

KEY VERSE:

Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.
Acts 12: 5



THE PARISH OF CHALFONT ST PETER

Encounter God, Encourage Others, Engage our World
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FOUNDATION CAFÉ SERVICE

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The Church Grows & Spreads 2:

Peter's Miraculous Escape from Prison



**CHALFONT
ST. PETER
PARISH CHURCHES**

KNOW WHAT:

- Today we celebrate the Feast of St Peter. Our village is named after him.
- At Foundation we continue to find out about how the church grew and spread after the death and resurrection of Jesus. After the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they met together, prayed together, and saw God use them to spread the good news of Jesus to all kinds of people in many different places.
- Last week we heard how Peter and John were used by God to heal a lame man at the entrance to the Temple. The people were amazed at what happened.
- As the church grew, so others opposed them. Herod had Peter arrested and put in jail.
- An angel of the Lord woke Peter in jail and led him out of the prison. Peter went to the house of John Mark where people were praying. Rhoda, a servant girl, was so surprised that Peter was the door that she failed to let him in. Finally Peter was let in. He explained what happened and asked his hearers to let others know.

SO WHAT:

- Peter When people experience God working in their lives, others may not like this and try to stop it, just as Herod tried to stop Peter.
- Peter discovered that God would keep him safe. He also knew that other Christians were praying for him.

NOW WHAT:

- Let's ask God to work in our lives this week, to protect us in difficult situations
- Let's pray for others who find themselves in hard times

JIM'S JOTTINGS: Peter Escapes from Prison

As I write this early on Friday the news has been announced that the country has voted to leave the EU and the Prime Minister has said that he will step down in the Autumn. These feel like momentous events which, whilst they might inspire hope and true British grit, will also result in anxiety for many people whichever way they voted.

Perhaps there are some lessons from this Sunday's story of Peter. He had been thrown in prison for his faith and the likely result was that he would be executed like his master, Jesus. There was nothing the tiny church could do in terms of political or military action: they could only pray and they did, praying hard and fervently. Meanwhile Peter, chained up in prison, was asleep despite the fact that his situation seemed hopeless. He had an inner peace despite the outward circumstances. Then, while Peter slept an angel came to him, woke him up, his chains fell off, and he followed the angel to freedom. He swiftly visited those who were praying and then headed for safety.

What does that say to us today? This story tells us that when we are faced with deep challenges our first response should be to pray to God who loves and cares for us. He knows the future and, if we trust him, he can show us the way forward. For Peter the future was greater than he could ever have imagined. He led the church as it expanded through a hostile world and eventually settled in Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire. The man who escaped prison helped change the world.

May I encourage all of us today to pray for each other, our country and the world that peace may prevail.