion service at St A's

10.30am Informal Worship with Children's Groups – Youth in service

6pm Encounter – Evening of worship & prayer at St A's

Sunday 25th Feb

Church of Tomorrow – Acts 9

9am Communion service at St A's

10.30am Informal Worship with Children's and Youth Groups

3:30pm Holy Communion at St B's

6pm Prayers of love and faith presentation at St A's

Monday 19th Feb

7pm STA Youth

Tuesday 20th Feb

7:30pm Men's Curry Night

Wednesday 21st Feb

11:30am BLT (Babies, Lunch and Toddlers)

7:30pm Hearing God's Voice Through Art Course

Thursday 22nd Feb

10am Thursday Knitters

10am Holy Communion at St A's

10:30am Ladies Connect Group

7:15pm Alpha

7:30pm Zoom Prayer Meeting

Friday 23rd Feb

9:30am Friday Minis

Churchsuite

ChurchSuite serves as our secure platform for staying connected and accessing the latest information about events at St. Andrew's, including our weekly newsletter. You can conveniently sign up for special events, activities, and teams through the website or app, available for download at <https://churchsuite.com/apps/>.

Pastoral Care

As part of our Christian community, we provide mutual support for one another. Much of this happens informally with friends within the church and through the connect groups. However, sometimes people will have need for more personal support and encouragement either as a 'one-off chat' or on a more ongoing basis. We have a pastoral care team who can provide this type of care. Please contact Nigel Roe (Team Leader) on 07780 994827 or Rosi White on 07426 357967.

Notices

Prayers of love and faith conversation Sunday 25th Feb 6-7.15pm. The Church of England has introduced prayers for same-sex couples. Please come and hear the leadership's response moving forwards.

Envisioning Evening Our annual envisioning evening is taking place on Sunday 17th March at 6pm. Do join us as we hear from the different ministries the church engages in and take time to pray.

Marriage Course John & Alice will be running an online marriage course starting 11th April. Whether you've been married for six months or 40 years, whether you're in a good place or struggling, The Marriage Course offers practical support over seven sessions to strengthen your relationship. To sign up or for more information, go to <https://stastb.churchsuite.com/events/6cfjhhoa>

World Day of Prayer Crafted by Christian women from the Palestine committee two years ago, the World Day of Prayer service emphasises the connection to Jesus' birthplace despite the ongoing conflict. This year's theme, "bear with one another in love", aligns with the women's commitment to witness Christ's love. Supported by Churches Together, the local service is on Friday, March 1st, at St John's Church Churchdown, starting at 7.30 pm (refreshments from 7 pm). All are welcome.

Abaana New Life Choir We are excited to announce that on Saturday 4th May 2024, the Abaana New Life Choir will be coming to perform for us, here at St. Andrew's. It's going to be an amazing night for all the family as this incredible group of Ugandan children perform a range of worship and traditional African music and dances, while sharing about what God is doing in Uganda. For more information about who Abaana are and what they do in Uganda, please visit www.abaana.org. You will also find lots more information about the choir on their website. We are also looking for 10 households from church who would be able to host 2 choir members and a chaperone each on the night of the concert. If you feel that this is something you might be able to do or if you want some more information please speak to Victoria Churton or send her an email (toribell045@gmail.com).

3 Part Plan to Climate Safety In a divided, damaged and troubled world, a positive moment of hope. On Wed. 28th Feb at 7pm in St Andrew's Church, there will be a talk and discussion by congregation member Jonathan Whittaker (21 years environmental campaigning) entitled: '3 Part Plan to Climate Safety'.

Women's Breakfast The next women's breakfast will be on Sat 9th March, 9-10:30am. Our guest speaker will be Libby Hayes. You can sign up here <https://stastb.churchsuite.com/events/maskok6i>

New Wine Bursary The church has received a small bursary for New Wine. If you are eager to attend but find yourself facing financial constraints, please get in touch with the office.

Eco Tip

What are you doing for Lent? Why not try going greener? Check out A Rocha's top tips <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/go-green-er-for-lent/>

Events

Our website calendar is a good place to find out what's happening throughout the year. Visit <https://www.stastb.church/calendar>

1st March – World Day of Prayer

9th March – Women's Breakfast

17th March – Envisioning Evening 6pm

24th March – Newcomers' Tea 12noon

11th April – Marriage Course Starts

4th May – Abaana New Life Choir at St Andrew's

St Andrew's Church Centre, Station Road, Churchdown, Gloucester
GL3 2JT

www.stastb.church 01452 712154

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Closed Tuesday 9.30am - 11.30am

Contact information

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Forward any notices to Adam.



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