



The Benefice of
St. Withburga, Holkham, All Saints, Warham,
St Nicholas, Wells-next-the-Sea and All Saints, Wighton

5th Sunday of Easter
2nd May 2021

Today's Services

- 9.30am Holy Communion at St. Withburga, Holkham
This service will be recorded and uploaded to YouTube later in the day
- 11.00am Worship for All at St. Nicholas, Wells
- 6.30pm Taize Evening Prayer at St. Nicholas, Wells
and via Zoom

Our Prayers

In our benefice this week we pray especially: -

- for those who need our prayers: - Baby Evie, Amanda Newton, Diana Claxton, Stella Richardson and Gill Smith.
- for those who have died recently: - Revd. Alan Elkins
- for those who died at this time in years past:-



This Week

Tuesday 4th May
2.00pm Funeral of Revd Alan Elkins
live-streamed from Fakenham Parish Church on the
St Nicholas Church Wells YouTube Channel.

Wednesday 5th May
10.00am Holy Communion at St. Nicholas, Wells
which will be recorded and uploaded to YouTube later in the day
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCbV-ISQ1HQ1jZvnESfrY2A/>

The new Bishop of Lynn has been announced this week. The Venerable Dr Jane Steen, currently Archdeacon of Southwark. On her appointment, Jane said: "I am honoured and delighted to have been called to be the next Bishop of Lynn and I am looking forward to the new ministry to which God and the Church have called me. It will be a privilege to minister with the clergy and laity of the Lynn archdeaconry and to serve the wider life of north and west Norfolk."

Next Sunday 9th May

- 9.30am Holy Communion at All Saints, Wighton
which will be recorded and uploaded to YouTube later in the day
- 11.00 am Holy Communion at St. Nicholas, Wells
- 6.30pm Evening Prayer at St. Nicholas, Wells and via zoom

Christian Aid Week - 9th - 16th May.
Wells Post Office have kindly agreed to have a Christian Aid collection box on their counter during Christian Aid Week.
Two important dates:-
Tuesday 11th May 'Sunset to Sunrise Sponsored Walk'
along the Norfolk Coastal Path from 5.30am to 8.30pm.
This is being organised by Wells, Walsingham & District Christian Aid Group and it is an ecumenical event. We will have a short service outside Burnham Deepdale Church at 11am; do come if you can.
If you need a lift to the Service please contact Margaret Sheppard. If you would like to join in for the walk please contact Kate Clodd. The Money raised will help the construction of dams in Kenya; for more information about this project, please contact Helena 01328 711788
- You can donate on the JustGiving page
<https://justgiving.com/fundraising/wells-and-walsinghamor326583>
- Sponsor forms are in the churches at Wells and Wighton or contact Margaret
Saturday May 25th
There will be a street collection outside Leftley's 10am-4pm.
Thank you from Kate and the Christian Aid team.
Kate 711312 Margaret 710584

Visiting Churches and Attending Worship

Our churches remain open for private prayer.
Please remember :-
Wear Face masks unless exempt,
Observe the Social Distancing guidelines,
Use the hand sanitiser on entering and leaving the building.

Churches Open

All Saints, Warham	Daily	10am - 4pm
St Nicholas, Wells	Daily	10am - 4pm
All Saints, Wighton,	Daily	10pm - 4pm
St Withburga, Holkham,	Thurs - Sunday	10am - 4pm

Rector

The Revd. Brenda Stewart **01328 710628**
bas@con-brio.com

Churchwardens:

St Withburga, Holkham
Johnny Coke 01328 711358 johnny.coke@btinternet.com

All Saints, Wighton
Alan Groom 01328 821996 alangroom56@yahoo.co.uk

St Nicholas, Wells
Kate Clodd 01328 711312 kate.clodd321@gmail.com
Margaret Sheppard 01328 710584 margaret.sheppard222@gmail.com

Benefice Pew Sheet:

Rachel Newstead rknewstead9@gmail.com

Website: www.stnicholaswells.co.uk

YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCbV-ISQ1HQ1jZvnESfrY2A/>

Traidcraft - Wells Churches support this charity and all items you buy will give much needed help. If you wish to make an order please contact:- Mary Cundy- 01328 710643 or mary@greenbee.net.
For more info contact Kate:- 01328 711312 or kate.clodd321@gmail.com or you can order from:- Traidcraft :- www.traidcraftshop.co.uk

Wells Churches collect for the Food bank.
Thank you to all of you who continue to support the Foodbank. Wells hospital and the Co-op are working together and deliveries are made from the hospital to those who need it in Wells and the villages on a Friday. Donations can be taken to Wells Hospital or the Co-op. Money donations are also very welcome.

Today's readings

The Collect

Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting
life:

grant that, as by your grace going before us
you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help
we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

1st Reading Acts 8.26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptised?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptised him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

2nd Reading

1 John 4.7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

The Gospel

John 15.1-8

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

Post Communion Prayer

Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

About a century before Christ there was a mass conversion of Ethiopians to Judaism and the Kandake's treasurer was making his annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But he had one problem, only entire males could take a full part in temple worship and like most court officials in the Near East he was a eunuch. He was excluded from the inner courts of the temple and so from participating in the full life of the Jewish people and thus cut off from God. He was riding home deeply disappointed, puzzled and searching the scripture for an answer. And the Spirit told Philip to join him and help him. By chance or probably a first prompting of the Spirit he had found that well-loved passage in Isaiah that speaks of the sufferings of the servant of God, which enabled the salvation of his people from exile and alienation. To Philip, a Greek-speaking Christian Jew and so bit of an outsider himself, that passage shouted "Jesus", as it has done for Christians ever since. The eunuch realised that whatever his status in mainstream Judaism, there was nothing to prevent his being baptised and he was able to go his way rejoicing.

The eunuch's problem doesn't exist any more. About thirty years later the temple was burnt down during an insurrection against the Romans. Nowadays only a few hundred remaining Samaritans still practise animal sacrifice and most of the issues that excluded the treasurer from observing his adopted religion have lost their meaning.

John writes in one of very few verses in the Bible that says what God is: "God is love and those who live in love, live in God".

What unwritten rules make it hard for us to accept some people into the worshipping community? Be honest with yourself. Fr. Peter