

Sunday 28th January

A just society is not one built on fear or repression or vengeance or exclusion, but one built on love. Love for our families. Love for our neighbors. Love for the least among us. Love for those who look different or worship differently. Love for those we don't even know.

— John Legend —

AZ QUOTES

Mahatma Gandhi is often quoted as saying, "A civilisation is measured by how it treats its weakest members" or "The greatness of a nation can be judged by how it treats its weakest member". Many historians have questioned whether he said this or not. Nonetheless, the essence and importance of these words are undeniable. Likewise, Pearl Buck's (1892-1973), words "Our society must make it right and possible for old people not to fear the young or be deserted by them, for the test of a civilisation is

the way that it cares for its helpless members." These two leaders and many others point our attention to the importance of treating those who are vulnerable or weak with gentleness, kindness and compassion. In the same way, many passages in the Bible encourage us to be the voice for the voiceless (proverb 31:8-9) and defend the widows, the orphans and all who are vulnerable (James 1:27).

In the last few weeks, I have often wondered what type of society we are building and what we will leave for our children and grandchildren. There is so much maltreatment of the weak and vulnerable. The Post Office scandal and how the Sub-Postmasters were treated and victimised is a prime example. The way refugees and asylum seekers are labelled, victimised, exploited and excluded is another. I am sure one could add many other examples to the list. It is often easy to say I am not involved or that it does not affect me. But this will be a flimsy way of excusing our inaction. For a society to reflect Godliness and good virtues, each of us has a role. As Christians, we need to lead by example. We need to show the world what righteousness and justice look like by how we behave and treat others. We must endeavor to speak out against injustice, exclusions, and discrimination wherever we see such. We allow such behaviors and actions to grow and become the norm when we keep quiet. I encourage you this week to be a voice for those who you know are voiceless and the defender of those who are weak. In doing this, we can build a just society where love reigns and grace abounds. We will meet at 8 and 10 am this Sunday for Holy Communion Services. There will be facilities for children and families during the 10 am Service. We will also meet on Wednesday at 10.30 am. I wish you a blessed week.

Revd Folli Olokose vicar@oatlandschurch.org.uk / 01932840077

This Week's Bible Readings: Deut 18: 15-20, Rev 12: 1-5a, Mark 1: 21-28

Our Prayers this week: We pray especially for the people of the Middle East, Morocco and Libya, for all those who have lost friends, families and livelihoods as a result of war, earthquake and flooding. We continue to pray for peace in Ukraine, Sudan, and many other places. For all refugees and displaced people and all who welcome and support them.

Families, individuals and businesses are suffering from the impact of the increased cost of living. **Please remember our Mission Partner:** The Bible Society. **Please pray for:** All couples marrying at St Mary Oatlands in 2024 and for the Marriage Preparation course on 11th February. **We pray for the sick in our parish:** especially remembering all who suffer from mental ill health and are victims of abuse and discrimination. **From the Diocesan Calendar of Prayer:** Septuagesima; Thomas Aquinas, Priest, Philosopher, Teacher of the Faith, 1274. **Anglican Diocese:** The Anglican Church of Southern Africa Place Safeguarding Team - Church House Guildford Lead Jane Huttly Other staff Jackie Broadfoot, Natasha McMillan, Marzena Mazurkiewicz. **We Remember the Recently Departed:** Christine Incledon, Alan Ulrick & David Basham. **From the Memorial Book at their year's mind:** Anne Shepherd, Peter Atkinson, Dora Fairhead, Graham Cole, Kenneth Maidment, Aruthur Howard & John Archer.

Activities and Events at St Mary Oatlands

New!!! 'Activation Youth' Term time Fri evenings in St Mary Oatlands Church Hall. School Yr 7-10 aged children 17.30-19.30 & School Yr 10-12 aged children 19.30-21.30. Free of charge. No regular sign up required, just turn up, play games, talk, have fun and make friends. Tuck shop. Tell someone about it! For more details contact Leon 07881 786309

thepaislad@gmail.com **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Event** Tuesday 13th Feb in the church hall. 3.30-5.30pm. £2 per person. All welcome. **Ash Wednesday** 14th Feb 10.30am Holy Communion & 8pm Holy Communion with imposition of ashes. **Lenten Retreat** Sat 17th Feb 10am-4pm Led by Revd Folli, exploring themes such as Temptations, Annunciation, God's Love and Patience, Pain and Suffering, Christ's Crucifixion, Forgiveness, and Resurrection. Opportunity for Prayer, Ministry, Reflection and Worship. The Abbey Retreat House, Chertsey. £10 (incl lunch). Please use the sign-up sheet at the back of the Church.

Revd Phil Barlow will be licensed at St Lawrence, Effingham, on Wed 21st Feb at 7:30 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend this special occasion. **Plant Swap Day** Sat 27th April 9am-12noon on the Church lawn. Browse, swap plants and information. Refreshments will be available. Please contact Rachel Bainbridge if you can help or need more information 07557408085. **Oatlands Village Fayre Sat 11th May 12.30-4.30pm.** We will be there once again with our Cake and Children's Crafts stalls. If you can help on either stall or pledge a cake for the cake stall, please use the signup sheet at the back of the Church or contact the parish office. 01932 231274. **Christian Aid Week** 12-18th May. **Kim & Malcolm Groom's Open Garden** Sat 15th June 2-5pm West Lodge, 169 Burwood Road, Hersham, Walton-On-Thames, KT12 4AT (near Squires Garden Centre) 7.5 glorious acres of garden, Japanese tea house, Children's trail, & lawn games, plant stall and raffle. Children welcome. (Entrance fee applies, under 12's free)

Holy Week and Easter services. Please collect a flyer from the back of the church.

Palm Sunday 24th March. 8am & 10am Holy Communion. **Maundy Thursday** 28th March 7.30pm Agape Supper in Church hall. 8pm Holy Communion service with foot washing. **Good Friday** 29th March 1-3pm Music & Readings for Good Friday. 2.30-4pm Free Children's Good Friday Craft Afternoon in the Church Octagon room. **Easter Sunday 31st March** 8am & 10am Holy Communion. **8.30-9.30am** Parish Breakfast. We do an excellent hot breakfast! Everyone is welcome for breakfast and fellowship. Please use the sign-up sheet at the back of the Church.

If you can offer help with the breakfast do please contact the Parish Office.