

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

25 May 2025

6th Sunday of Easter

Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.

For information about us please visit: www.northburychurches.org.uk



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6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 16.9-15 Psalm 67 Revelation 21.10,22-22.5 John 14.23-29

So how do you define greatness? Check a dictionary and you will likely find something along the lines of 'well above average'. And when it comes to people, there is one man in history who stands out above the rest – or so his name would suggest. A man who was indeed well above average when it came to military power, conquering lands from Western Europe and North Africa, across the Middle East and into Asia as far as India, to rule over 2 million square miles of our world. A man who perhaps unsurprisingly because of this became known by the title great - Alexander the Great. Rightly so we could say, for there was indeed no one greater than him in the ancient world that was very much in his control.

But great is certainly a word that can be used to describe the main character in the passage from the Book of Acts set for the Sixth Sunday of Easter. The person who could be seen as being very much the main character in the whole of this book written to describe the life of the early church, such were his efforts some several hundred years after the time of Alexander the Great to spread the Good News of Jesus to the whole of the known world of his day and everyone in it. This great man is, of course, St Paul.

And yet, whilst Paul is indeed one of the greatest evangelists to spread the good news of Jesus in our world, this is in many ways greatness that falls within the grasp of *anyone* who professes to be a follower of God. And this is revealed very much in these words from the Book of Acts offered in the season of Easter, describing yet more of Paul's efforts as an evangelist at the very start of the life of the Christian church.

As it turns out the first thing that reveals this is something that connects Paul to Alexander the Great. For Alexander was born in Pella, in the land of Macedon, a country that was a part of the Ancient Greek world, and one that Alexander went on to rule. Alexander was then exactly as Paul saw in his vision from God, a man of Macedonia.

But either way, thanks to this vision, the first great thing that Paul does in his mission here and elsewhere in the Book of Acts, is to recognise the call of God and allow God to lead him where he needs to go. This is a trait that all those who follow God can embrace. Naturally few, if any, of us can afford to up sticks and head off to another part of the world as Paul did in response to God. And of course, few will receive visions from God at night in our

dreams. But in our world what we do have are screens and newspapers that constantly show us places where people are in need. Like Paul we can respond to this - not least by offering such situations to God in prayer.

The power of intercession, naming those requiring peace and love before God, is in the grasp of all those who grasp their hands together in prayer. But more than this, like Paul, any can be led to help people and offer the love of God in other ways. I know that such a task is by no means beyond us, not least as there are ways that we are probably doing this already. Such ways as offering donations to the Foodbank or offering time or money to charities that help those at home or abroad.

And through visiting friends or neighbours who require help and through caring for one another, we also perform this great task. We should not underestimate the importance of this, for it can mean the whole world to someone who is struggling, alone or afraid. And so, we can do great things for others if like Paul we see or hear of troubles in the world and respond with love and prayer.

Another thing that we see God do for Paul in Macedonia, is to lead him to those things and people and places where God is already at work. Paul when he reaches Philippi heads to a place of prayer by the river gate and meets people who are already open to God, namely Lydia and her household.

That Paul is doing the work of God here, amongst those who God has already inspired, is clear from the truth that thanks to his ministry with them the Lord opens Lydia's heart. She is eager to lap up what Paul offers as she and all who live with her are baptised. This openness to accept any into the fold as followers of God is also a simple and yet crucial task that any can join in with. There is no question from Paul that Lydia shouldn't be part of the story that God has laid the foundations for in that place. Such is a wonderful and loving, but very simple way, that any can again match this great apostle.

What this also reveals is that, for Paul, God's mission was not one that he took on alone. This is another reason why such things are within everyone's grasp - because help is there for everyone who is a follower of God, help from different sources. Of course, in Lydia Paul has an ally in the spreading of the Good News of Christ. But before we even move on to her, the presence of the term "we" in the passage from Acts shows that Paul was not responding to the call of God to help the needy in Macedonia alone. "We set sail from Troas", "we remained in this city for some days", "we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there", for example.

This suggests the author, supposed to be Luke, was probably with Paul on his travels. Either way, certainly others were with Paul at times. Others such as Barnabus, or Silas, or John called Mark, or Timothy, alongside many more as this Book of Acts and the letters of Paul make clear. And yes, some of these relationships soured, but all of them show that people were there alongside Paul offering their gifts to God. In the case of Lydia, this shows that those who are perhaps new to the faith can be a part of God's mission in the world as well. Which yet again shows that this includes those who people may not see as likely to be so.

Lydia as a Gentile woman would not have been the first choice that many would have suggested for the leader of a church in a new part of God's kingdom, and yet here she and the other women were to do exactly that. A lesson that once again reveals that part of being great in the kingdom of God is accepting whatever help God offers and accepting the truth that all can be part of God's mission for the world.

But the main thing that means that anyone can do great things for God, is that God will be there to help. As Christ explains in one of the Gospel passages from St John set for this Sunday of, God has sent an Advocate, the Holy Spirit. As Paul showed with Lydia and her household, fired with this Spirit, others can be fired up with the same desire to see people come to know God, and to spread the love of God in the world. This is the action of the Holy Spirit as revealed at the great feast of Pentecost, to be celebrated in a few weeks, when this exact thing happens for the disciples.

And so, Alexander was indeed the Great, a great man from Macedonia, who conquered the ancient world. But for those who follow God and want to spread the Good News in the world, a true great is St Paul. Paul sent by God to Alexander's home of Macedonia to help in a time of need. Help offered with the support of friends and colleagues, to join in with what God was doing in that place, and to fire people up to join in that work of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And yes, any can be that great. Be great through listening to God, being guided by God and joining with others - those known to us, and those we may come to know and even in places, and people, who are most unexpected. But either way, like Paul all can perform the great task that is helping those who are desperate in our world, and showing the great love of God, a great love that truly conquers all. Amen.

Andy Milller

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 25 MAY

SUNDAY 25 May 6th Sunday of Easter

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Culford
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
12 noon	Holy Communion (BCP)	Flempton

Monday 26 May Rogation Day; Augustine, archbishop, 605; John Calvin, reformer, 1564; Philip Neri, founder of the Oratorians, spiritual guide, 1595

Tuesday 27 May Rogation Day

6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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Wednesday 28 May Rogation Day; Lanfranc, monk, archbishop, scholar, 1089

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
5.00pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds

Thursday 29 May **ASCENSION DAY**

9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
7.00pm	Eucharist (CW)	West Stow

Friday 30 May Josephine Butler, social reformer, 1906; Joan of Arc, visionary, 1431; Apolo Kivebulaya, priest, evangelist

5.15pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	Eucharist	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Saturday 31 May **VISIT OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY TO ELIZABETH**

9.30am	Solemn Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
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SUNDAY 1 June 7th Sunday of Easter ~ after Ascension Day

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	West Stow
10.00am	All Age Worship	Fornham All Saints
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
3.00pm	Wonder Club	Lackford

ALL SAINTS CHURCH
PARK ROAD
IP33 3QW

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

INFORMAL BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

BRING YOUR OWN PACKED LUNCH



29th May
26th June
24th July

12:00 - 13:00

Tea & Coffee provided





The bell ropes dance up and down as the church's bells, now a ring of eight, are rung at their (re)dedication by Bishop Graeme at Fornham St Martin on Sunday 18th May.

Fornham St Martin Church

*Book Sale,
Coffee & Cakes*

Saturday 31st May

10:00am - 3:00pm

Over 2000 books and lots of
cakes, scones and pastries.

All Welcome



CAPTION COMPETITION



What is going on here? Do you think we should be told? A choice of fairtrade wine or chocolate awaits the person who can contribute the winning caption for this photograph featuring Ali Miller, Rod Cooledge and Scarlett Blacker.

Please send your entries by
Monday 26th May
to the Viral Bulletin
at

adrian.mann@btinternet.com

Next steps to a Climate and Nature Bill

Andy Atkins, CEO of A Rocha UK, writes:

Scientists, economists, business leaders, church leaders and others, who read the late Pope Francis's *Laudato Si* (Praise be for our common home), along with millions of ordinary people, realise this: our best chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change and a total wipe out of nature is to deal with these crises together. As importantly, it must be done in ways *that are fair* to the poorest and most vulnerable in all countries – and to avoid a backlash against planet-saving measures.

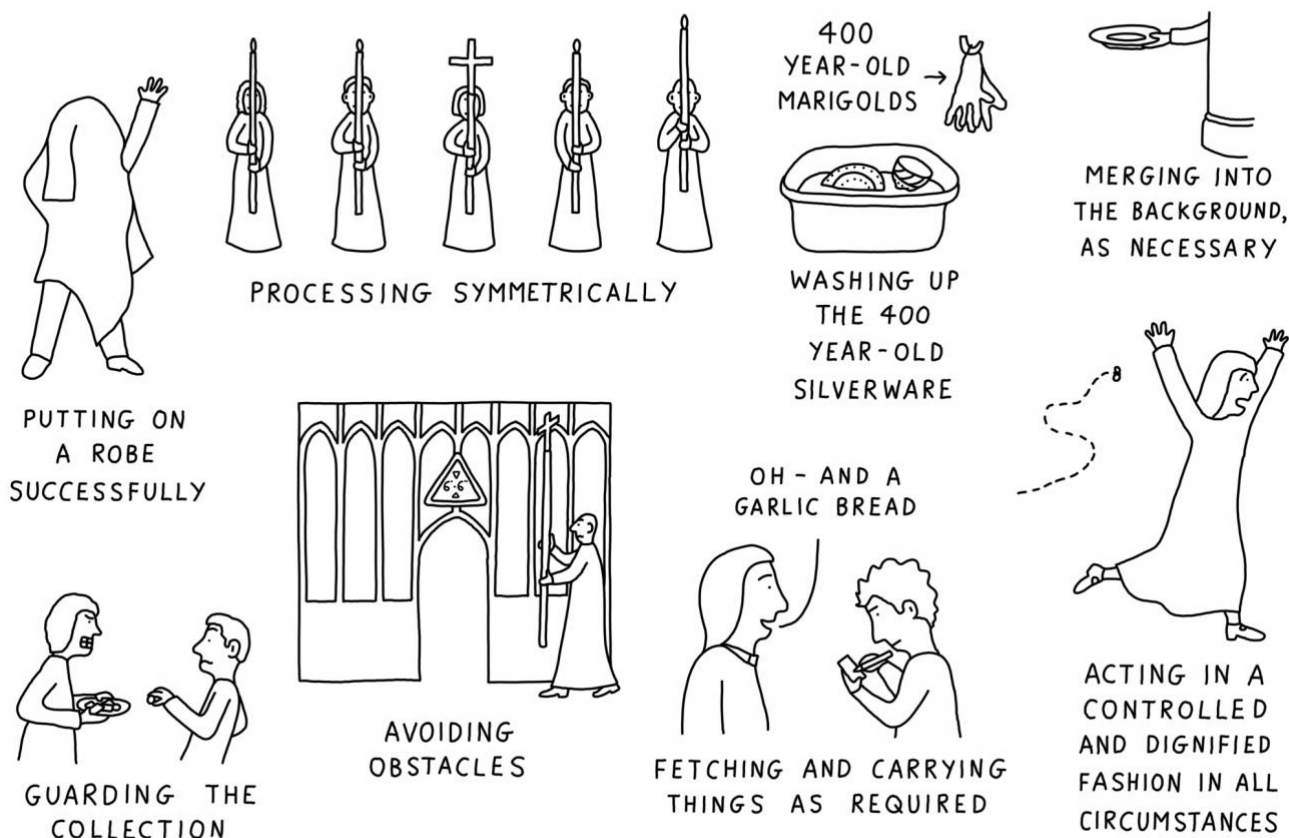
That is where the Climate and Nature (CAN) bill comes in (previously called the Climate and Ecology Bill). First conceived by the Zero Hour campaign six years ago, with the early backing of A Rocha UK, there are now more than 180 organisations, as well as faith leaders, scientists and politicians, supporting the bill. After the government failed to back the bill at its second reading in January, but made some relevant promises, the campaign is stepping up.

The next step is for citizens of all constituents in the UK to write to Prime Minister Keir Starmer, calling on him and the government to face the stark reality on climate and biodiversity loss, and get behind the practical and fair actions to address the twin crises.

You can swiftly sign (and amend if you wish) an email to the Prime Minister at [Zero Hour – Join the campaign for the Climate and Nature Bill](#). As the UK heads for what looks like another unusually hot and dry summer, now is the time to remind our government of the urgency of joined up action for climate and nature.

SERVERS

THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES



Wonder Club

**Story
Wondering
Craft
Prayer
Cake**



***St Lawrence
Lackford***

**1st June
at 3pm**



Coffee morning with



Churches Count on Nature

**Are you curious about what is growing
and living in our churchyards?**

Well, let's find out together!



7th June

Fornham All Saints

10:00am

**Wear stout outdoor shoes and suitable
clothing such as long sleeves/trousers to
avoid nettles and prickles**

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

Praying Together ~ June 2025

For the wider community and church

- 1 S** For all badly affected by cost of living difficulties
- 2 M** Food Banks - organisers and users
- 3 T** Marham Park & Marham House Care Home
- 4 W** The West Suffolk Crematorium
- 5 T** Housing & businesses in Mildenhall Road area
- 6 F** Industrial and retail estates in the north east of the town
- 7 S** Doctors' & dentists' surgeries and health centres

- 8 S** Bury Town Pastors
- 9 M** Vineyard Church; Kingsgate Church
- 10 T** For industrial chaplains
- 11 W** West Suffolk College and its chaplaincy team
- 12 T** All who live in Culford
- 13 F** St Mary's Church, Culford
- 14 S** *Growing in God* worship, work & witness at Culford

- 15 S** Culford School
- 16 M** Culford Village Hall
- 17 T** Cedar Lodge Residential Home
- 18 W** Rough sleepers & homeless people
- 19 T** Trinity Methodist church; Bury Drop In for homeless people
- 20 F** North Court Care Home
- 21 S** Manson House Residential Home

- 22 S** St Andrew's Street housing area
- 23 M** Northgate Street Business Park and other local businesses
- 24 T** The Abbey Gardens - those who visit and those who work there
- 25 W** Garland Street Baptist Church
- 26 T** St Nicholas Hospice and its chaplaincy team
- 27 F** West Suffolk Hospital and its chaplaincy team
- 28 S** For those who are unemployed or made redundant

- 29 S** For all in relationship difficulties
- 30 S** For those affected by addictions of all kinds

Women's Voices Women's Bodies

**We will meet Bathsheba, Anna, Mary and others, to explore
the Abused Body, the Disabled Body, the Aged Body, the
Nurturing Body and the
Suffering Body**

**A day event led by The Revd Canon Dr Liz Shercliff
and The Revd Dr Kate Bruce**

21st June

10.30am – 4pm

**St John the Evangelist church,
St John's St. Bury St Edmunds
IP33 1SP**

**To let us know you are attending, book here
[Women's Voices, Women's Bodies - Insight CofE Suffolk](#)
or for more information contact
Revd Ali Miller teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com**

Bring your own lunch ~ Drinks provided



Churches Count on Nature 2025

Discover and delight in what's
on our church doorstep



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*We also have assistance from priests within
the benefice who have permission to officiate.*

Please don't forget ...

to let Julie Hooton NBTLVB@outlook.com

and the 'Viral Bulletin' adrian.mann@btinternet.com

have news and details of events which have happened
as well as events which are coming up at your church.

And your photographs are always welcome.
