

*A brighter dawn is breaking  
and earth with praise is waking*



Trinitate 2

## MINISTRY TEAM

**VICAR: Revd. Bill Boon** Email: bill.boon@btinternet.com  
The Vicarage Sanigar Lane, Newtown (01453) 811 360 *Day off - Monday*

**COMMUNITY CHAPLAIN: Revd. Mary Tucker**  
Hinton Cottage, Hinton. (01453) 811 105  
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**For Baptisms, Confirmations, Home Communions,  
Wedding Arrangements etc...  
Please contact the Vicar.  
Benefice Website: [www.heuristika.co.uk/lfgdiscussion/](http://www.heuristika.co.uk/lfgdiscussion/)**

## CHURCHWARDENS

**Mrs Margaret Price** (*Purton*) The Mill House, Purton (01453) 811 250  
**Ms Katrina Bailey** (*Sharpness*) 8 Jubilee Way (01453) 810 850  
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*Vacancy - Slimbridge Warden*

## Parochial Church Council Officers

### *Sharpness with Purton*

**Mrs Carol Bailey** (*Secretary*) 8 Jubilee Way (01453) 810 850  
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**Mr Pieter Koole** (*Treasurer*) April Cottage, Shepherds Patch  
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# Parish Diary - April 2021

## **(1st) SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup> - EASTER DAY**

9.00am	1662 Prayer Book Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
9.30am	Easter Communion	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Easter Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Easter Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

## **(2nd) SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> - EASTER 2**

9.30am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Holy Communion	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

## **(3rd) SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup> - EASTER 3**

9.30am	Holy Communion	St. John's, Purton
10.00am	Morning Prayer	St. John's, Slimbridge
11.00am	Informal Communion Service	St. Andrew's, Sharpness

## **(4th) SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup> - EASTER 4**

10.00am	Benefice Communion	St. John's, Slimbridge
	<i>No Services at Purton or Sharpness Today!</i>	

**SUNDAY WORSHIP IN CHURCH RESTARTS  
ON EASTER DAY**

Covid-Restrictions remain in place

## A Message from Bishop Rachel

*Published on 23<sup>rd</sup> March - National Day of Reflection*

It is exactly one year since we went into lockdown, and so the charity Marie Curie, supported by the Church of England and other partners, is marking today as a National Day of Reflection.

I suspect most of us have memories and thoughts relating to 23 March last year not least regarding rapid decision-making coupled with uncertainty and anxiety.

I was thinking about this as I walked among the famous wild spring daffodils near Oxenhall at the weekend. I was reflecting on both the trauma of the past year and my delight at the privilege of being vaccinated last week. It seems hard to believe that in one year we have gone from a decision about lockdown and all that has ensued regarding a viral pandemic, to a time when people are being successfully vaccinated across our country. So, perhaps more than ever, on this anniversary we are deeply aware of holding together lament and grief, with hope and thankfulness. All have a place and they do not cancel each other out.

I have always loved Psalm 85 and those words in verse 10, translated in the Authorised Version as 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other'. Their beauty is poignant because so often in our lives mercy and truth, and righteousness and peace, are not obvious friends, as many of us will have discovered in situations of conflict or injustice. That is true too regarding lament and hope, and grief and thanksgiving. They are not obvious partners. Yet, today on this first anniversary of lockdown my prayer is that we will be those whose lives speak of lament and hope kissing each other, as grief and thanksgiving meet each other.

The symbol used by the charity Marie Curie is a daffodil, and as I walked among thousands of them in their bright yellow glory, I was reminded that they were also there on 23 March last year. Beneath the cold dark soil of recent months, the transforming love and hope of God's life has not ceased.

In our weariness and lament may we open our hearts and minds to the creativity of God's spirit at work within us and around us, trusting in the truth that the hope of God in Jesus Christ cannot be destroyed. Today and in these days of Passiontide, the pain of the cross is in sight and so too is the hope of the empty tomb.

Today I'm putting yellow daffodils in the window, and tonight at 8pm it will be the flame of a candle, bearing witness to lament and hope, and grief and thanksgiving.

*With thanks and prayers as ever  
+ Rachel*

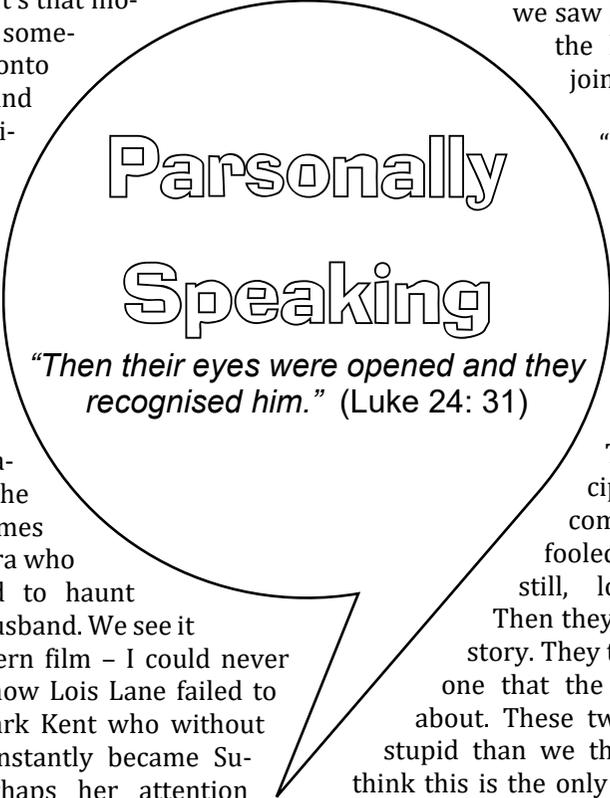
There's a comedy situation known to dramatists around the world. Shakespeare used it in *Twelfth Night*, Brandon Thomas in *Charley's Aunt* and Noel Coward in *Blithe Spirit*. It's that moment when someone comes onto the stage and we in the audience know who it is but those on the stage don't. It could be Olivia disguised as her brother, Charley's aunt from Brazil (where the nuts comes from) or Elvira who has returned to haunt her former husband. We see it used in modern film – I could never understand how Lois Lane failed to recognise Clark Kent who without his glasses instantly became Superman, perhaps her attention was swayed by his leotard!

How can they be so stupid, we think, not to recognise who they are talking to? But no, the other characters are completely fooled until the moment when all is revealed. Then everyone reels back in amazement and they live happily ever after.

If ever we need to show that Jesus has a sense of humour we only have to read about events on the afternoon of Easter Day. We learn how he engaged

in a classic piece of comedy with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus.

We see two sad people trudging along the road when a stranger appears. We know who it is. It's Jesus and we saw him killed in the last Act. He joins the two.



"Hello. Why are you looking so glum? What's the trouble?" Or words to that effect.

The two disciples are completely fooled. They stand still, looking sad. Then they tell him the story. They tell HIM! The one that the story is all about. These two are more stupid than we thought. They think this is the only person who hasn't heard the news. Jesus goes on to milk the situation. "About what?" he says.

If we are to understand what was happening along the road, first we have to ask why the two friends were feeling downhearted. Well, they'd just had a terrible shock and when you're in a state of shock you sometimes fail to recognise what's going on around you. They had just lost a friend. Yes, and more even than a best friend:

someone they had come to love, to trust, to put their complete faith in. This was someone they believed would save them from the oppression the whole country was under. They looked to Jesus to change things.

Already they'd seen some of the things he could do. They saw him heal the lame, help the blind to see, the dumb to speak. He'd brought dead people back to life and he was prepared to challenge those in authority. But now the bottom had dropped out of their world. He'd been crucified. He'd lost the battle. Already there was a story going round that some women had seen him alive that morning, but they hadn't seen him so they couldn't be sure.

Jesus listens to the whole story. "Oh, how foolish you are," he says. He points out that all these things they'd been talking about just had to happen. Things indeed will be different now, but he hadn't lost the battle at all. We can see what's going on as he uses the scriptures to explain the story to them and slowly they come to understand. They even invite him home for a bite to eat and only then, when he is sitting down to supper, does the penny finally drop. It's him! You're Jesus! He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

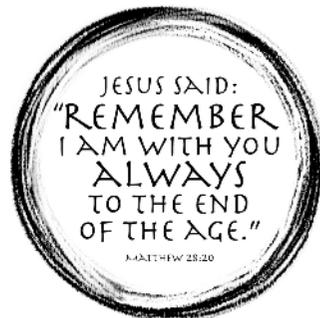
It's not only in our diaries that Easter Day follows Good Friday. That is the Christian experience. Sadness may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning. People often discuss the miracles of Jesus – did he walk on water; did he turn water into wine? Did

he feed five thousand people with a few fish and a couple of buns? If he could rise from the dead or enable others to rise, I'm sure he wouldn't have had much trouble with these minor miracles.

The problem was that the couple on the road had been reading the scriptures the wrong way round. They thought that God would redeem Israel *from* suffering but the truth was that God would redeem Israel *through* suffering. Jesus took them through the whole story. He had not come to the end but to a new beginning.

"They cut me down but I leap on high. I am the life that will never, never die."

Words succinctly put by the Quaker Sidney Carter in his song, "Lord of the Dance". In all the Easter appearances of Jesus there is a spirit of buoyancy. Jesus leapt from the tomb and he's continued to leap through the centuries to the present day. How will we recognise him? Here's a clue: Jesus is no stranger – we can see him in the faces of all whom we meet.



*Nigel Beeton writes: The opening verses of John chapter 14 are very special to many of us, they certainly are to me. They bring us great comfort in this time of fear and uncertainty, and I hope that this little reflection upon them might do the same for others:*

## *The Way*

*Come, still your hearts, let troubles go  
For you believe in Me,  
And I am with you, I will show  
The way ahead of thee.*

*My Father's house has many rooms  
You know my words are so!  
My Spirit and my Word illumines  
The way that you shall go.*

*I am the Way, the Truth, the Life  
Believe and you shall see  
The way through tempest and through strife  
To My eternity.*

*By Nigel Beeton*

## Historical Snippets

*Taken from the Parish archives  
held at St Johns Church Slimbridge;*

*Years ago, each of the local parish churches submitted their news to a publication called 'The Parish Magazine'. Contributors came from quite a large area including: Lower Cam; Coaley; Eastington; Frocester; North Nibley; Stinchcome; and \*Slymbridge. It was printed by: O. E. Hill, Cam, Gloucestershire, for the cost of 2d (tuppence) per copy.*

*This month's historical snippet is taken from April 1947*

*\*Slymbridge is the old-fashioned spelling for Slimbridge.*

*-0-*

Rector; Rev. W. H. Thomas, M.A.

Church Wardens; Mr. J. Wherrett and Mr. W. P. Hill.

*The Rector earnestly desires to be informed in all cases of sickness and sorrow.*

My dear People. . .

### Parish Notices:

#### *Easter Services:*

Good Friday:

- o Children at 10am;
- o Three hours service 12noon to 3pm;
- o Conductor the Rev, L. C. Hodges, Vicar of Coaley.
- o Evensong 7.30pm.

#### *Easter day:*

- o Holy Communion 6.30 am, 7.15am, 8am.
- o Eucharist and procession 10.30am;
- o Evensong and procession 6.30pm.

Annual Church Meeting of the PCC and the Vestry will be held on Thursday in Easter week 10<sup>th</sup> April in the Church Hall.

Young Wives: Monthly meeting will also be held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. Speaker, Mrs Sutch of Cirencester.

#### *Father's and Men's Union:*

It has been suggested to me that we now reform our Father's and Men's Union, and I welcome this suggestion very much and look forward to the day, not far distant, when this will once again be

taking its place and fulfilling its function in the corporate life of our Church. An excellent start towards this Men's Union has begun in the belfry, where a splendid spirit of co-operation and friendliness, together with a real sense of Church duty prevails; and with our two loyal Wardens, a faithful band of Sidesmen, Choirmen and Servers, together with our very zealous male members of the P.C.C., we look forward to much happy and useful work together in the Parish. Any men who are regular members of our congregation, regularly attending Church services Sunday by Sunday, as a good many do, should consider talking this matter over with the Rector with a view to becoming members of the Union. I value the work of our loyal band of men-folk very much.

**Deaths:**

We extend the sympathy of the Church to Mrs Milson in the loss of her father. Mrs Milson has been a faithful Church worker for many years.

**Sunday School;**

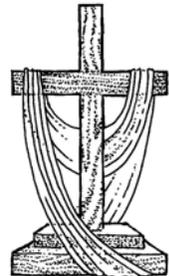
I have to make an appeal this month for someone to come forward and volunteer to help teach some of our children in the Sunday School. We need one or two more teachers, as the number of children attending has steadily increased over the last two years. This is a very good thing to be able to report, but we cannot carry on adequately without help.

Offers please to Mrs Thomas.

Your friend and Vicar  
Rev W H Thomas M.A.

*Our archives containing these magazines can be viewed by mutual arrangement with the Vicar, Church Warden or any member of the PCC but not to be taken away.*

*David Carrington  
Vicar's Warden*



## St George's Day

*Canon Paul Hardingham considers our national patron saint.*

The film *How to Train your Dragon* is set in a Viking village under attack by dragons, who steal livestock and burn down houses. Hiccup, the village Chief's son, invents a machine to capture them. However, when he catches the most dangerous one, Night Fury, he cannot kill it. This is because when he looks into the dragon's eyes, he sees that he is just as frightened as himself. Through their friendship, the people and dragons eventually come to live in harmony.

It's appropriate to think about dragons this month, when we remember St. George, England's patron saint, famed for slaying a dragon. Whether he actually killed a dragon is open to question! We do know that the original George was a Roman soldier at the time of Emperor Diocletian. He refused to renounce his faith, as commanded by the Emperor, resulting in his death on 23 April 303 AD.

So, we have here St George who slayed a dragon, while Hiccup refused to kill one. They seem like opposites: one a brave soldier and the other a weak boy! However, both acted according to their conscience, going against what people expected and not worrying about the cost to themselves. St George was martyred for standing up for his faith in Jesus, while Hiccup risked rejection by his father and village because of his compassion.

Today, we are still called to stand for Christ against wrongs and injustice in a daily life, despite the personal cost. We need to look into the eyes of apparent enemies and meet their hostility with love and compassion. And for all of us the most important place where we need to slay evil is in our own hearts. Don't forget that we have the power of the Resurrection at our disposal!

## From the Registers - February 2021

	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Gift Aid</u>	<u>Envelopes</u>	<u>Cash</u>
<b><u>Sharpness:</u></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£80</b>	<b>£56</b>	<b>£0</b>
Rent:				£300.00
PCC Fees:				£ 93.00
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE		SURPLUS (+ / -)
<b>For the Month:</b>	<b>£529</b>	<b>£1,155.40</b>		<b>-£626.40</b>

From 1st Jan. 2021 St. Andrew's has spent **£256.67** more than it has received

<b><u>Purton:</u></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£60</b>	<b>£60</b>	<b>£0</b>
PCC Fees:				£ 93.00
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE		SURPLUS (+ / -)
<b>For the Month:</b>	<b>£213</b>	<b>£983.08</b>		<b>-£770.08</b>

From 1st Jan. 2021 St. John's has spent **£790.75** more than it has received

<b><u>Slimbridge:</u></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£375</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
CBF:(Land Rent)				£289.37
	INCOME	EXPENDITURE		SURPLUS (+ / -)
<b>For the Month:</b>	<b>£664.37</b>	<b>£373.08</b>		<b>+£291.29</b>

From 1st Jan. 2021 St. John's has received **£3,769.84** more than it has spent

My thanks to all of you who continue to support our churches through these very trying times

## **FUNERALS:**

*We commended to the Lord's keeping:*

CARMEN NEALE ( <i>Purton</i> )	3 <sup>rd</sup> March
STANLEY THOMAS BALDRY ( <i>Gloucester Crematorium</i> )	9 <sup>th</sup> March
HEATHER REID WHITTAKER ( <i>Westerleigh Crematorium</i> )	17 <sup>th</sup> March
KATHLEEN LILIAN HILL ( <i>Westerleigh Crematorium</i> )	17 <sup>th</sup> March

## **Creature Feature**



# Close Attention to Text

Written by Barbara Mosse

## **Matthew 28:16-end**

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'*



From the time of Moses onwards, mountains in scripture have been places of divine revelation and encounter. Old Testament examples include Moses' first meeting with the angel of the Lord who spoke out of a burning bush; his meeting with God in the darkness on the summit of Mount Sinai; Elijah's unexpected mountain top encounter with God in the "still small voice".

The tradition continues in the New Testament with the devil's temptation of Jesus on "a very high mountain" (Matthew 4:8), and his transfiguration on a mountain witnessed by Peter, James and John. In each case, the person, or people, experiencing these mountain top epiphanies has their experience of God challenged, deepened, driven into another dimension.

And in this reading from Matthew, the post resurrection Jesus has a final meeting with his disciples, on an unnamed mountain in Galilee. The many resurrection appearances recorded in the Gospels come to a climax here. Matthew doesn't record Jesus' ascension itself but his words clearly represent his final instructions and reassurances. Reassurances, yes - but also the disciples greatest challenge. Up to

this time they have had Jesus physically present with them; they have been able to see, hear and touch him. In what sense can Jesus continue to be with them, when he is no longer physically present? In what sense do we experience Jesus with us, having never known his physical presence?

Lord of all life and power,  
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son  
overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in him:  
grant that we, being dead to sin  
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,  
may reign with him in glory;  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be praise and honour, glory and might,  
now and in all eternity. Amen.



## Red Letter Days

Alphege – the archbishop taken captive by Danes ~ 19<sup>th</sup> April:

Alphege is the saint for anyone who refuses to let others suffer on their behalf. His is a tale of courage and self-sacrifice, with some details that are still poignant, even down 1000 years of history.

Alphege began like many other leading churchmen of his time; born of a noble family, with a good education, he decided to become a monk. Alphege joined the Benedictine Abbey at Deerhurst in Gloucestershire, and then became a hermit at Bath, before becoming Abbot of Bath. From there, he was appointed to be Bishop of Winchester, where he was loved for his frugal lifestyle and great generosity towards others.

In 954 King Ethelred the Unready sent Alphege as a peace envoy to the Danes, seeking some relief from the constant Viking raids against England. Alphege secured a time of peace, and in 1006 was made the 29<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury.

But the Viking raids increased again, until the south of England was largely overrun. In 1012 they surrounded Canterbury, and with the help of a treacherous archdeacon, Elfmaer, captured and imprisoned Alphege. A vast sum was demanded by his captors, so much that it would have ruined the people of Canterbury. And so Alphege refused to be ransomed.

This infuriated the Danes, who wanted the gold of Canterbury, not the Archbishop. After seven months of ill-treating him, one night they got very drunk and began pelting him with ox-bones from their feast, until in a frenzy they hacked him to death with an axe.

Alphege was mourned as a national hero and venerated as a martyr: he had given his life in order to protect his people from harm.

## Smile for a While!

### Lot's wife

A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. 'The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.' His son looked up, concerned. 'What happened to the flea?'



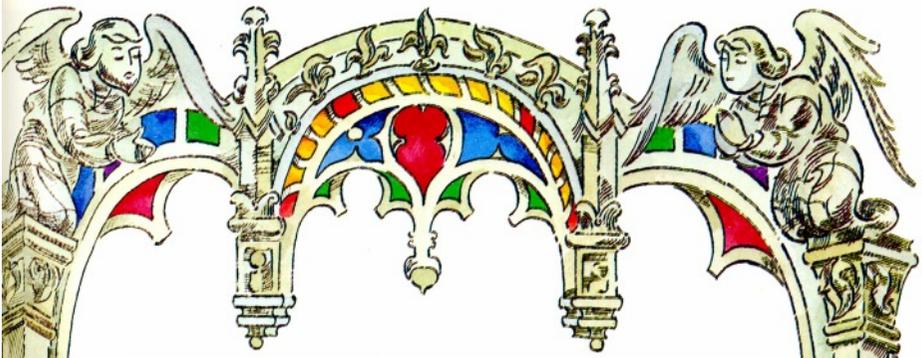
### Notices found in church newsletters - that didn't quite come out right!

- \* This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs Brown, our church warden, to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
- \* Ladies are requested not to have children in the church kitchen.
- \* For those who have children and don't know it, we have a crèche in the crypt.
- \* Bring & share church supper: Prayer and medication will follow.
- \* Don't let worry kill you. Let the Church help!
- \* The organist invites anyone who enjoys sinning to volunteer for the choir.
- \* At the church meeting last week the rector spoke briefly and delighted the audience.
- \* Remember in prayer the many who are sick both of our church and the community.
- \* Smile at someone who you find hard to love. Say 'hell' to someone who doesn't much care about you.



### Nice

The nice thing about becoming forgetful is that you can hide your own Easter eggs.



## Quotes of the Month

*With Easter in mind....*

He suffered not as God, but He who suffered was God. - *John Owen*

The death of Christ was the most dreadful blow ever given to the empire of darkness. -  
*William Plumer*

The empty tomb of Christ has been the cradle of the church. - *WR Nicoll*

The Christian church has the resurrection written all over it. - *E G Robinson*

Christianity is the revelation of God, not the research of man. - *JA Stewart*

Our friends bring us to the grave and leave us there, but God will not. - *Anon*

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime. - *Martin Luther*

## The story behind ..**THINE BE THE GLORY**

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,  
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;  
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
Kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.*

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,  
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.*

This hymn sings exultantly of Christ's resurrection. Its three stanzas are inspired by the gospel accounts of the Resurrection, and notably St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians chapter 15, who declares triumphantly "death has lost its sting". Edmond Budry (1854-1932), who wrote the original words in French and set them to a tune by Handel, was a Swiss pastor.

He composed the hymn when he was in mourning for his first wife Marie, who had just died. He seems to have wanted to offer himself and extend to all believers the reassurance that death is not the final word and that due to Christ's resurrection he would see his beloved wife again.

The hymn does indeed celebrate Christ the Conqueror of death, and in the last verse it entreats us to be more than conquerors ourselves, and to be brought to everlasting life through Christ's love "bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above". For Christians this is such an important message to get across - life after death - and I sincerely hope that this is indeed the case.

Budry's words were translated into English by a remarkably multilingual Baptist pastor called Richard B. Hoyle. He was born in 1875, in Cloughfold, England. He translated about 30 French hymns into English. He also translated hymns from 12 other languages, all of which he read fluently. In 1934 he went to the United States where he taught in Philadelphia for two years. On returning to England he became the pastor of the Baptist Church in Kingston upon Thames.

This hymn has such a majestic, powerful feel to it - helped by Handel's great tune which he originally wrote for the chorus 'see the conquering hero comes' in *Judas Maccabeus* (1746). The words are very passionate and muscular - glory, conquering, victory, triumph, glorious - it is a hymn full of Easter promise.

**SPRING** (*Acrostic Poem*)

**S**pring has arrived with armfuls of blossom,  
**P**etals of every colour and hue,  
**R**ain and sun caressing the earth  
**I**nspiring spring bulbs to come into view  
**N**ow is the time of new beginnings  
**G**iving us pleasure all season through.

*By Megan Carter*



## Out of the Silence . . .

*The monthly journal of the journey of a Priest, Contemplative and Community Chaplain in lock-down!*

I was reading something recently and came upon a quote which I just loved,

“ . . . the massive continuity of ducks!”

and this morning as I settle to choosing a section of last year’s journal to share with you, the ducks, who always arrive at this time of year, have just swooped in. There is a ‘massive continuity’ in the whole of nature. Wonderfully unaware of the ongoing crises of humanity, the seasons roll on as does the farming year and as does the church’s year. It is with no apology then that the sections I have chosen from last years ramblings mention little of the beginning of the pandemic just begun, but concentrate on the ‘massive continuity’ that is Easter. We are, after all, an Easter people.

### Palm Sunday – 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Facing a Palm cross (last year’s of course), facing the coming week, Holy Week with the Palm Sunday Gospel (Matthew 21:1-11), the Passion Gospel (Matthew 26:14 – 27: the end) and today’s Psalm 118 . . . but this poem, for me, speaks for them all. I weep every time I come upon it.

### The Coming by R. S. Thomas

And God held in his hand  
A small globe. Look he said.  
The son looked. Far off,  
As through water, he saw  
A scorched land of fierce  
Colour. The light burned  
There; crusted buildings  
Cast their shadows: a bright  
Serpent, A river  
Uncoiled itself, radiant  
With slime.

## Trinitate 21

On a bare  
Hill a bare tree saddened  
The sky. Many People  
Held out their thin arms  
To it, as though waiting  
For a vanished April  
To return to its crossed  
Boughs. The son watched  
Them. Let me go there, he said.

### Easter Saturday – 11<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Easter Saturday – a strange day amongst strange days – a catching of breath, whether in hope or in fear – a limbo time in the true sense of that word, ‘caught between life and death’, between heaven and hell, but held, held if we only perceived it, in your pierced hands.

It is so totally still outside this window – it is rare for there not to be a breath of air, a twitch of a petal – it is as if the whole of nature waits with us, hidden in our upper rooms, waiting, waiting for release and resurrection.

Perhaps though today has a purpose – a reminder that we live neither in the past or the future but here, now, in the stillness, the waiting, the unknowing . . . and it is here that, when the time is right, we will turn and see you waiting for us.

### Easter Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2020

. . . and our 40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

SO much to celebrate! For the last time this year I stand the Palm Cross beside the candle and its significance, as the sun rises in a rosy dawn, is that like the tomb, it is empty! You are risen! You are risen indeed!! Alleluia!!!

Mark’s gospel, set for today, originally ended at verse 8 where, having fled the empty tomb and received word that Jesus was risen, the two Marys, terrified, said nothing! A disappointing conclusion? Perhaps in some ways. Luke’s Emmaus road revelation, the appearances to the disciples in the upper room, and especially Mary Magdalene at the tomb in John, are precious, as is the ‘great commission’ at the end of Matthew, but in many ways Mark’s stark and challenging ending speaks to us, Lord, who know you, believe in you, without having seen

you. Jesus' words to doubting Thomas bring a blessing to us without that sight.

“Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

John 20

Perhaps in long marriages it is also not necessary to have ‘proofs’, great resounding paragraphs of words, rather I quote Matthew Arnold.

“Is it so small a thing to have enjoyed the sun, to have lived light in the spring, to have loved, to have thought, to have done?”

As a text for our anniversary that says it all.

And finally, the shortest of all the Psalms also has a most powerful assurance,

“Alleluia!

O praise the Lord all you nations;  
praise him all you peoples.

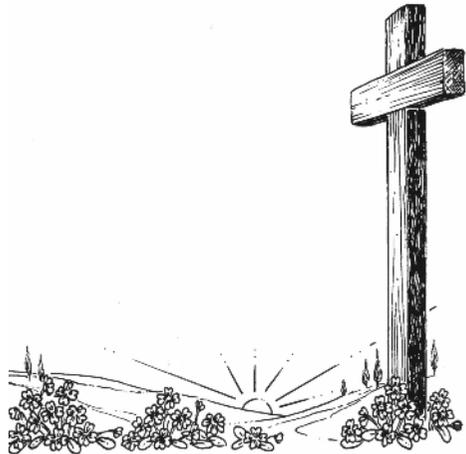
For great is his steadfast love towards us,  
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever.

Alleluia!”

*More next month*

*With love and many blessings*

*Mary Tucker*



# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Matthew 26:20-25, 31-35, Mark 14:17-21, 27-31  
Luke 22:22, 31-34, John 13:21-30, 36-38

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus.  
One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, had  
accepted money from them to betray him.

As Jesus and his disciples ate the  
Passover meal, Jesus said



John was sitting  
next to Jesus, so  
Peter said



So John asked Jesus



It is the person I give  
this piece of bread to.



What you are about to do  
you must do quickly.



Why has Judas gone out?



They continued  
the Passover meal



When the time  
comes, you will  
all run away.  
'When the shepherd is struck,  
the sheep scatter.'\* \* Zech 13:7



Peter said



Before tomorrow morning  
you will have denied you  
even know me 3 times.



And the  
others all  
said the same.



## **THE WAY I SEE IT!**

*As Holy Week commences the Christian Church prepares to Journey with Jesus on his final days and hours to the Cross – On Maundy Thursday the Church remembers Jesus and his disciples keeping the Jewish Passover in the Upper Room. The Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, explains its relevance in today's world.*

Passover is a festival which usually brings several generations of even the most secular Jewish families together and so, for many, having to mark it alone yet again feels particularly incongruous. However, Passover has always been a festival of paradoxes. At one and the same time, it calls upon us to remember the suffering of our ancestors while slaves in Egypt, but also the joy of their liberation.

The 'Seder' meal, which forms the centrepiece of the festival, illustrates the inherent contradiction perfectly. We eat unleavened matza crackers and bitter herbs, which symbolise our slavery, but we also sing jolly melodies, recline in regal fashion, drink wine or grape juice and dip foods, all of which represent our freedom. Nothing encapsulates this inconsistency better than the hors d'oeuvres served at every one of our tables. It's a hard-boiled egg in salt water. The salt water represents our tears, while the egg sends out a profound message. Nearly all other foods, when boiled, get softer. The egg, however, becomes harder. It reminds us that, when the heat is on in life, we can summon our inner resolve and stand firm. Therefore, in the very same dish, we combine pain and fortitude, desolation and hope.

This is a theme which I have found to be particularly evident over recent weeks. The 'Day of Reflection', which we kept on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, marked a year since the first lockdown began and prompted many of us to grieve for what we have lost, whilst many nevertheless continue to feel positive and even excited at the prospect of better times to come. The two sentiments together might give rise to feelings of awkwardness or even guilt, but in Jewish tradition, we frequently make a point of recalling the deep traumas of our past at moments of great celebration. For example, the Bible instructs us to celebrate all major Jewish festivals in memory of our

exodus from Egypt and, at Jewish weddings, a glass is broken to remember the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. We do this because it is from within the tragedies of our past that our resolve to build a better future was forged.

The depths of our pain and the heights of our joy are therefore inextricably and permanently linked. That's why, even at this moment of profound adversity for our country and indeed for the whole world, we can, nonetheless, excitedly and passionately ask ourselves: When the restrictions are lifted and our freedoms return, what kind of society will we seek to rebuild?

# A Continuing Rhyming History of Britain House of Stuart 1603 - 1714

Queen Anne  
1702-14

A single struggle dogged Ann's reign:  
To stop France getting hold of Spain.

S.America, W.Indies  
Italy, Belgium etc.

The Spanish empire was greater  
Then any seen till much later,

Charles II  
Died Nov 1700

And Charles, it's dying King, expressed  
A wish to leave all he possessed  
To Sun King Louis' grandson, who  
Was Prince of our old friend Anjou.

War of the Spanish  
Succession  
1702-13

Both crowns united as one nation  
Would be a fearful combination;

The Allies mustered ships and men  
And staggered off to war again.

John Churchill  
1650-1722

The brilliant Duke of Marlborough led  
The English forces, but in bed

He called surrender. War appealed  
Far more than his own battlefield,

Duchess of  
Marlborough  
1660-1744

Where Sarah made his life a hell,  
And dominated Anne as well.

Battle of  
Blenheim  
Aug 1704

Blenheim, his quintessential fight  
Earned him a Royal building site,

Sir John Vanbrugh  
English Architect  
1664-1726

Where Vanbrugh became resigned  
To Sarah's endless change of mind.

The Duke kept well out of the way,  
Preferring camping any day.

## EASTER, the most joyful day of the year

Easter is the most joyful day of the year for Christians. Christ has died for our sins. We are forgiven. Christ has risen! We are redeemed! We can look forward to an eternity in His joy! Hallelujah!

The Good News of Jesus Christ is a message so simple that you can explain it to someone in a few minutes. It is so profound that for the rest of their lives they will still be 'growing' in their Christian walk with God.

Why does the date move around so much? Because the date of Passover moves around, and according to the biblical account, Easter is tied to the Passover. Passover celebrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, and it lasts for seven days, from the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which equates to late March or early April.

Sir Isaac Newton was one of the first to use the Hebrew lunar calendar to come up with firm dates for the first Good Friday: Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April 30 AD or Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 33 AD with Easter Day falling two days later. Modern scholars continue to think these two Fridays to be the most likely.

Most people will tell you that Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, which is broadly true. But the precise calculations are complicated and involve something called an 'ecclesiastical full moon', which is not the same as the moon in the sky. The earliest possible date for Easter in the West is 22<sup>nd</sup> March, which last fell in 1818. The latest is 25<sup>th</sup> April, which last happened in 1943.

Why the name, 'Easter'? In almost every European language, the festival's name comes from 'Pesach', the Hebrew word for Passover. The Germanic word 'Easter', however, seems to come from *Eostre*, a Saxon fertility goddess mentioned by the Venerable Bede. He thought that the Saxons worshipped her in 'Eostur month,' but may have confused her with the classical dawn goddesses like *Eos* and *Aurora*, whose names mean 'shining in the east'. So, Easter might have meant simply 'beginning month' – a good time for starting up again after a long winter.

Finally, why Easter eggs? On one hand, they are an ancient symbol of birth in most European cultures. On the other hand, hens start laying regularly again each Spring. Since eggs were forbidden during Lent, it's easy to see how decorating and eating them became a practical way to celebrate Easter.



**BONUS BALL SWEEPSTAKE**



**March  
WINNERS**



**Fay Thomas 15**



**Percy Langford 20**



**Maureen McIntyre 21**

**Glenda Jackson 29**



**YOU HAVE TO BE IN IT  
TO WIN IT!**

*Thousands of Pounds Won  
Thousands of Pounds Raised  
for Sharpness Church*



*All numbers are currently in play!*



**THANK YOU!**



LETTERS TO UNCLE EUSTACE

On the best way to run a church council meeting

The Rectory  
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Thank you for inviting me to speak at your church council yesterday. I began to suspect that my theme of why Eusebius's dislike of Sabellianism led to his condemnation at the Council of Antioch in 324 was a little misjudged, when the only question I was asked after my lecture was if Eusebius was on Facebook.

I never realised how much technology is needed these days just to discuss church matters. It seemed that everyone had brought their laptop, so they could refer to all the diocesan briefing documents and reports that you mentioned. I've been in the diocese 40 years and have never heard of most of those papers. But then I find it too easy to delete the diocesan mailings, unread, with a click of my mouse.

Our church meetings are far more traditional. Since the church floor seems to have been carved out of permafrost, our meetings circulate round members' houses. This introduces a nice element of competition, as each host tries to outdo the previous one in the baking of cakes. Meetings at Colonel Drinkwater's – a more inappropriate name one cannot imagine – are the shortest, since we are always promised wine once the meeting is over. It is remarkable how unanimity is achieved on every subject within minutes, and nothing appears under "any other business".

Mrs Eddington never troubles us with minutes, largely because she can rarely read the notes she takes. She just shares with us whatever she *can* decipher at our next meeting. Last month, she accidentally brought her shopping list instead, and so read that out. There followed a lively discussion on whether carrots from our local shop were better than those at the supermarket. When it was found out she intended to use them in a venison casserole, endless recipes were keenly debated.

We always leave our church meetings well fed, up to date with village gossip, and totally untroubled by any church council business. And the lack of any minutes ensures that I can then make all the decisions myself, between meetings. I think you will find our system has much to be commended.

Your loving uncle,

# PUZZLE PAGE

Place the words below into the grid and find the missing spaces

C	O	S	M	I	C		T	H	O	M	A	S
E	L	E	V	E	N		P	R	I	S	O	N

HOLYWAR  
SCHOLAR  
SPHERE  
ISSUE  
FALWELL

DEBAR  
CLIFFS  
SIDON  
DEACONS  
DELIVERER

BROIL  
DELAIAH  
DANCE  
STOLEN  
PSYCHE

MOIST  
CANTAUR  
WATER  
INHIS  
RADIANT  
CANDACE  
RECOVERED



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# Backpage Picture



Here is a photo from the Slimbridge archives. Taken in April 1953 it shows the Rector William ‘Bill’ Thomas presenting a gift to Miss Sybil Smith of Hurst on the occasion of her forthcoming marriage. Sybil was a bell ringer, and this gift of a tray & glasses was a wedding gift from them. Bill Thomas is still fondly remembered in the village today having been Rector from 1936-1966. His ashes are interred in the church sanctuary to the left of the altar. The Mortar Board Hat - or Oxford Cap – was something he always wore, linking with the church’s patron Magdalene College, Oxford.

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A an electronic version of this magazine is available in pdf - contact Bill Boon for details.