



The Lion

A Monthly News Sheet for St. Mark's Church, Basford

www.stmarksbasford.co.uk

June 2017



Elijah Ordinary Man Extraordinary Service

In January, I started an online course in Carmelite Spirituality. The Carmelites are a religious order within the Catholic Church, with an emphasis on contemplation and prayer, balanced with engagement with the world. This course is something that I have been interested in for most of my Christian life, and Carmelite saints, such as St Thérèse of Lisieux or St Teresa of Avila, have always influenced me through their teaching which has a strong emphasis on God's love and living a simple Christian life.

This course has been interesting and challenging, something that I have wanted to do for a few years but have not had the time to do it. It has taken me into new or different areas of the Church's teaching and theology.

One of the people that I studied is the Prophet Elijah. His story is found in 1 Kings 17ff. He lived on Mount Carmel in Israel, and the Carmelites take their name from Carmel, and with the sense that they are continuing the tradition of prophecy and contemplation that Elijah started. There is a feast day for the Prophet Elijah, July 20th.



Elijah had his ministry during the reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, who are the evillest of the rulers of Israel. They killed the Lord's prophets and persecuted Elijah, threatening to kill him as well, and Elijah engaged with them. Elijah is an example to us that you cannot separate religion and politics, but that his faith meant being actively engaged in the political systems of his day, and this was costly for him in many ways.

Elijah was always very human, and the Bible describes one point, when he has been threatened by Queen Jezebel, where he runs away into the desert and sits under a solitary broom tree and just wants to die. He feels like a failure, he feels that the odds are stacked up too much against him, he can't win and he is at his lowest. Elijah is not a mighty powerful prophet who always succeeds in everything that he does, but he is human just like you or me, and sometimes it feels just too much.

God comes to Elijah in his depression, and walks with him in the wilderness. Elijah is fed by ravens and angels in the wilderness and he has a very powerful experience of God, who he finds not in the earthquake, wind or fire, but after the sound of sheer silence. This leads him in his vocation, and God directs him to anoint a new king for Israel, and a successor for himself. I wonder if our experience is like Elijah's, in that we sometimes keep on looking for God, or for our experience of God in the wrong places. We must question the nature of our relationship with God, is it more in the doing and busyness of Church life, when God wants to meet us in the stillness and silence when the business has settled.

so much through sitting in God's presence in silence, and listening to him. This is the thought in the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind':

*Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb,
let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake,
wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.*

It was Elijah who stood with Moses next to Jesus in the Transfiguration, one of the most mysterious events of Jesus' life. The disciples were certainly confused and Peter suggests making tents for all three of them. However, amid this confusion God speaks,

*"This is my Son, the Beloved;
with him I am well pleased; listen to him"*

The Old Testament, the prophets and the saints are all directing us towards Jesus who was born into our messy world. The prophet Elijah spoke to the situation that he

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was born into, he had a very powerful relationship with God, which also recognised his fragility as a human being. James said that Elijah was a human like us, I find that so reassuring when I read about him. James uses him as an example of someone who is human like us and who can pray in wonderful way. Elijah prayed for a drought to stop, and for a widow's son to be raised to life again.

I suppose that I have learnt from the Prophet Elijah that God calls us all in different ways, and he calls us because he loves us, and loves this world.

Ed Smith

(Ed is a Reader in the Church and works as a person-centred counsellor and as a care-worker in a nursing home.)

SANCTUS

Thank you for your ongoing support of the SANCTUS Project. There were a good number of Christian refugees from SANCTUS at the cathedral on 20th May for Bishop Michael's launch of his direction of travel for the Diocese. Month by month we continue to collect (i) size '6' nappies, (ii) sanitary towels and The toiletries for both men and women.

Church Queen's Open House

Thursday, 1st June, you're invited to our Queen's Open House (11.00am and 4.00pm) and (6.00pm and 9.00pm) at Nick and Julie's, 10 Winchester Drive in the Westlands. See you there!

2017 Confirmation Group

If you have not been Confirmed and would like to know what is involved, why not have a word with Pat Dunn? In July Pat will be starting a light and accessible course to prepare people for Confirmation which is already booked in Bishop Geoff's diary for Sunday, 3rd September.

Men's Mass & Fellowship

The next scheduled mass and fellowship (pint and pub grub) for the men of Newcastle and Stoke North Deaneries will take place at 7.30pm at St. Michael's, Cross Heath.

Stratford - Day Trip

St. Margaret's is arranging a coach for day trip to Stratford on Saturday, 17th June. Seats cost £15.00 each and the coach will leave here at 9.00am returning by about 7.00pm. There is a sign-up sheet in church.

Queen Crowning and Garden Party

This year's Queen Crowning and Garden Party will take place on Saturday, 8th July. Our special guest will be Fr Graham Fowell who will crown Alice and formally open the Garden Party. As ever, lots of help will be needed to make the day a success so please offer what you can. If you can lend us a gazebo to cover a stall in the garden that would be very much appreciated.

Deanery Synod

Our newly elected Deanery Synod Reps should note the date and time of the next meeting which will be at St. Margaret's – Betley at 7.30m on Thursday, 29th June. As usual, this synod will be open to non-synod members so that they can hear the main speaker who will be The Revd David Primrose who will address the subject of 'Dementia friendly Churches'.

Corpus Christi

This Feast (15th June) celebrates the institution of the Holy Communion and will be celebrated with some solemnity and pageantry at Wolstanton. Porthill and Bradwell will be joining in proceedings – why not join in and experience something new?

Some Diary Dates for June

1 st	Thursday		(11.00am–4.00pm & 6.00pm-9.00pm) Church Queen's Open House
3 rd	Saturday	3.00pm	Wedding
5 th	Monday	7.30pm	PCC Meeting
6 th	Tuesday	7.30pm	Living Faith Course – Pt 4 (Lady Chapel)
7 th	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
10 th	Saturday	6.30pm	Church Queen's Night at the Races
12 th	Monday	7.30pm	Men's Mass at Cross Heath
13 th	Tuesday	7.30pm	Living Faith Course – Pt 5 (Lady Chapel)
14 th	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club Regent Theatre – Boy in the Striped Pyjamas
15 th	Thursday	7.00pm	Corpus Christi Mass at St. Margaret's
17 th	Saturday	9.00am	Day Trip to Stratford
20 th	Tuesday	7.30pm	Living Faith Course – Pt 6 (Lady Chapel)
21 st	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
22 nd	Thursday	7.00pm	Clergy Chapter at St. Giles' Vicarage
24 th	Saturday	2.00pm	Messy Church
27 th	Tuesday	7.30pm	Living Faith Course - Pt 7 (Lady Chapel)
28 th	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
29 th	Thursday	7.30pm	Deanery Synod – St. Margaret's - Betley

Early July...

2 nd	Sunday	11.00am	Patrick's Ordination at Lichfield
		2.00pm	Celebration Lunch (Church Hall)
4 th	Tuesday	7.30pm	Living Faith Course - Pt 8 (Lady Chapel)
8 th	Saturday	1.00pm	Garden Party Queen Crowning

Worship Services during June

3 rd	Saturday	3.00pm	Wedding
4 th	PENTECOST	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Family Worship with HC
		4.30pm	Evensong
7 th	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
11 th	TRINITY SUNDAY	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
		4.30pm	Evensong
14 th	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
15 th	Corpus Christi	7.00pm	Mass at St. Margaret's
18 th	FIRST AFTER TRINITY	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Family Worship with Baptism
		4.30pm	Evensong
21 st	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
25 th	SECOND AFTER TRINITY	9.30am	Holy Communion
		9.30am	Holy Communion
		4.30pm	Evensong
28 th	Irenaeus	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)