

Vol.61 No 4 April 2021 Online Edition

**ST PETER'S CHURCH  
BRACKLEY**

**"Loving God, loving each other, loving Brackley"**



## Revd, Rich writes.....



I recently heard it said that the two things people need most during a pandemic are:

- 1) a friend in the darkness
- 2) a future in the light

It seems to me, this is exactly why Easter is such good news for Christians, not just this year after what people have described as ‘the longest Lent ever’, but in every age. Good Friday shows we have a friend in the darkness; Easter Sunday shows we have a future in the light.

### **Good Friday shows we have a friend in the darkness.**

Jesus plumbed the depths of human despair and suffering that first Easter. The Bible tells us he was forsaken, rejected, a man of sorrows, familiar with pain, who suffered temptation, every temptation, false accusation, betrayal and so much stress that he experienced hematidrosis as blood dripped from his ruptured sweat glands (Matthew 27:46, Isaiah 53:3, Hebrews 2:18, Hebrew 4:15, Mark 14:58, John 16:32, Luke 22:44).

Our Lord understands the darkness like no one else. Darkness filled the land that first Good Friday (Mark 15:33) as Jesus willingly took our misery and judgement on himself, “Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering... he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4-5). This is a friend in the darkness who not only suffers *with* us, he also suffers *for* us. What a friend we have in Jesus!

### **Easter Sunday shows we have a future in the light.**

In the midst of suffering, we not only need *friendship*, we need a *future*. As the sun rose at dawn that first Easter Day, the light banished the darkness in more ways than one. The coronavirus has cast a long shadow: the shadow of death. But the resurrection of our Lord provides glorious light at the end of the tunnel. Last month, I had the honour of taking my grandfa-

ther's funeral and had the privilege of reminding my extended family that, if Christ was raised from the dead, then we can be too, and the grave need not be a final destination but a doorway to paradise.

You see, the cross and resurrection signalled the beginning of the end of suffering for God's people. Christ's payment was enough to overcome the curse of toil and pain in Genesis 3. Whilst the Buddha's dying words are recorded as, "Strive without ceasing," Jesus' dying words were, "It is finished." What a contrast! No more striving or pain is needed to pay for our sin, which means that even though our suffering in this life continues, it is part of the old order that is passing away. I love the opening verse of a hymn by Phillips Brooks (who also wrote 'O Little Town):

Tomb, thou shalt not hold Him longer;  
Death is strong, but Life is stronger,  
Stronger than the dark, the light;  
Stronger than the wrong, the right.  
Faith and Hope triumphant say  
"Christ will rise on Easter Day."

As we look at St Peter's to the future with hope, let me say a brief word on future roles and future plans.

## **Future roles**

As many people are resetting and reassessing their commitments at the moment, please could I ask you to consider offering yourself for a new area of ministry. We have space for more volunteers in all sorts of areas: on PCC, on the laptop rota, Junior Church rota, readers and prayers rotas, cleaning rota, Holiday Club helpers, you name it. Please pray about any new areas you might like to serve and do get in touch with me.

## **Future plans**

With so much still dependent upon variants and vaccination programmes, we put firm dates in our diaries at our peril these days. However, while it's right to recognise everything might change, it is also good to make tentative plans. Therefore, here are some provisional dates to write (in pencil!) in your diaries:

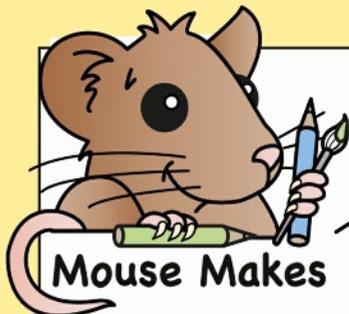
- **14<sup>th</sup> April** – online Discipleship Explored course recommences (back by popular demand, we'll aim to cover sessions 5-8 on Wednesday evenings)
- **18<sup>th</sup> April** – aim to restart Junior Church provision for our young children following 'stage 2' of restrictions easing.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> May** – Annual Meeting in person, straight after our 9:30am service.
- **27<sup>th</sup> June** – 'Back-to-Church Sunday' – a celebration, inside or out, that things have improved, even though some restrictions remain.
- **23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> August** – Holiday Club for primary-aged children. Details to follow.

However dark the present becomes for the Christian, Easter shows the future is always bright. God bless and Happy Easter!



### EASTER SERVICES

1 <sup>st</sup> Thurs	<b>Maundy Thursday</b> 8pm	Lords Supper in side chapel
2 <sup>nd</sup> Fri	<b>Good Friday</b> 9.30am	Meditation
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sat	<b>Easter Eve</b> 8pm	Reflective service followed by vigil
4 <sup>th</sup> Sun	<b>Easter Day -</b> 9.30am	All Age Holy Communion (Please book on website) Followed by Easter Egg Hunt



## Mouse Makes

Can you find these names of **Jesus** in the word search?

### SON OF GOD

Matthew 3:16-17



### KING OF KINGS

Revelation 17:14

### PROPHET

Luke 24:19



### PRIEST

1 Timothy 2:5

### ROCK

1 Corinthians 10: 4

### LORD

1 Corinthians 1:9

### AMEN

Revelation 3:14

### LIFE

John 11:25-27

### MESSIAH

John 1:41

### SHEPHERD

John 10:11

### LIGHT

John 8:12



### WORD

John 1:1-50



### BREAD

John 6:35

### CREATOR

1 John 1:3



V L I F E W D  
 D I A L A R O C K  
 C M H M O M S R E H C  
 H E O B R E A D O O R  
 R S L W D N V I N E E  
 I S Y A P R I E S T A  
 S I O Y P R O P H E T  
 T A N J E S U S T D O  
 S H E P H E R D E D B R  
 K I N G O F K I N G S  
 D S O S O N O F G O D  
 L I G H T

### CHRIST

Matthew 16:16

### SAVIOUR

John 3:16-17

### HOLY ONE

Mark 1:24

### VINE

John 15:5



### DOOR

John 10:9



### WAY

John 14:6

### LAMB

John 1:29



## Easter morning, the 'Other' Mary

As the traditional Easter story is rehearsed again this month, you may notice that there is one name that frequently occurs. It is that of the 'other' Mary – not the mother of Jesus, but Mary of Magdalene, who stood by her at the cross and became the first person actually to meet the risen Christ.

That's quite a record for a woman who, the Gospels tell us, had been delivered by Jesus from 'seven devils' – New Testament language for some dark and horrible affliction of body, mind or spirit. As a result, her devotion to Him was total and her grief at His death overwhelming.

In church history Mary Magdalene became the 'fallen woman' a harlot who was rescued and forgiven by Jesus but there is no evidence to prove she was a 'fallen woman' but the contrast is sublime, Mary the virgin mother, the symbol of purity. Mary Magdalene, the scarlet woman who was saved and forgiven, the symbol of redemption. Surely, we all fall somewhere between those two extremes.

The dark cloud from which she was delivered may have been sexual, we are not told. What we do know is that the two Marys stood together at the cross, the Blessed Virgin and the woman rescued from who knows what darkness and despair.

The second great moment for her was as unexpected as it was momentous. She had gone with other women to the tomb of Jesus and found it empty. An angelic figure told them that Jesus was not there, He had risen – and the others drifted off. But Mary stayed, reluctant to leave it like that. She became aware of a man nearby, whom she took to be the gardener. She explained to him that the body of 'her Lord' had been taken away and she didn't know where to find Him.

The man simply said her name 'Mary' and she instantly realised it *was* Jesus. She made to hug Him, but He told her not to touch Him because His resurrection was not yet complete. She was, however, to go to the disciples and tell them she had met Him. She did – but they wouldn't believe her.

Her words – 'I have seen the Lord' – echo down the centuries, the very beating heart of the Christian gospel.

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Two elderly couples were enjoying friendly conversation when one of the men asked the other, "Fred, how was the memory clinic you went to last month?" "Outstanding," Fred replied. "They taught us all the latest psychological techniques: visualization, association, etc. It was great." "That's great! And what was the name of the clinic?" Fred went blank. He thought and thought, but couldn't remember. Then a smile broke across his face and he asked, "What do you call that flower with the long stem and thorns?" "You mean a rose?" "Yes, that's it!" He turned to his wife, "Rose, what was the name of that memory clinic?"

## **Annual Vestry and Parochial Church Meeting**

The meeting will be held on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

following the 9.30am service.

A copy of minutes of 2019 meeting will be available in church.

The Accounts for 2020 will be displayed on the Church Notice Board.

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Vestry Meeting 2019
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Minutes of the Parochial Meeting 2019
5. Reception of the Electoral Roll
6. Reports
  - a. PCC
  - b. Treasurer
  - c. Fabric, Goods, Ornaments and Extension
  - d. Deanery Synod
  - e. Safeguarding
  - f. Vicar
7. Election of members to Deanery Synod for 2 years
8. Election of members to the PCC for 2/3 years
9. Appointment of Sides-persons
10. Appointment of an Auditor
11. Open Forum

During April there will be the facility to propose and second candidates

If you wish to stand for any position, you must be on the church electoral roll, please contact Karen Gees PCC secretary for details.

Places to attend the meeting will be governed by the covid19 regulations at the time.

Any update to this notice will come from Revd Rich Duncan, via email or service notices.

## St Peter's Bell Ringers



It's now over a year since we've been able to ring the bells, not only at St Peter's but pretty much at every Church in the Culworth branch of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers. The bell chamber from where we pull the ropes is an enclosed area with no ventilation and so no room for social distancing, plus some of us are in the higher risk group.

No bells for Sunday Services and Christmas without bells was truly unthinkable. A single bell was tolled for John Lewis's passing, he was a long-term ringer, plus just a few weeks ago a single bell was rung in celebration of the renewal of a couples marriage vows.

We've so missed the camaraderie of the ringers group, our weekly practice nights were so much an enjoyable part of lives - and will be again in the coming months.

There is now a glimmer of light in the COVID gloom. The Central Council have tentatively given 17th May as a possible start date for short ringing sessions. However after a whole years absence, heaven only knows how rusty we'll be and what sounds we'll be inflicting on everyone!!!

When we're eventually able to return to a 'normal' routine ie: no social distancing or wearing masks, (whenever that may be, possibly not this year) we seriously do need to recruit volunteers to learn to ring if the bells are to keep ringing well into the future. Nationally there is a shortage of bell ringers and it is so very sad to think that this ancient art will 'die out' eventually. Please keep this in mind as an enjoyable hobby for the future, from eleven years of age with no upper age limit if you're fit and able, to a family group learning together - all welcome.

Julie Blencowe

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If you have enjoyed this short online edition of the current magazine, you can purchase the full 20 page printed edition for the modest sum of 40p.

The magazine is available at Jems on the Market Place or you can have delivered to your door at no extra charge monthly.

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[marilynisrael2017@gmail.com](mailto:marilynisrael2017@gmail.com)