

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

# VIRAL BULLETIN

23 August 2026

12th Sunday after Trinity

*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](http://www.northburychurches.org.uk)



*Norman Tower, Bury St Edmunds*

*13 August 2026*

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# *12th Sunday after Trinity*

*Isaiah 51.1-6 Psalm 138 Romans 12.1-8 Matthew 16.13-20*

Given that the final week of August sees the fifth anniversary of my arrival as the Team Rector of the Lark Valley and North Bury Team, it has been some time since I have applied for a job and alongside this needed to find people to provide me with a reference. But despite this, I still know full well that being asked to be a referee for someone is of huge import and a privilege.

For it is one thing for me to state the obvious – that I am a highly motivated, adaptable and unflappable leader with a track record of success, having great intelligence, easy charm, natural charisma, a wonderful sense of humour and a fabulous singing voice – but it means so much more if somebody else has seen this and can agree, in all honesty, that I am the person I am claiming to be. And more so, it is wonderful to help someone to reach their full potential through doing this.

In the passage from the Gospel of St Matthew for the 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity, Jesus asks his disciples a question. And this question, “who do people say that the Son of Man is?” may well make us wonder what Jesus is hoping to gain through posing it. Well, Jesus can in no way be supposed to be suffering from an identity crisis. His assurance in his role and mission is clear. This is proved not least through his describing himself as the Son of Man in quizzing his friends. For this phrase is used to describe the one who Daniel sees descending from the heavens in his vision of the Old Testament.

Nor is Jesus seeking a reference. Certainly not in terms of feeling that he needs others to validate his claim that he is indeed the Word made flesh. Jesus has made it clear on numerous occasions that he is the Son of God and will perform the works of God whether people believe that he is, or feel that he should, or not. And yet through asking this question Jesus is moving in the realms of providing a reference and endeavouring to see people fulfil their potential. But not him, rather those that he is talking to, the disciples.

Either way, in response to his question the disciples reveal that people apparently see Jesus as something of a prophet in the mould of John the Baptist, Elijah, or Jeremiah. They see him then as someone who is a mouthpiece for God, looking to see God and their desires known in the world. And yes, certainly this is true of Jesus. Like these great men of faith, Jesus has and will continue to proclaim the good news of God’s kingdom and stand up, and out, for God.

And like these prophets this has seen him demand that people change their ways if they need to. This has included speaking truth to power, no matter what the consequences may be, or will be, for him personally. However, as worthy as all this is, such answers fail to get to the heart of Jesus. For as great as these prophets are, they were simply preparing the way. And of course, as John the Baptist stated so clearly, they were preparing the way for Jesus. And so, like a respectable B+ school report being given to the child who is destined to finish top of the class with A\* grades across the board, these suggestions may be good, but they fall well short of the full wonder and majesty of Jesus.

So, perhaps in search of a better answer – the right answer – Jesus turns to his inner circle, the disciples. After all these are the people who know him better than anybody else. For they have seen and heard at first hand who Jesus is and what he has done. So, he asks them, “but who do you say that I am?” And here “but” surely suggests that he wants something more than what he has already heard. And this Jesus receives.

We should not be surprised that, as has happened before and will happen again, it is of course from Simon Peter, that this more comes. “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” this leader of the disciples blurts out with his usual passion. Blurted out or not, Jesus is impressed. And this is no surprise given what a statement this is. For as it reveals in so few words, for Peter Jesus is nothing less than God in human form, come into the world to forgive sins, defeat evil and to win for all the gift of eternal life.

No wonder then that Jesus is impressed. Who can fail to be impressed by what is clearly the right answer? And that Jesus is impressed, hearing the answer that he clearly hoped to be given, is revealed through how he responds to Peter’s words. For it is thanks to his announcement that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of the living God that Jesus piles effusive praise upon Peter, blessing him and hailing him as Peter by name and by nature.

So he states that Peter is the rock upon which the church will be sturdily built, and the one who will be given the keys of the kingdom of heaven itself. Peter then through this answer is, in effect, providing his own reference that allows him to become this rock and to fulfil his potential as a follower of Jesus. And through this – through making Peter the rock upon which the church is built – Jesus is also revealing that it is upon this disciple and his opinions of Jesus that the church still stands. Through his response to Peter, Jesus makes it clear that the glue that still holds the church together is this knowledge that he is the Messiah and Son of God,

come to save and redeem the world. And it is also therefore through aping Peter that the church still exists and grows.

We do not need to offer a reference for Jesus, for as we know the wonders of Christ found within the Scriptures speak for themselves. But certainly, so much of the life of the church and its growth, is about answering that question that Jesus asks his disciples - “who do you say that I am?” And it is the full and glorious answer that Peter gives, and not a half complete version, that is to be proclaimed.

Yet this doesn’t mean that we all must go out onto the streets and begin shouting about Jesus. As Paul, who would certainly know given his exploits in the field of spreading the good news of Christ, makes clear, some but not all, are called to be evangelists. But as those who are part of the church built upon Peter, Christians are called to live lives that are shaped by the truth that Peter voiced. We are called to live lives that reveal that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of the living God through our thoughts, words and actions.

Indeed, all that we do offers our answer to the question about who Jesus is. And this not least for others around us, such that through this we therefore invite people to join us in the church built upon Peter.

Not that this will be easy. Sometimes life can lead us into doing things that do not do justice to our faith in Christ. But in this we can derive comfort from Peter. For Christ’s rock he may be, but Peter as we know certainly has his flaws. Indeed, we will find in the Gospel reading for the 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity, as Jesus explains about the suffering and death that he will soon face, Peter’s unfitting reaction to this sees him transformed from this rock to a stumbling-block, such that Christ even calls him Satan!

But here again, Peter offers an example. The example that, like him, it is only with the help of God that we are the people that Jesus wishes us to be. Through listening to Jesus and learning from him, we strive to live lives befitting of the one who we know is the Messiah, and the Son of the living God.

So “who do you say that I am?” As Christians it is our huge privilege to be asked this question by Jesus each day and more so to answer it. Answer it not least in the way we live our lives. Lives that therefore reveal the one asking it – Jesus Christ. And answer it then with the worthy tribute that is Peter’s response. “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” An answer that we strive to give in both word and deed to help grow the church that Jesus built upon Peter, the rock.

*Andy Miller*

# Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

## SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 23 AUGUST

### SUNDAY 23 August 12th Sunday after Trinity

|         |                      |                              |
|---------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 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 (CW)  | Flempton                     |

### Monday 24 August Bartholomew the Apostle

|        |                       |                            |
|--------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 6.00pm | Solemn Eucharist (CW) | St John's, Bury St Edmunds |
|--------|-----------------------|----------------------------|

### Tuesday 25 August

|        |               |                            |
|--------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 6.00pm | A Quiet Space | St John's, Bury St Edmunds |
|--------|---------------|----------------------------|

### Wednesday 26 August

|        |                     |                              |
|--------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 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 27 August Monica, mother of Augustine of Hippo

|        |                |                              |
|--------|----------------|------------------------------|
| 9.30am | Eucharist (CW) | All Saints', Bury St Edmunds |
|--------|----------------|------------------------------|

### Friday 28 August Augustine, bishop, teacher of the faith

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

### Saturday 29 August Beheading of John the Baptist

### SUNDAY 30 August 13th Sunday after Trinity

|         |                                                  |                              |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 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) <i>preceded by breakfast</i> | All Saints', Bury St Edmunds |
| 10.00am | Benefice Eucharist (CW)                          | Fornham St Martin            |
| 11.00am | Sung Eucharist (CW)                              | St John's, Bury St Edmunds   |
| 3.00pm  | Pet Service                                      | Timworth                     |

**UPDATE ~ Change of details**  
**Lark Valley North Bury Team**

# **Pilgrimage**

**Saturday 22nd August**

**The pilgrimage will now start  
at 10am  
from St Mary's, West Stow**

(and not at Lackford as previously advertised in the  
Viral Bulletin or currently in the Lark Valley magazine).

You need to book if you wish to walk  
and we may cancel if the forecast  
is for very hot weather.

Please contact:

Ali for further information [teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com](mailto:teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com)  
or Sarah for a booking form [seg30@cam.ac.uk](mailto:seg30@cam.ac.uk)

**We look forward  
to being pilgrims together!**

*Alex, Ali, Andy, Sarah*



# Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

## Praying Together ~ September 2026

### *For the wider community & church*

- 1 T For all places of education at the start of a new academic year
- 2 W Beetons Lodge residential home
- 3 T The Presbyterian Church; Lancaster Avenue Gospel Hall
- 4 F St Olave's Road shops and residential area
- 5 S The Beacon Church (Pentecostal)
  
- 6 S** Bridge Community Church
- 7 M All Saints, Bury
- 8 T *Growing in God* worship, work & witness at All Saints, Bury
- 9 W All Saints Bury church hall
- 10 T Julie Hooton, our Benefice Administrator
- 11 F All Saints church monthly coffee morning
- 12 S The Priors Estate
  
- 13 S** The Priors Estate Residents' Action Group
- 14 M Kings Road & Queens Road housing areas
- 15 T Out Risbygate housing and business areas
- 16 W St Peter's House residential home
- 17 T Jankyn's Place sheltered housing
- 18 F St Andrew's, Timworth
- 19 S *Growing in God* worship, work & witness at Timworth
  
- 20 S** All who live in Timworth
- 21 M St George's, Bury
- 22 T *Growing in God* worship, work & witness at St George's
- 23 W The Anselm Community Centre
- 24 T The Mildenhall Road Estate
- 25 F The Mildenhall Road Estate Residents' Association
- 26 S Chestnut Court sheltered housing
  
- 27 S** Northumberland Avenue Methodist Church
- 28 M Kingdom Hall (Jehovah's Witnesses)
- 29 T West Road area
- 30 W Westley Road area & Winthrop Road area

# Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

## Praying Together ~ September 2026

### *For the Lark Valley and North Bury family*

- 1 T Philip & Katie Orchard
- 2 W Clive & Alison Pettitt
- 3 T Terence Pettitt
- 4 F Michael Phillips
- 5 S Tibor Pinter
  
- 6 S** Sue Piper & Carla Hampton
- 7 M Ivy Powell
- 8 T Sue Presland
- 9 W Jill Quantrill
- 10 T Anthony, Caroline, Stephen & Daniel Ranson
- 11 F Sarah Reilly
- 12 S Gina & Steve Robertson
  
- 13 S** Roderick Rogers
- 14 M Claire & Peter Rose
- 15 T Anne Ruffles
- 16 W Pamela Rynsard
- 17 T John Sadler
- 18 F Roni Sayer
- 19 S Sarah Scambler
  
- 20 S** Anna-Marie, Barbara, Benjamin, Nathan & Stuart Scarfe
- 21 M Judith Scott
- 22 T Helen Silver-MacMahon
- 23 W Sonja Simpkin
- 24 T Ann Southgate
- 25 F Malcolm Southgate
- 26 S Hugh & Margaret Steavenson
  
- 27 S** Wendy Stebbings
- 28 M Claire Stickings
- 29 T Jean Stiling
- 30 W Wendy Stott

To change, add or remove names  
please contact the Revd Julia Mann.  
Email: [jc.mann@btinternet.com](mailto:jc.mann@btinternet.com)



**Happy birthday, Michael!**



Michael Phillips is seen at St John's last Sunday, surrounded by cake marking his forthcoming notable birthday on 23rd August.



Our Pets



# TIMWORTH CHURCH Pet Service



Sunday 30th August  
3pm



Lark Valley & North Bury Team Ministry

[www.northburychurches.org.uk](http://www.northburychurches.org.uk)

Charity Number: XN42173

St George's Church



# **BINGO**



at

**The Anselm Centre, IP32 6JZ**

**on the following date:**

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September**

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**6.30pm for 7.00pm start**

**£8.00 per person which includes  
entry fee and bingo cards,**

(extra cards can be purchased on the night)

**Hot drinks and snacks will be on sale  
in the interval**

*although you may bring your own*

**Please pre-book your place by contacting either**

**Wendy on 01284 768714**

**or Maz on 07746 058179**

# The Wonder Club

Story  
Wondering  
Craft  
Prayer  
Cake



St Lawrence  
Lackford  
Sunday  
6th September  
at 3pm

# CAPTION COMPETITION



Some time ago people at St John's noticed that two helium balloons had been released in the church and had taken up residence in the apex of the nave ceiling. After a few days the first descended to ground level, but the second, shown here, did not do so until the morning of 15th August, when it was immediately apprehended by the Team Rector. A choice of fairtrade wine or chocolate awaits the person who can contribute the winning caption (hopefully shorter than this one) for this photograph of the event, kindly provided by Ali Miller.

Please send your entries by Tuesday 25th August to the Viral Bulletin at

[adrian.mann@btinternet.com](mailto:adrian.mann@btinternet.com)

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## Contacts

|                          |              |                                                                                  |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Revd Dr Andy Miller .... | 01284 728714 | <a href="mailto:teamrectorlvnb@btinternet.com">teamrectorlvnb@btinternet.com</a> |
| Revd Ali Miller .....    | 01284 728714 | <a href="mailto:teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com">teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com</a>   |
| Team Office .....        | 01284 700400 | <a href="mailto:NBTLVB@outlook.com">NBTLVB@outlook.com</a>                       |

*We also have assistance from our Curate, Jonathan Boast, our Assistant Priest, Sarah Gull, and from priests within the benefice who have permission to officiate.*

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## Please don't forget ...

to let Julie Hooton [NBTLVB@outlook.com](mailto:NBTLVB@outlook.com)  
and the 'Viral Bulletin' [adrian.mann@btinternet.com](mailto: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, but please don't forget to ask permission of those who may therefore appear in the Viral Bulletin.*

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