**Messy Church – 19th October 2024**

**This is your life, Peter**

The activities are:

1. **Peter the fisherman** – Matthew chapter 4, verse 18
   1. string net picture, in Celebration
   2. boat (skewers for mast)
2. **Call of Peter and Andrew** – John chapter 1, verses 35 to 42 – friendship bracelets
3. **Peter and the big catch of fish – Peter asks James and John to help**: Luke chapter 5, verses 1 to 7; playdoh fish
4. **Peter the rock:** Matthew chapter 16, verses 13 to 19;
   1. **net of a church, to be placed on a rock**
   2. **duplo blocks**
5. **Peter walks on water** – Matthew chapter 14, verses 22 to 33 – paper construction
6. **Breakfast on the beach** – John chapter 21, verses 1 to 12, and 15 to 22
   1. **crepe paper fire – in Celebration**
   2. **iced biscuits**
7. **Peter at Joppa** – Acts chapter 9, verse 32 to chapter 11, verse 18 – **clay and play doh animals** (10, 9 – 16)
8. **Peter in prison, freed by an angel** – Acts chapter 12, verses 3 – 19 – make an **angel**

**Stories and Activities**

Peter’s real name was Simon, and he is a fisherman who becomes one of Jesus’ friends in all four Gospels, although some stories appear in all the Gospels, and some in only one, or perhaps two. In the course of this booklet, you will find out why Simon became Peter.

1. **Peter the fisherman** – Matthew chapter 4, verse 18

We don’t know how old Simon Peter was when he first met Jesus. We know that he was an adult, working as a fisherman with his brother and his friends.

There are two activities in this section: a string net picture, and making a boat, which we may use for other stories.

* 1. String net picture – in the Celebration

**You will need:** a piece of paper, some string, glue, scissors, colouring pencils or felt tip pens (or you can use scrap paper to make fish, or cooking foil)

Stick lengths of string across the paper to make a net, and then draw and colour fish in the net – or cut out and stick fish made of scrap paper or cooking foil.

* 1. boat

**You will need:** a print out of the boat (supplied), on card, or stuck onto card, colouring pencils or felt tip pens, scissors, glue, a piece of twig – or bamboo skewer – for the mast, and a piece of card to act as the sea and as a base.

Colour in the boat, and then cut it out. Colour the base card to look like the sea. Stick the front and back of the boat together, and use the tabs to stick the boat to the base. Poke the mast through the centre piece so that it rests on the base and hold it with glue or bluetac.

**Talk about:** what it might be like to be a fisherman. You would have to keep the nets mended, and your ropes for pulling the net strong. You might smell of fish when you had been fishing – and you might have to prepare the fish to sell, as well.

**2. Call of Simon Peter and Andrew** – John chapter 1, verses 35 to 42 – friendship bracelets

This is John’s version of how Simon Peter came to be one of Jesus’ friends. In John’s Gospel, Simon Peter isn’t fishing when Jesus suggests that he join Jesus in teaching people. Andrew, who is Simon Peter’s brother, and Simon Peter, have gone to listen to John the Baptist teaching. Andrew may have been a follower of John, because he is there, the day after Jesus’ baptism, and John tells him about Jesus, when he sees Jesus walk past. Andrew, and someone else (not Simon Peter), followed Jesus and saw where he was staying at the time. Andrew then went and found Simon Peter, and told him that they had found the Messiah (which is what John had told them). Andrew took Simon Peter to Jesus, who said to Simon “Your name is Simon, son of John, but you will be called Cephas.” (Cephas is Greek for Peter, and they both mean Rock.)

**You will need:** some thread, some beads. You may find a little sticky tape or play doh useful.

Cut three lengths of thread, (which should be long enough to go round your wrist twice) and tie them together at one end. Plait them together, threading a bead onto one of the threads from time to time. Make the plait long enough to go round your wrist one and a half times, and tie the ends together, leaving the long ends of the threat hanging. Give the bracelet to a friend, to remember you by.

**Talk about:** being friends – sharing games, food, jokes. Keeping in contact when you are not going to see each other for a while. What happens if you have an argument? Can you share your friends – be part of a larger group?

**3. Peter and the big catch of fish –**Luke chapter 5, verses 1 to 7; playdoh fish

This story appears in Luke’s Gospel. Luke, Matthew and Mark all tell a version of this story – not exactly the same. It is possible that Jesus had met the fishermen before, but not necessarily so. Simon Peter and his partners, Andrew his brother, and James and John, who were also brothers to each other, have been fishing all night, and have caught nothing. Now they were washing their nets at the edge of the water. Jesus was speaking to a crowd of people, who were crowding him closer and closer to the edge of the water, so he got into Simon Peter’s boat, which happened to be closest, and asked Peter to push the boat out a little way. Jesus then continued his teaching of the crowd on the shore. When Jesus had finished teaching, he suggested that Peter push the boat out a little further and let the net out to take a catch. Fishermen usually fished at night, to be able to sell the catch fresh in the morning. Peter explained to Jesus that they had caught nothing that night, so it was unlikely that they would be able to take a catch now but said that he would let out the net.

They caught so many fish that they had to call to James and John to help, and both boats were so full they were in danger of sinking. Peter went on his knees to Jesus and said that he was a sinful man in front of God. Jesus said to Peter that he should not be afraid – from now on, he would be catching men, not fish. The four fishermen took the boats back to the shore, and then they left everything, says Luke, and followed Jesus.

**You will need:** some playdoh, a paper plate to put your creations on.

Make playdoh fish of various sizes, and put them on your plate, to show in the celebration.

**Talk about:** catching fish – in a net, as Peter and his friends did, or with a line. How long might it take to catch enough fish to feed the family if you did it one at a time? What did Jesus mean when he told Peter and the others that they would catch men instead?

**4. Peter the rock:** Matthew chapter 16, verses 13 to 19;

This story appears in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, but the last two don’t have the bit about Peter being a rock. This is Matthew’s version of the change of Peter’s name from Simon. Jesus is talking to his friends as the travel through the countryside, and he asks them “who do the crowds say I am?” the friends say that some people think he is John the Baptist, and some say Elijah, or Jeremiah, or some other prophet. Then Jesus asks who they think he is. Simon Peter says “You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.” Jesus says “Good for you, for God has told you this. You are Peter, the rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church.”

We have two activities in this section.

1. Cardboard church (from a net, supplied)

**You will need:** a print out of the net, (this could be done with a paper print out – it is not very large), colouring pencils or felt tip pens, scissors, a flat stone to stand it on (or use a paper plate, upside down – you could paint it grey first!)

Colour and cut out the net round the outside lines. Fold it on the marked lines, and use the tabs to stick it together. If you have a flat stone, stand it on that, or use an upside down paper plate.

1. Duplo church

**You will need:** some duplo, or mega blocks, or, with a child over three, lego or something similar.

Build a church – to your own design.

**Talk about:** Jesus was relying on Simon Peter to keep on following him, learning from him, and going on, when Jesus was no longer there to help him. We have the church today because Peter could be relied on. Can you be relied on to do what you say you will?

**5. Peter walks on water** – Matthew chapter 14, verses 22 to 33 – paper construction

This story can be found in Mark and John, as well as in Matthew, except that only Matthew tells the story of Peter walking on the water as well.

Jesus had had a busy day – he had spent most of it teaching a big crowd of people – more than 5000. Then he had fed them all, with five rolls and two fish – we looked at that story in the July. In the evening, he sends his friends off in the boat, telling them he will see them on the other side of the lake. He goes away from the lake, up a hillside, to be alone, and to pray.

In the very early morning, before it was light, the friends, in the boat, saw someone walking towards them on the water. They screamed, because they were scared it was a ghost, but the person spoke. It was Jesus, and he told them not to be scared. Peter said “If it is really you, Jesus, tell me to come to you.” So Jesus did, and Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water towards Jesus. When he looked at Jesus, he was fine, but when he looked at the waves, and felt the wind blowing, he got scared again, and he began to sink. Jesus grabbed him, and said “How little faith you have. Why did you doubt?” They both got into the boat, and the friends said “Truly, you are the Son of God!”

**You will need:**  the instructions (supplied), two pieces of blue paper – different shades of blue would be best – a piece of scrap paper, scissors, glue, pencil or a felt tip pen to draw with. If you are going to make the simpler version, you may want paint, although you could use felt tip pens to colour the waves.

Follow the instructions, to make a picture of Peter walking, and then sinking! If you have made the most complicated version, you could move the waves as well.

**Talk about:** starting to do something, and then getting scared it won’t work. Who do you trust to help you do things properly?

**6. Breakfast on the beach** – John chapter 21, verses 1 to 12

All four Gospels have some resurrection stories, but the most detailed are in Luke and John, although they are not the same stories. This is part of the very last story of Jesus in John’s Gospel.

The friends of Jesus have gone back to Galilee, where most of them came from, while they waited for the promise of Jesus to come true, so between Easter and Pentecost. One evening, Peter said he was going fishing, and the others decided to go with him. Like at least once before, they caught nothing, and in the morning, someone stood on the beach and called “Have you caught anything?” “No!” they answered. The man on the beach said “Throw out the net on the other side of the boat!” So they did, and the net was full in no time. John, who used to be a partner with Peter, when they all fished full time, said to Peter, “It’s Jesus!” When he heard that, Peter leapt into the water and rushed to the beach. The other friends followed, in the boat, towing the net full of fish. On the beach, they found Jesus and Peter, with the fire that Jesus had built, already cooking bread and fish. Jesus asked them to bring some of the fish they had caught, and Peter dragged the net full of fish onto the beach. They cooked some more fish, and they all had breakfast together, Jesus and his friends.

Again, we have two activities here.

1. Crepe paper fire – in the Celebration

**You will need:** a paper plate, twigs or sticks, red and yellow tissue or crepe paper, scissors, glue

On the paper plate, arrange the twigs or sticks to look like a fire, and cut or tear up the paper to make flames. You may want to glue the flames to the twigs, but you could just wrap them round the sticks.

1. Iced biscuits

**You will need:** a copy of the recipe (supplied), the tools and ingredients, plus some squirty icing.

If you have very small children, you may wish to buy their favourite biscuits and ice them.

Make the biscuits and allow them to cool. When they are cool, draw fish with icing on the biscuits.

**Talk about:**  a special meal when you have been working hard, or to celebrate something, or even just a meal you haven’t had to do all the preparation for!

**7 Peter at Joppa** – Acts chapter 10, verses 10 to 16, – clay and play doh animals

This activity comes from the middle of a very long story about Peter, after Pentecost. The whole story goes from Acts chapter 9, verse 32 to chapter 11, verse 18, if you want to read the whole story.

Peter was staying in the city of Joppa, with a man called Simon, while he taught the people around about Jesus. Up to this point, the only people the followers of Jesus were talking to about him were Jewish. They didn’t understand that God wanted everyone to know. This is how Peter found out.

One day, he was in the house, and went up on the roof to pray while a meal was being prepared. As he was praying, he saw what looked like a sheet – like on a bed – in front of him, full of animals. The puzzling thing for Peter was that they were all the sorts of animals that Jews were not allowed to eat, and a voice said to him “Get up, Peter. Kill, and eat.” Peter was very clear “Certainly not, Lord. I have never eaten anything forbidden!” The sheet was picked up by its four corners, and lifted up out of sight. Then it appeared again – three times altogether, with the same conversation happening each time.

Then Peter heard someone knocking on the door, and the voice that had told him to kill and eat something told him to go downstairs to meet the newcomers. When he got there, he found that these people were not Jewish – and yet they wanted to know about Jesus. Now he knew that Jesus, and God, were for everyone, not just for Jews.

**You will need:** a paper plate (or thick card), some clay and/or play doh to make reptiles, including snakes, and birds

If you are using clay, keep your hands damp as you are working. If you are sticking bits together (legs on reptiles) make sure that both pieces are damp, as well as your hands. If you are using play doh, this will be something you are familiar with – you may often just squash it back in the container, and make something else next time.

Put what you have made on the paper plate, so that we can see it later.

**Talk about:** learning to do things differently. What happens when you have learned one way of doing something, and you discover that there is another way? Do you refuse to learn a new way, or do you try it and see?

**8. Peter in prison, freed by an angel** – Acts chapter 12, verses 3 – 19 – make an angel

This is almost the last story about Peter in the Bible, although there are two letters by him.

The King who ruled Jerusalem, Herod Agrippa, decided that the church of Jesus’ followers was becoming a nuisance. He started arresting people, and then he had James, the brother of John, killed. He found that this pleased the Jewish authorities, which had already been trying to stop the church, so he had Peter arrested and put in prison. Herod was going to have Peter tried (no charge is given in the Bible) in public, after Passover, which was happening at the time.

However, the night before the trial, when Peter was asleep, chained up between two guards, with more guards at the prison gate, an angel woke Peter up. He told Peter to put on his sandals, and do up his belt. Peter’s chains fell off, he did as he was told and picked up his cloak as well (he had been using it as a blanket). The guards did not wake up, and the angel led Peter out past the other guards, who did not notice them. The prison gate opened of its own accord, and Peter and the angel walked out and down the street. Then the angel disappeared, and Peter looked round to see where he was. He went to Mark’s mother’s house, where he knew he would find help. When he knocked at the door, the maid went to answer, but when he said who he was, she didn’t open the door, but went to tell the people in the house. A number of Christians had gathered to pray for Peter, and when the maid said he was at the door, they didn’t believe her! At last, as Peter went on knocking at the door, they opened it. Peter told them what had happened – “The Lord sent his angel to rescue me from Herod’s power.” He told them to tell the rest of the Christian leaders (including another James), and then he went somewhere else to hide, so the Jewish authorities could not find him.

In the morning, at the prison, the guards were puzzled as to where Peter was, but they couldn’t find him in the prison or the city either. Herod was very angry, and had the soldiers executed.

**You will need:** a piece of paper, the stencil (there are a couple supplied), printed on card or thick paper – or a stencil of your own, scissors, paint and brush or sponge

Cut out the angel (if you are using a supplied stencil) and use either the hole in the paper to make an angel, or use the cut-out to make a silhouette angel.

**Talk about:** surprising things happening. How do you react when something surprising happens? Do you get involved, or do you try to ignore it, because you prefer things to be “normal”? Would you have opened the door to Peter?

**Celebration**

Peter is a really important person in the story of Jesus’ ministry and in the story of the start of the church. He was the disciple who recognised that Gentiles (people who weren’t Jews) could be Christians too. Of course, not everything he did was right. He tended to open his mouth without thinking and to act impetuously. But Jesus saw what he was really like.

Song Big man standing by the blue waterside

<https://youtu.be/qDX_lxHdg6Y?si=3DONT0ZnibOdEUUm>

Peter was originally called Simon. Jesus named him Peter, which means rock. He was a fisherman when Jesus met him. There are two stories of Jesus helping him catch fish, which is why we make a net picture.

We’ll do that now

His boat is important too, as Jesus used is on one occasion as a kind of pulpit to speak from. There are a lot of other boat stories. The most famous is when Peter saw Jesus walking on the water and, without thinking, he wants to do the same. Once he starts, he gets frightened by the waves and sinks, but Jesus saves him. Another time Jesus asks the disciples who people think he is. When he asks them who they think he is, Peter is the first to answer.

Song Our God is a great big God <https://youtu.be/0K3TUFFpmhA?si=qiRAK48jnFYIMNmJ>

When Jesus was arrested, Peter at first tried to fight, but then he ran away. Later he went to where Jesus was being tried to try to find out what was happening. He was terrified, and three times, when someone said that they thought he was one of Jesus’ followers he said he wasn’t.

After Jesus died and came back to life he met with Peter and the others on a beach and cooked breakfast. He asked Peter if he loved him. He asked three times. Jesus told Peter to look after the people who followed him.

We’ll make a model fire on the beach.

After Pentecost Peter was the one who spoke to the crowd and told them about the Holy Spirit. The at Joppa, when Peter was praying, and also hungry, he saw a vision of animals, but they were animals Jews weren’t supposed to eat. Just after that a Gentile came to ask Peter to go with him. As a Jew, Peter wouldn’t go into a Gentile’s house, but Peter realised that this was what the vision was about.

We are going to sing Jesus, you are changing me. <https://youtu.be/WdwIE0EmHaA?si=xIutlXz710L5V1Bm>

Peter eventually went to Rome, and tradition says that he was killed there by the Romans

Let’s pray.

Dear God,

Thank you for Peter. Thank you that he listened and helped people like us, who aren’t Jews, follow you as well. Thank you that we know the he wasn’t perfect but he was still important to you. Thank you that that shows us that, although we’re not perfect either, we are important to you as well. Help us to recognise that that applies to everyone else as well.

Amen

Next Messy Church is 16th November. See you then.

Enjoy our celebration on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw>

Then have tea or a treat if it isn’t tea time!

If you send me pictures of anything you do, I can share them on the Church Facebook page or in the Church Monthly (if you want to send pictures that you don’t want shared, just tell me. I’ll only share the one’s you’re happy to share.)

Harlington Messy Church Team

We’ll have a Zoom meeting open for those who can’t come to the church. Our end of Zoom will go on YouTube during the celebration, but we won’t put pictures from your end on. Contact me if you want the link for Zoom. Look out for the broadcast on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw/videos>