

Vol.66 No 4 April 2026 Online Edition

# ST PETER'S CHURCH BRACKLEY



**“LOVING GOD,  
LOVING EACH OTHER,  
LOVING BRACKLEY”**



*I am the  
resurrection  
and the  
life.*

whoever  
believes in me,  
though he die,  
yet shall he live.

John 11:25

***Rev'd Rob writes.....***

## ***The Easter Garden***



Do you love gardening?

For many people gardens are places of peace, relaxation, and rest.

There's no surprise then that we have so many keen gardeners at St Peter's. That's why the churchyard always looks so nice.

Now, I love to look at and enjoy a nice garden. However, the effort of digging, mowing, and planting I'm not so keen on. In fact, I was grateful to learn about wild gardening. If I don't get around to doing the hard work, I can simply claim that I'm eco-friendly, rather than just lazy.

At the beginning of the Scriptural drama, humanity is in a garden (Genesis 2:8). It's a place of beauty and peace. The imagery pointed to the harmonious relationship that was enjoyed between creature and Creator. However, humankind was expelled due to their decision to disobey God's command and, therefore, demonstrate their love of self over love of their Creator. However, at the end of the Scriptures, we are given an image of a new Eden (Revelation 22:1–5). The imagery points to the restoration of a harmonious relationship with God. How does that happen? Well, that's where the Easter gardens come in.

John in his gospel describes Gethsemane as a garden (John 18:1). There, according to his human nature, Jesus was deeply distressed and sorrowful. He was tempted. Yet he submitted his human will to his heavenly Father. In Eden humanity grasped at self-rule. Do you see how Jesus did the opposite? There, in Gethsemane, Jesus obeyed. He reversed the curse that came in Eden. So great was Christ's obedience he went from Gethsemane to bear our sin in his body on the tree.

Because of Christ's obedience, new life also springs out from a garden. This is the Easter garden you may have made as a child. Or maybe you've had to help children or grandchildren make them.

John sets the scene for us.

*At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:41-42).*

There's a lovely detail in John's account of the resurrection.

Mary Magdalene did not realise she was speaking with Jesus. Then we are told,

*Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). (John 20:15-16)*

Here's how G.K. Chesterton masterfully summarises,

On the third day the friends of Christ coming at daybreak to the place found the grave empty and the stone rolled away. In varying ways they realised the new wonder; but even they hardly realised that the world had died in the night. What they were looking at was the first day of a new creation, with a new heaven and a new earth; and in a semblance of the gardener God walked again in the garden, in the cool not of the evening but the dawn.

*(From the Everlasting Man)*

Isn't that a wonderful summary of what Easter is all about?

Humanity once again walked with God in a garden. New hope, new joy, new life. Praise God!

I'm not sure if, like me, you're too eco-friendly, or lazy, to be keen on gardening. Regardless, what beautiful imagery we are given. We can be overjoyed that because of Jesus Christ we can now walk in a right relationship with God.

Hallelujah Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, halleluiah.

## **WE HAVE GOOD NEWS**

The good news is that the Church of St Peter's has been awarded a very large grant, of over £80,000 from HS2's Community Environment Fund (CEF). The CEF fund has been created by HS2 to add benefit to communities along the route that are demonstrably disrupted by the construction of HS2. The administration of these funds is managed on behalf of HS2 Ltd by the community charity, Groundwork UK. Further information on this funding programme can be found here - [HS2 Community and Business Funds](#) This generous grant will enable us to retille a large section of the Church Hall roof.

As many of you will be aware, we have a very real problem with the tiles on the roof of the Church Hall. They should have lasted for a hundred years but unfortunately the tiles that we were sent when the hall was being built some 30 years ago, turned out to be defective but this did not become apparent until way after any warranty period so despite our best efforts in the past, we couldn't get any compensation and we have to bear the cost of replacing these tiles ourselves. And the cost is huge. We have already spent almost 150 thousand pounds repairing about 60% percent of the roof.

So we are very grateful indeed to HS2 for this very generous grant particularly as they do not give money to religious institutions and are only prepared to assist where buildings belonging to the church are a valuable community asset. And our hall is quite definitely that. A very large number of people in Brackley, who are not members of our congregation, regularly use the hall for all sorts of activities and that is why HS2 have made us such a generous grant.

The Church do have to make a contribution to the total cost of about £15,126 and in order to cover that, because the church does not have any spare cash at this time, we have taken out an interest free loan from the Diocese which we have up to three years to pay back. And unfortunately there will still be quite a large section of the roof remaining which will not get done this time. At some stage the Church will have to find the money from somewhere to deal with that because we have neither the income to cover the cost or the reserves. So we are very grateful for the generosity of HS2; their grant will go a long way to preventing further deterioration of the Church Hall roof and enabling it to continue to be used by all in the local community for many years to come.



Alpha

## Is there more to life than this?



**Alpha** has become one of the most influential introductions to the Christian faith in the modern era. Originating in the late 1970s at Holy Trinity Brompton in London, Alpha was designed as a safe, welcoming space for people to explore life's biggest questions. Over time, it has grown into a global movement, running in churches, homes, universities, prisons, and workplaces in more than 100 countries.

### 'Exploring life's biggest questions'

The importance of the course lies in its accessibility and openness. It provides an environment where participants can discuss topics such as **"Who is Jesus?"**, **"Why did He die?"**, and **"How can I have faith?"** without pressure or judgment. Each session includes a shared meal, a short film, and open discussion. In a culture where many people feel isolated or hesitant to engage with church, Alpha provides a bridge—offering an introduction to Christian beliefs.

Countless individuals who have attended Alpha testify to experiencing spiritual renewal, deeper understanding of faith, and a stronger sense of purpose. For many, it marks the beginning of a lifelong Christian journey; for others, it provides clarity and healing in times of doubt. The course emphasises the transformative work of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and belonging.

Alpha begins at St Peter's Church on **30th April at 7:30pm** and will continue each week ending the first week of July.

If you want to learn more about life, faith and meaning you are invited. There is no charge and you can register at:

**[www.stpetersbrackley.org.uk/contact](http://www.stpetersbrackley.org.uk/contact)** or call

**07763 967589 or 07515 480221**

*life faith meaning*



Alpha

## What's orange, sticky and worth preserving?



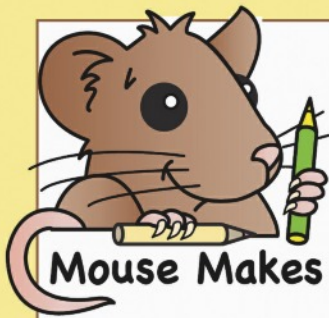
This month sees National Marmalade Week (18<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> April). If you really want to celebrate, go to Dalemain Mansion and Gardens in Cumbria, where they hold the World Marmalade Awards & Festival. It celebrates, preserves and promotes artisanal marmalades, with thousands of entries. (Even Paddington Bear will be in attendance!)

If you like marmalade, ever wonder where it comes from? One tradition traces it to a storm-damaged Spanish ship which took refuge in Dundee Harbour in 1700. It was full of Seville oranges that the captain was desperate to sell before they went mouldy. A local down-on-luck merchant, one James Keiller, bought the lot. He didn't know what to do with the oranges either, but fortunately he had a resourceful wife. She set about turning a shipload of Seville oranges into a preserve, and so the first marmalade factory was born.

Marmalade has been at the heart of British breakfasts for centuries. Winston Churchill fought the Second World War on it (washed down with a flute of Pol Roger each morning). DH Lawrence wrote novels on it. Paddington Bear's sandwiches were all marmalade. If you also want to get your fingers sticky, visit:

[www.marmaladeawards.com](http://www.marmaladeawards.com).





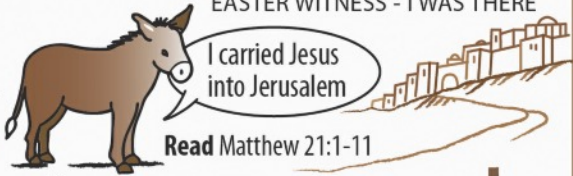
**Mouse Makes**

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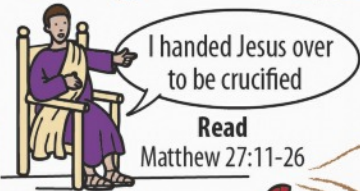


**EASTER WITNESS - I WAS THERE**



I carried Jesus into Jerusalem

Read Matthew 21:1-11



I handed Jesus over to be crucified

Read Matthew 27:11-26



I nailed Jesus to the cross

Read Mark 15:16-32



We watched Jesus die

Read Mark 15:33-41



I laid his body in my tomb

Read Mark 15:42-47



I guarded the tomb

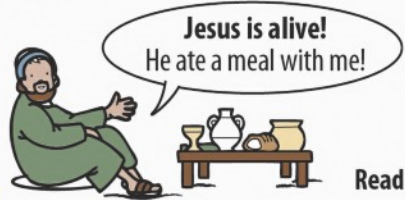
Read Matthew 27:62-66



We saw the empty tomb

and spoke to the angel!

Read Matthew 28:1-10



Jesus is alive!  
He ate a meal with me!

Read Luke 24:13-35

## Happy Easter

One Easter Sunday morning, as we reached 'The Peace' in our service, I said:



"Today, instead of saying 'peace be with you' we will try something different. Turn to someone and say, 'The Lord is risen' and they will reply, 'He is risen indeed!'" Everyone nodded and smiled. So, I approached a tall man in the front row. "George, the Lord is risen!" I said with suitably uncontained enthusiasm. He replied, in a rather gruff and unimpressed voice, "I know."

Perhaps on Easter Day, I should have stuck with the usual response: "Peace be with you." Why? Because that is the way Jesus greeted his disciples after his resurrection. "Peace be with you."

A friend of mine was once leading Collective Worship in his local primary school and asked the children what Jesus said to his disciples on that first Easter morning. A forest of hands went up. "Yes," said my friend, pointing at an excited looking girl. "Happy Easter!" the girl replied. Well, not quite. "Peace be with you" was the answer he was looking for.

Before the world can experience a Happy Easter, there has to be a desire for that deep down, God-given peace. We watch the news on TV and there seems to be nothing we can do. Not true. We can start where we are – at work, at home or in the community.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God."

Happy Easter!

The Venerable Richard Ormston  
Archdeacon of Northampton

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