

*A Place of Peace
and Reconciliation*

Easter 2024
Issue 22

As we return to more familiar patterns of worship, we urge everyone to continue to be cautious.

To find all the latest information about Sunday services and mid-week activities at St Andrew's, visit our website or Facebook page. The address is at the bottom of page 24 .

We welcome items for future editions. They should be sent to John Daymond at:
john.daymond1@btinternet.com

Deadline:
Sunday, 21 April 2024
(Pentecost Edition)

*Suggested
Contribution 75p*



Crucifixion Window

St Mary the Virgin, Staverton, Daventry

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.

A New Day, A New Dawn



Bishop Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton, is the Acting Bishop of Coventry until the vacancy is filled.

Bishop Ruth reflects on Easter Day:

'It's a new dawn, it's a new day... and I'm feeling good' sang Nina Simone. Those words came back to me as I sat to write this article. They made me think about how those early risers on that Easter morning were really feeling.

Of course, they weren't feeling good. Those women who went to the tomb early were wanting to have the opportunity to mourn fully, to express their grief for this man they had thought would change their world. He had died brutally, his life interrupted just as momentum was gathering and others were looking to join them. What on earth was God playing at?!

How often do we ask that same question? Why has God allowed this thing to happen? When someone we love suffers, is not healed when we pray, dies, then we rail at God. It's understandable, especially as we know that he could do something about it. He has the power.

I missed out a phrase from the lyrics I quoted. The missing piece ... *'it's a new life for me'*. It expressed the liberation felt by Simone in this freedom song. In the light of the civil rights movement of that era, it marked something of the new possibilities open to those who had been so cruelly ignored, rejected and discriminated against.

On that Easter morning that new life became possible in the resurrection. We know from the gospels that for some of those in the garden that day, it took time for the truth to sink in. Who can blame them! Incredulity, uncertainty, fear, were the whole range of emotions felt. The *'feeling good'* took much longer to be expressed.

But the Easter dawn does mark new life for all, for you and me. We have gained freedom and indeed forgiveness from the sin which has impeded us, has prevented us from knowing the true liberation to be found in a life in relationship with God.

However you enter the Easter garden and its story, this year, whether carrying a burden of sorrow and pain; or feeling more hopeful, I pray that each of us might leave it knowing ourselves loved, forgiven and free to grow to become more faithfully the people God has called us to be.

That liberty and freedom is not just for us to hold as a personal comfort blanket but rather something which should determine how we now live.

Those early apostles of the resurrection story, found themselves having their personal freedom restricted as they courageously told the story. But the freedom they lived out was one that transformed the world they occupied, calling out the racism of an early church which sought to keep itself pure, inviting people to break down the barriers of division between them.

A recent visit to Rugby showed me something of how Christians are offering new hope and possibility to those who are grieving the loss of a loved one; to those who are homeless, or are finding the cost of living too great to afford to feed their families. Discovering new life in Christ ourselves, causes us to desire that new life should be the experience of others too.

As we celebrate Easter this year what might that boldness signify for us? How should we now live? *'It's a new dawn, it's a new day, it's a new life'*. If we also want to *'feel good'* then we need to consider how we live out our freedom to change what is harmful and bring about God's kingdom in our community.

What seeds have we planted?

Ben Jennings, Community Engagement Lead writes: The winter season can be hard for many reasons: the continual cold, a lack of sunshine, less frequent social interaction. But when spring begins to emerge, we are faced with a question: what seeds have we planted?

The answer will guide our trajectories for the coming seasons. The answer is reflective of what we have been focussing on during the cold months. Hopefully we have dived deeply inward, and have found new things to share with the world in the warmer months.

In the rather controversial Gospel of Thomas (being an 'arty type', I've often been attracted to controversy!), Jesus states that 'if you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you'. I came across this several years ago, and it stuck with me.

I feel that Jesus trusted that we have powerful seeds within us, and a responsibility to ourselves and the world to germinate the seeds. The trouble is that when we find the seeds it can be hard to trust them. Will they grow into something beautiful? Or will they rot within us and fill us with bitterness.

But we could plant them and they could fail to germinate, they could die in their infancy. Does the seed have a fundamental quality? Is the environment primed for its growth? Will it bear fruit? It takes insight and contemplation to find our seeds within, it takes courage and faith to plant them, it takes presence and a responsible attitude to nurture them, and it takes openness to accept and enjoy the fruits which the plant eventually produces.

This analogy could go on and on. I think the point I'm making is that Spring is here, and it's time to hop to it! But it's a question worth asking: what seeds have we planted?

Wasting Time with the Everyday God



*Rev'd Canon
Dr Edmund
Newey
writes:*

In church at on a Sunday morning, do you ever think about what you'll be doing at 10.30 the following day?

Those twenty-four hours make quite a difference, don't they? Sundays aren't as different from other days as they once were: the shops are open, football is played, and at least some buses run as normal. But, for those of us who come to church, Sundays are still set apart. This, for us, is the first day of the week, the day when we remember Jesus being set free from the prison of death. This is the day when we turn aside from our everyday preoccupations to give time to God: to worship, to say sorry for what we've got wrong and thank you for what has gone well; to invite God's guidance and blessing into our lives, our neighbourhood and our world.

Monday is a different matter. For some people Mondays are miserable. Even if we enjoy school or college or work, Monday remains the day when routines are resumed, when we slot back into the pattern of everyday life. And if we're retired or unemployed or on shift work, we're still aware that this is the day when the treadmill starts up again, when the Job Centre is open, the gasman calls and the consultant can see us for our next appointment. Sometimes it's hard to make the connection between Sunday and Monday.

Even on a Sunday morning, serving and worshipping God isn't easy, but at least we have a rough idea how to go about it. Serving and worshipping God in the playground, the office, the bus queue or the surgery is a less obvious business. Yet the point of worshipping God in church on Sunday is to be in a better position to worship God everywhere all the rest of the time.

A wise person once said that worship is a waste of time: *worship is wasting time with God*. For much of our lives we're so preoccupied with ourselves, or with the next thing that has to be done, that we forget the bigger picture. Wasting time with God in worship is what opens our eyes to the things we would otherwise miss.

It helps us change our lives for the better, so that we don't overlook the child in the playground who has

nobody to play with him, the colleague in the office we needlessly offended last week, the disabled lady on the bus anxious that she's going to miss her stop, or the tearful man in the surgery waiting room who needs a prayer, whether silent or spoken.

It's on occasions like these that the God we worship on Sunday becomes known to us as the Everyday God, with us always and everywhere.

Getting To Know You



My name is James Sampson-Foster and I am pleased to say that I will be joining the family at St Andrew's to serve as Assistant Curate from July. I am currently in the final stages of my formational studies at the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham, and I will, God willing, be ordained deacon at Coventry Cathedral on Sunday 30th June.

My wife Lydia, our baby daughter Annabel and I currently live in Coventry, where we worship at Holy Trinity Church, next to the Cathedral. Lydia and I are

delighted to be joining the community at St Andrew's, having received a lovely and warm welcome when we came to visit earlier last year.

I grew up in Slough on a council estate a short distance away from the factory where Mars bars are made. I left to study Politics at the University of Warwick, where I met Lydia. After discovering how bad I am at knitting, Lydia and I married in 2017, double-barrelling our names in the process. Lydia works with Coventry Good Neighbours, a charity helping introduce befrienders to older people in the city. Before I went forward for training, I worked in Public Health at Coventry City Council, and before that as a seminar tutor at the University of Warwick.

Lydia and I like food (restaurant recommendations gratefully received), playing board games and computer games (though not Monopoly!), playing music (Lydia plays many instruments well; I play the Hurdy Gurdy badly), and sci-fi and fantasy books and films. Annabel's hobbies involve sleeping (though not when we want her to), and trying to eat anything she can get her hands on (whether we want her to or not!). I'm so excited to discover what God is doing through you all at St Andrew's.



*Rev'd Canon
Sue Hardwick
writes:*



The beautiful Dominus Flavit Church on the Mount of Olives is shaped like a teardrop.

It marks the place where, it is said, Jesus beheld Jerusalem before he entered the City for the last time on Palm Sunday and wept over it.

‘As he drew near and came in sight of the city, he shed tears over it and said: “If you too had only recognised on this day the way to peace. But in fact it is hidden from your eyes”.’*

From the Mount of Olives, down through the Valley of Kidron, to the great gate through which he enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

From his despairing tears, to the jubilant crowds who laid down their cloaks and palms torn from nearby trees in welcome.

I wonder how empty their joyous shouts must have seemed to Jesus knowing, as he did, that only a few days later they would be paying for his blood. Huge crowds had followed him throughout his public ministry, had listened to him, were healed by him, had their lives turned

upside-down and inside-out, by him.

But false voices, bearing false messages, had been insidiously at work trying to destroy all that he was, all that he stood for, all that goodness.

How triumphant these ‘voices’ must have felt when they saw Jesus being tried, flogged, spat at, dragging his Cross to his place of execution.

Yet, as he hung on his Cross, with some of his last words Jesus could ask God to forgive those who had done this to him.

I am in awe of how Jesus sets us such an example of holding together inner pain and sadness and knowledge of betrayal, with continuing what he had set out to do; of seeing the task faithfully to the end, throughout those tumultuous final days ... yet all the while knowing all that lay ahead.

His raw courage.

A stone pillar in the grounds of the Dominus Flavit Church (the words mean ‘The Lord’s Tears’) bears the following inscription:

‘Here rings anew the love of God’s lament: Mankind, made for Himself, so far from Him has strayed; here, now, the Saviour

calleth thee in love; God calleth, calleth, calleth: “Repent and come back home”.’

God’s Love and Forgiveness: never more important and more needed than in our fractured world now.

We, who attempt to walk in Jesus’ footsteps are now the healers and reconcilers; not as holier-than-thou people, but as fellow-travellers with Jesus; who walked the Holy Land making it the Land of the Holy, who lived and died and rose again, and who now walks the face of the Earth in all his many guises.

We do indeed, as the hymn says, have such a Gospel to proclaim!

*Tell of his death at Calvary
Hated by those he came to save;
In lonely suffering on the Cross
For all he loved, his life he gave.*

*Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
Empty the tomb, for he was free;
He broke the power
of death and hell*

*That we might share his victory.***

May you have a very happy and wondrous Easter!

*(Luke 19:41-42)

** (vs3 and 4 from the hymn: *We have a Gospel to proclaim*).

Being Asked

John Goddard, a member of the bell ringers, reflects on a lifetime of being 'asked':

Has the course of your life been changed by 'Being Asked'?

Thinking back on my life I found the following:

Early days saw me at my village of Long Buckby Sunday School, and at the age of 13 I was **asked** if I wanted to learn to ring church bells — obviously the answer was 'yes'. Bell ringing practice clashed with Confirmation classes, but by pedalling like mad I could catch the start and finish of the ringing practice.

Following confirmation, I was **asked** if I would like to be an altar server, which I did until getting married and moving to Rugby.

As a keen ringer, I helped out at the weekly ringing practice at Yelvertoft, and eventually **asked** Mary, a young lady learning to ring there, if she would marry me — the answer was yes, a big life-change that one!!

Having been married for about a year and having moved to Rugby I was writing out some ringing music in our office at lunchtime and an engineer walking through to the next office recognised what I was writing and **asked** me if I could help with

the St Andrew practice on a Monday evening.

Around a year later I was **asked** if I would take on the job of Tower Captain, which I did for about 50 years.

As a member of St Andrew's congregation, I was **asked** if I would become a Communion Assistant which I still am.

I was **asked** to join in a Cursillo weekend course, which is designed to deepen your Christian faith, and became a Cursillista. Several St Andrew people were on this course and they became the backbone of the Prayer Ministers some years ago.

This course gave me the confidence to become one of the volunteers at St Cross hospital giving Communion to patients when **asked**.

All this **asking** seems to be interlinked in some way, perhaps the action of our heavenly Father guiding us?

And perhaps you, dear reader, would care to think where 'Being **Asked**' has changed your life, and if in the future you see Edmund approaching with a glint in his eye, decide if a quick exit is required to avoid another life changing **Ask!**

Hopefully not!

Towers News: Is Bob to Blame?



*Christine Homer,
Bell Captain,
writes:*

There has been a lot going on since the last magazine. We have attempted a few quarter-peals before evening services, with mixed results: we have attempted Stedman doubles three times now without success, but did get one of Grandsire triples, which was a first quarter-peal for Will, shortly before Christmas.

Two visiting bands have enjoyed our bells: a group from Bristol came on 25th November, and a band for a peal attempt on 23rd December. The peal attempt failed, but they rang a quarter-peal instead.

Ringling for Remembrance Sunday was successful with no slipped muffles — a relief to me as I had fitted them!

We started handbell practices for ringing Christmas carols the following week: this always makes Christmas feel close. Julian hosted us for the first session, he has been unable to join us in the tower for some time now due to ill health and it was great to see him again. The following practices were in church.

Only three of us were available to do performances this year. We would like to add to that number: if anyone reading this is interested in having a 'go', please get in touch — it is not the same as ringing the 'big' bells (and does not require climbing the tower stairs!). Many handbell ringers (like us) start as a side-line to ringing church bells, but the two are not closely related.

Our main band members actually missed ringing handbells at the Manchester Carols, as we had our annual dinner that evening, at The Bear at Bilton. It was a good meal, and well organised by

Pip (thanks, again!). We will go back there this year, but at the end of November to avoid the date clash this time. Margery and Ted, Andy and Laura used the handbells to ring rounds before the Carols performance.

We managed to ring for all the main Christmas and New Year services, including the Midnight service on Christmas Eve and ringing in the New Year (on eight bells), with some assistance from ringers from other towers (several of us help with ringing at other towers as well).

We reduced our activity a little in January (to just practices and Sunday morning ringing) until our AGM on the 31st, where we remembered the two good friends we lost last year and elected three new members (Jane, Marlon and David).

We agreed to attempt to ring before evensong more often, targetting specific method(s) to ring: the first one after that was very well attended with several visitors as well as many from our own band attempting to ring Stedman Triples.

We proved we can ring plain courses OK. Not many of the touches came round, but some of the ringing in them was good — until it suddenly wasn't!

Or as some of the Clifton ringers used to say 'it was going well until Bob joined in' ('Bob' is an instruction to vary from the plain course when ringing a method).

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I am so excited to discover (and join in with!) what God is doing in, through, and amongst you all at St Andrew's. Please know that my prayers will be with you all in the coming months.

What Does It Mean To Be An Easter People?

Helen Bryant, Chaplain at Harris School, writes:

This year's reading on Easter Sunday will be Mark's resurrection narrative. This comes to an abrupt ending, 'They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid' — and well they might be. The week preceding this event had probably been traumatic, bewildering and they had already risked much by coming to the tomb to care for Jesus' body.

Read the passage now, you might want to imagine the story in your mind.

Mark 16:1-8: *When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, 'Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?'*

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you".'

Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

The women who come to Jesus' tomb early on Sunday morning find it opened and empty. They see a young man in

white robes, who tells them that Jesus is raised. They are to tell the disciples to go to Galilee where they will meet Jesus, risen as he had told them. With little else to go on (as yet), the women are both amazed and terrified, and afraid to speak to anyone.

This Gospel passage tells us that Easter joy was not immediate for the disciples. What does this mean for us? How can it help us to deal with the continuing pain of living in a suffering world? How can it help us live as Easter people?

Mark's Gospel conveys the very human emotions felt by those who witnessed the empty tomb. The women don't see the risen Jesus but witness the signs – the rolled stone, the man in white, the empty tomb. There's an invitation for them to put the pieces together to fully understand what has happened.

So much of our faith is a process of understanding. In a world of fast-moving news and social media, faith for many young people is about finding the signs, making connections and discerning the truth.

I wonder if you might like to spend time with this resurrection narrative story, in the run up to Easter, looking for the truth, considering where God speaks to you through the words and pausing to think about what it means for you to be an Easter person.

Here are some questions that you might want to prayerfully consider:

What are the reactions of the three women who visit the tomb?

How does the Easter message transform your life?

What does it mean for St Andrew's and the communities to which you belong, to be shaped by the joy and wonder of the resurrection?

Direct Cremation

The following article first appeared in the blog Theology Everywhere, written by Rev John Lampard, a Methodist Supernumerary Minister in London

'The way we treat the dead is an indication of the way we treat the living'. You may have seen, on television, on the web and even on the London Underground, advertisements for 'Direct Cremation' (some call them Pure Funerals).

It is what it says on the coffin. Your relation's or friend's body is collected from a hospital or morgue, cremated without ceremony, and a few days later you either receive their ashes in a cardboard box, or they are anonymously scattered somewhere at the crematorium.

There is no preparation of the body, no viewing, no contact (apart from 'phone or email) with the cremation arranger, no viewing, no hearse, no service. What you do with the ashes, if you elect to receive them, is up to you.

You can arrange a funeral service, or not. You can dispose of them any way you wish within the law and your own level of 'taste'. In the USA this service is known as 'Cash and Ash'. An increasing number of established funeral directors are offering this service, but there are now at least twenty new 'disruptors' who have

entered the market. They can operate from home, making all the arrangements on line or on the 'phone, with no storage facilities, using any vehicle to transport the body.

Costs for this service vary, but it can be half the cost of a modest funeral, so it is attractive to people who cannot or do not want to pay ever-increasing funeral costs.

There are many social implications of this new trend, but there are also ethical and theological issues for Christians.

Unfortunately the Christian churches have never faced up to the fact that the standard 'choices' burial and cremation are not alternatives. With burial there is no remainder; with cremation there are several kilos of undisposed of remains which need to be disposed in one way or another.

Should the ashes be treated with the same respect as the body? Is cremation a religious act, requiring liturgy and the presence of a minister? Are there Christian and non-Christian ways of disposal? What routes are there for pastoral care for the bereaved from funeral directors, officiants, or those to whom the bereaved might be directed?

The Catholic Church, back in 2016, issued instructions that following cremation, ashes should not be

scattered but buried, and also should not be used to make jewellery etc, or kept in an urn on the mantelpiece, or divided among members of the family.[i] It argues that Christians should be buried (as a body or as ashes) as Christ was buried.

If cremation is viewed as a non-religious act, but simply as a method of preparation of the body for final disposal, are there any Christian objections to the growing practice?

Is there pastoral value in the common practice today of a 'private' cremation followed by a church service? Is the 'committal' at the crematorium a false parallel to burial? Could a new Christian model for a funeral be prior 'direct cremation', a church service with the ashes, immediate burial of the ashes, and a communal coming together?

The shape of my own funeral service is still uncertain in my mind. Much depends on the age I reach and family circumstances. I cannot see any Christian objections if there is cremation first and no coffin in church. This could mean 'direct cremation' followed by a service.

I know that I want a forward looking *funeral* service and not a backward looking service of thanksgiving. The one certainty I hold to is that I want my ashes be buried in 'holy ground'. The one hope I hold is that within the ultimate mystery I may rise with Christ.

[i] (2016) 'Ad resurgendum cum Christo' (To rise with Christ).

Who is the funeral for?

Rev Rob Anning writes: The service sheet for the last funeral I attended had a lovely picture on the front of my friend. It also had his full name (which I never knew) and his date of birth and his date of death. Another friend rang me a few days before the funeral and said: 'Are you going to Ron's funeral'.

It was Ron's funeral but apart from the commendation when we placed Ron's spirit into God's hands, there was nothing else we could do for him.

I'm sure the service, which went well, was a comfort to his wife and family. They had done the best they could to ensure his end was comfortable and dignified and 'he had a good send off'. We also prayed for them, and those relatives and friends, who hadn't managed to get to the service.

The rest of the congregation had heard an account of Ron's life, how he had used his time here on earth, and perhaps reflected on what we might have learnt from his time.

But perhaps most important of all, God, not Ron, was at the centre of the worship. There was a recognition that God had given Ron life, that God had travelled with Ron throughout his life, and there was the hope that life did not end with the here and now.

Since then I have pondered on how the funeral played a significant part in our grief and how I might have felt if I had not had this final opportunity to say 'goodbye'.

So it feels like the funeral was not just Ron's but for us all.

Dying Really Does Matter:



Rev'd Sharon Crofts, Associate Minister & UHCW NHS Trust Chaplain for Compassionate Communities, writes:

So Let's Talk About It . . .

I appreciate that this title may put you off reading on, but for those of you who choose to stick with this, I feel it imperative to convey the importance of talking about death and dying and especially with those we love.

It's important to normalise dying and death because it is a normal part and fact of life. Many of us don't want to talk about this subject because we find it painful to think about the inevitable, sometimes for ourselves and especially when we think about this in relation to our loved ones. As a result the majority of us don't talk about death and dying at all and by not talking about this ordinary part of life, we are de-normalising something that is, in reality, that happens to everyone.

Dr Kathryn Mannix, an experienced and well renowned palliative care consultant, seeks to normalise the 'taboo' of dying, encouraging education and conversation on this subject. On her webpage www.kathrynmannix.com she states:

'We have no cure for death. We're getting better at postponing it, but sooner or later it comes to us all. So getting informed and prepared seems a good idea. We have no workarounds for daunting conversations. Whether we like it or not, sometimes we have to take a deep breath and get into a conversation that we might have preferred to avoid'.

In her introduction to her book 'With the End in Mind' Dr Mannix writes: *"When it comes to the big questions of birth, death, love, loss or transformation, everyone frames their experience through the lense of what they already know"* – our lived experience. She goes on to say *'Whereas birth, love, and even bereavement are widely discussed, death itself has become increasingly taboo'.*

In my working and personal experience the subject of dying and death is one that even those dying will often choose to avoid, but there are just as many people

who want to talk about their impending death but their loved ones are often not wanting or prepared to engage with this subject, and so the dying are left in a difficult place not being able to have that important conversation. This is where 'normalising' conversation around dying and death is important for those who choose or wish to talk about it. Certainly in my role in supporting people who are palliative I know it can be important to provide that opportunity for people to reflect on their lives lived and what is important for them as they journey towards the end of their lives.

In our Bereavement Points too, most of our group members want to share the story of what happened for their loved one, and themselves, as their loved one came to the end of their life. Here I wish to pause and acknowledge the importance of recognising that death can also be sudden and unexpected and can happen at any stage of life or even before life gets to begin with a first breath. Acknowledging such deaths and allowing people to talk about the pain they experience of their loved one's death are as valid as acknowledging a journey towards death and in going through a natural and normal process of dying.

Now, all this said, death remains a difficult subject. It feels like it is not normal and that is partly due to the history of dying and death, particularly in the past century where dying and death has become much more medicalised and clinicalised. Much of our dying now happens in hospitals or hospices where medical and clinical care is provided to the end. When people die outside of those

environments, a doctor or medical professional will ultimately be called to certify a person has died and normally their body will be taken away to a mortuary awaiting a funeral.

Ordinarily, as soon as the deceased person's loved ones are able to consider arranging a funeral, we head to the other professionals — the funeral directors — who then take over the responsibility for genuinely caring for our loved ones following death. A good funeral director is brilliant. They are experienced professionals who know all the rules and regulations around registering a death, burials and cremations. They are able to take responsibility, guide and advise us as well as support our needs at what is often one of the most difficult experiences of our lives, and that is helpful and reassuring.

All of the care, given in support of our loved ones' dying and subsequent death, has meant though that we are no longer engaged in dying and death in the same way we historically used to be and possibly due to medicalisation and clinicalisation we have become unused to someone dying amongst us within our community. Again, here I want to acknowledge that is wonderful that for some we have so many choices as to where or how we might die but for others we don't. In days of old, ordinary people generally didn't have access to medics or hospital and nursing care. In days of old we died at home surrounded by our loved ones, our neighbours and community. Following a death the body would remain at home for a while for the community to gather and share in mourning before the body was taken away to be buried.

Grief was just as difficult – grief is always difficult, but because death was shared and experienced within our community, often grief would be better supported in that shared experience.

Today, many people who are grieving their loved ones feel unable to share their grief with others. Some people will avoid a grieving person because they don't know what to say or simply don't want to say the wrong thing and upset their grieving relative or friend. But a grieving person may want to immerse themselves in the story of their loved one's dying and death for a long while. They will certainly want to immerse themselves in the stories of their loved one's life by sharing memories. That's why the offer of a good listening ear is really important for a bereaved person.

It's interesting though that Christians willingly engage in Jesus' life and his death, and of course his resurrection all the time. Through Lent and Holy Week we will journey with Jesus towards Jerusalem in the knowledge of his impending death. On Good Friday, we know Jesus is crucified and will sit with Jesus for the three hours it takes for him to die – just as his family and his disciples did. On that Friday evening, some of Jesus' community, having asked permission to remove him from the cross on which he was killed, come and take him down, wash and anoint his body, preparing Jesus for burial before laying his body to rest in a tomb.

On Easter Sunday we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead with stories shared by his community of their witness and experience of encountering him in the days and

weeks afterwards. For Christians we are engaging in Jesus' dying, death and resurrection every Sunday.

It is so important to provide safe spaces for people to talk about both dying and death. Please let me encourage you to be that person who someone feels safe to talk to and share with.

Offering a listening ear to give someone the time to talk about what matters to them in their experience of journeying towards death or someone who is bereaved can be invaluable to that person.

Dr Mannix has produced a short video which seeks to remove the fear of dying and what we might witness should we find ourselves accompanying our loved ones in their dying. In it she says: *'Dying, just like being born, is a process our bodies go through quite naturally, with recognised phases which are pretty much the same for everyone. It's all very ordinary'*.

So let's work to make the conversation about dying and death ordinary too. To this end I'd like to invite you to join me for our Community Conversation in St Andrew's Church on Wednesday 1st May at 10.30am. Our conversation focus will be about all things dying and death. This conversation will lead into *Dying Matters* week which runs between 6th – 12th May, whose focus is on how we talk about dying matters. If you've never talked about this subject before and are intrigued, or you simply feel it's important to share your experiences please come and join me. There will be no agenda other than dying and death being the subject.

Easter Mystery — A Quantum Reflection

I hear the Easter Story, a story of betrayal and anger,
of sadness and despair, of agony and anguish, of loss.

A story of hope?
A story of life beyond death?
A mystery!

Jesus is a name given to a relationship of energy.
Jesus is the body. The body died. The body was put in the tomb
But that which gave consciousness to the body was never in the tomb!

Jesus was not resurrected, the body was not brought back to life.
That which gave consciousness to the body was not resurrected
for it was never dead, it is for all time.

Life as we know it is a box of time in the space of infinity; a reality of our
choosing; a choice we have forgotten and the remembering of which is the
quest of our life, glimpsed through moments when our soul connects to the
beyond and we fly; when we do not see with our eyes but with our whole; when
we leave the physical and move to the energy without.

When for a fleeting moment 'I am' becomes 'we are' and oneness is reality.
We reach for the reality of oneness for this is to be fully human.

A man from Nazareth, in that moment of history 'I am' became physical,
a relationship of energy creating the illusion of matter but for all time 'I am'.
His name in this moment is Jesus, a name given by his physical mother
and father, but for all time 'I am'.

For this moment I am physical, a relationship of energy creating an illusion
of matter but for all time 'I am'.
My name in this moment is Heather, a name given by my physical mother
and father but for all time 'I am'.

My life is continuous but in different realities; for now I am on a quest to
remember the life beyond this life and to connect with the 'I am' of eternity, the
unbounded energy of the cosmos, that, which in this reality I call God.

My example is Jesus who showed that the connection is possible
when all had forgotten they were connected.

*Written by Rev Heather Whyte, a United Reformed Church minister in the South West.
(This item was submitted by Sue Goddard).*

The Mission Hub and Lent



*Rev'd Alison Baxter,
Associate Minister
with responsibility
for the Mission Hub,
gives us an insight
into some of her work
during Lent:*

As we undertake the period of lent I would like to share with you what St. Andrew's Benn School is learning about this period. As many of you know this is happening through the development of a Choir Church which is held there.

Choir Church is a model for new worshipping communities, built around children's choirs in schools. The idea is to offer an opportunity for children to develop musical skills whilst also growing spiritually while they discuss issues on social justice. We are very fortunate at St Andrew's to have a skilled junior choir leader – Rachel Cliffe who co-leads Choir Church with me and focuses on teaching the music while I focus on discussion aspects of social justice with the children.

Although Choir Church is based in the school and runs as an after school club, the plan is that once a term this experience will be opened to the wider community of parents, teachers, neighbours and friends as an act of worship. Our first act of worship with parents, as well as the children, will be held at St Andrew's Benn School in the final week of term before the children break up for the Easter holidays.

So, what have they been learning about lent and what will they be learning this term? Due to the fact that the period of lent started in half term our first session back after the school holiday focused on pancake day and why pancake day exists. They learnt that the reason we have this day is because it's the last chance for indulgence before 40 days of fasting, and an opportunity to use up food that traditionally couldn't be eaten during Lent. This included eggs, fat and milk, which were made into pancakes and eaten on that day.

The children enjoyed playing a game about pancakes and thinking about what type of pancake filling they would have! They also spent time thinking about why we give things up for lent.

In preparation for our worship session just before Easter, Rachel taught them a song about forgiveness as well a 'forgiveness groove' song which as the name suggests involves lots of groovy dance moves! It was an instant hit with the children.

The morning after this choir church session I was invited to do an assembly at the school which considered why we observe the period of lent. I based the assembly on the need to focus and what happens when we don't focus, using the story of Jonah. He was a great example of someone who lost his focus when he got scared of God's call to go to the people of Ninevah and preach the Gospel to them, so that they could repent from the things they were doing wrong. As we all know this ended badly with him being swallowed by a whale hence having lots of time to repent from the bad decision he'd made to run away.

After hearing this story the children then thought about the concept of lent being a period where we put things aside to focus more on our relationship with God in order to get ready for Easter.

As I write this article we are still in the period of lent so in future weeks the children who attend Choir

Church will be considering the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, why the act of fasting can bring us closer to God and why sometimes instead of fasting people do the opposite and take something up instead, such as the 40 days of generosity challenge: <https://40acts.org.uk/>.

The period of lent can sometimes feel like a challenge in terms of the need to wait. I don't know about you but this is something I'm not particularly good at. I think the reason for my impatience is that in the fast paced world that we live in we are used to instant everything. A full meal can be reheated within minutes, text messages can be sent worldwide in seconds, news travels the moment it happens, and for many people almost anything they could ever want or need is generally only a short drive from their homes at the nearest superstore. All of this fosters a tendency to want what we want when we want it.

This mindset often carries over into our spiritual lives with us wanting God to act NOW! Yet, this is not how God works. Often he uses this period of waiting to develop us as people. This is the lesson Rachel and I are trying to teach the children at St Andrew's Benn School. It's a lesson which is good for us all to learn.

Let's pray that in this period of lent we can put time aside to wait on God, listen to what he is trying to tell us so that when Easter comes we can truly give thanks for the greatest gift ever.

The Joy of Writing a Diary



*John Howes,
Lay Worship
Leader,
writes:*

Do you write a diary? I've been writing one for much of my adult life — not every day, but most days, and in varying amounts of detail.

I haven't had a remarkable life. In fact, it's been very ordinary for much of the time, but, in a way, that is the point.

At the end of a day, I would reach for the diary next to my bed and scribble down a few comments on the previous 24 hours and try to be as honest as possible. In the past couple of years, I have changed strategy, jotting down thoughts on my mobile 'phone and then, periodically, transferring them to a much bigger document on my computer.

Why do we do all this? Who is really interested? We know that the diaries of well-known people continue to be objects of fascination. Perhaps the most famous diary of all, written by a young Dutch girl, Anne Frank, has educated millions of young people about the Holocaust. Other famous diaries include Samuel Pepys' description of 17th century London life, Michael Palin's exhaustive record of life in comedy and writing, and Tony Benn's series depicting political life in the 20th century.

But what about the rest of us who will only be remembered by a few? I suppose I make the effort to write a diary because I want people in the future to know what it was like to live a fairly ordinary existence in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It's in the diaries of the humdrum, rather than the famous or infamous, that we discover the reality of everyday existence. For instance, the wartime diaries of Nella, known as 'Housewife 49', were part of the Mass Observation Project which aimed to record how the Second World War affected daily life in Britain. Victoria Wood later played the part in a memorable film.

Some diaries can tell us very little, in the style of, 'Got up, went to work, came home, watched TV'. However, it's possible to write a diary, based on the same uneventful day, but to fill it with interest because we can describe our feelings about what's happened and include the details of what we have seen.

Anyway, I thought I would look back to Good Friday last year and see what was going on. Here's what I wrote:

*Friday April 7th, Good Friday:
Sunshine welcomes us this morning. The
tomato seeds have sprouted on the
bedroom windowsill. I read some poems
from the 'happy' collection. Poetry gives
such rewards first thing in the morning. I
tune in the Vatican stream on YouTube to
watch the Holy Thursday mass and it is
inspiring despite the very maleness of
those attending. Lizzy says, you've been
there. What is it like? More of a museum
than a church, I say, though still
impressive. A squirrel is hanging upside
down from Jim's feeder next door when I
look out of the window and, during a stroll
in the garden, I notice a blackbird singing
away at the top of the amelanchier tree.*

*Mother and father call in and I make us all
coffees. Gabriel comes back from a walk
part-way through and we discuss his
holiday plans. My parents had a new
yellow carpet put down in the lounge
yesterday and seem pretty happy with the
result.*

*Lizzy and I go to church for 2pm for the
liturgy. It is rather trying as ever on a
Good Friday but it is supposed to be like
that. In the morning, our toaster had gone
bang so we go to Asda and buy a new
one from their George range. The noise
and crowd in Asda make me long for the
quiet of church. Pleasant sunshine all day.
Gabriel struggles over a maths problem
but cracks it by teatime.
Tonight he chooses Final Destination 2 as
the movie and we all enjoy its silly shocks.*

As you can see, this is hardly going to
change history but might have some
value and some entertainment
possibilities in the future. I enjoy looking
back on the details — the squirrel, the
broken toaster, the new carpet —
insignificant to many, yet important to
me.

In the past I have enjoyed the diaries of
Trappist monk Thomas Merton who wrote
long entries almost every day of his life in

the monastery. You would think that little
changed from day to day but I find his
reflections consistently interesting and
often uplifting. Currently, I am reading
Henri Nouwen's book, *The Genesee
Diary*. Nouwen was a priest, author and
respected academic. The book describes
his seven-month stay in a Trappist
monastery in New York State. Nouwen is
a wonderful, honest writer and it
becomes clear that his stay is a mixture
of helpful, spiritual development coupled
with downright irritation.

For instance, someone criticises his
efforts in the monastery bakery and this
plunges him into 'a deep, morose mood'
full of hostile feelings. We've all been
there. He has dark thoughts about
himself, his past and all the work he has
done. He struggles with not being
noticed, not getting any mail, with no-one
appreciative of who he is and how well-
known he is, yet he comes to accept that
none of this really matters.

Later the same day, his mood is
completely different after a period of
prayer, reflecting that, 'it is not I who
pray, but the spirit of God who prays in
me'. This is stirring stuff, followed by the
beautiful sentence: 'When God's glory
dwells in me, there is nothing too far
away, nothing too painful, nothing too
strange or too familiar that it cannot
contain and renew by its touch'. So, in
amongst the trivial feelings of irritation,
annoyance and jealousy, we find these
pearls of great price. And life is like that:
plenty of weeds but the occasional
stunning flower, if we only have the time
and make the effort to notice them.

My challenge to you is to take up your
pen or computer or mobile 'phone and
write a diary of thoughts and of detail.
Don't let it be a burden but see it as a
joyful way of passing on the experiences
you are having now to future generations.
They will be grateful for what you have
left behind.

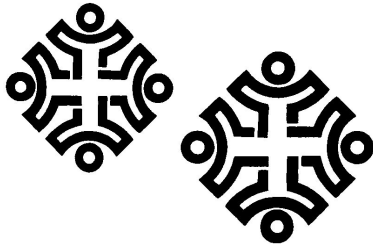
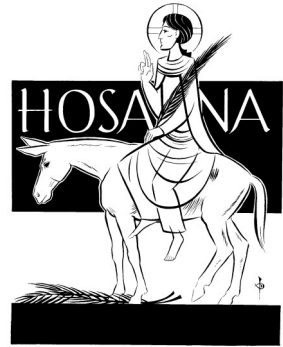
Easter Services

Sunday 24 March — Palm Sunday

08.00 BCP Holy Communion
10.30 Choral Eucharist with Donkeys in the Gardens
18.00 Choral Evensong

Monday 25 March

09.00 Morning Prayer
12.00 Holy Week Midday Prayer
19.00 Compline



Tuesday 26 March

09.00 Morning Prayer
09.30 Reflective Communion
12.00 Holy Week Midday Prayer
19.00 Compline

Wednesday 27 March

09.00 Morning Prayer
12.00 Holy Week Midday Prayer
19.00 Compline

Thursday 28 March — Maundy Thursday

09.00 Morning Prayer
12.00 Holy week Midday Prayer
19.00 Eucharist with Foot Washing and Vigil to 22.00

Friday 29 March — Good Friday

09.00 Morning Prayer
10.00 Walk of Witness — starting at Baptist Church
returning to St Andrews for Hot X Buns and Drinks
12.00 to 15.00 — Good Friday Liturgy
12.00 to 13.00 — Good Friday Reflections
13.00 to 14.00 — Good Friday Reflections
14.00 to 15.00 — Good Friday Liturgy



Saturday 30 March — Holy Saturday

20.00 the Easter Vigil and Service of Light

Sunday 31 March — Easter Day

08.00 BCP Holy Communion
10.30 Festal Eucharist



Who's Who at St Andrew's

Rector: The Rev'd Canon Dr Edmund Newey
01788 574313 mobile: 07414 904931
rector@rugbychurch.org.uk *Note: Day off Saturday*

Associate Minister (Compassionate Communities):
The Rev'd Sharon Crofts, sharon.crofts@uhcw.nhs.uk

Associate Minister (Mission Hub): The Rev'd Alison Baxter,
missionhub@rugbychurch.org.uk

Retired Clergy: The Rev'd Barry Collins, The Rev'd Pam Gould,
The Rev'd William Griffiths, The Rev'd Canon Graham Hardwick,
The Rev'd Peter Privett, The Rev'd Peter Beresford

Lay Ministers: Sue Goddard, Gwyneth Hickman, Sue Minton

Children's Ministry: childrenandfamily@rugbychurch.org.uk
(the email is being monitored, however should you prefer, please do not hesitate to contact The Rector as above).

Youth Ministry Lead: Magz Parmenter, sayf@rugbychurch.org.uk

Music Team:

Director of Music: William Uglow, directorofmusic@rugbychurch.org.uk

Junior Choir Trainer: Rachel Cliffe, youngchoristers@rugbychurch.org.uk

St Andrew's Community Singers:
Conductor: Amie Boyd amiemusic01@gmail.com
Membership Enquiries: John Howes shoparound1983@gmail.com

Parish Administrator: Kate Foster, 01788 565609, office@rugbychurch.org.uk

Community Engagement Lead: Ben Jennings. ben.jennings@rugbychurch.org.uk

Wardens: Joyce Woodings, warden1@rugbychurch.org.uk
Hash Mistry, warden2@rugbychurch.org.uk

Assistant Wardens: Ian Sheppard, asstwarden1@rugbychurch.org.uk
Bryan Acford, asstwarden2@rugbychurch.org.uk

Bell Tower Captain: Christine Homer

St Andrew's Church Website: www.standrewrugby.org.uk

Here we come a-wassailing at May Blossom Farm

