

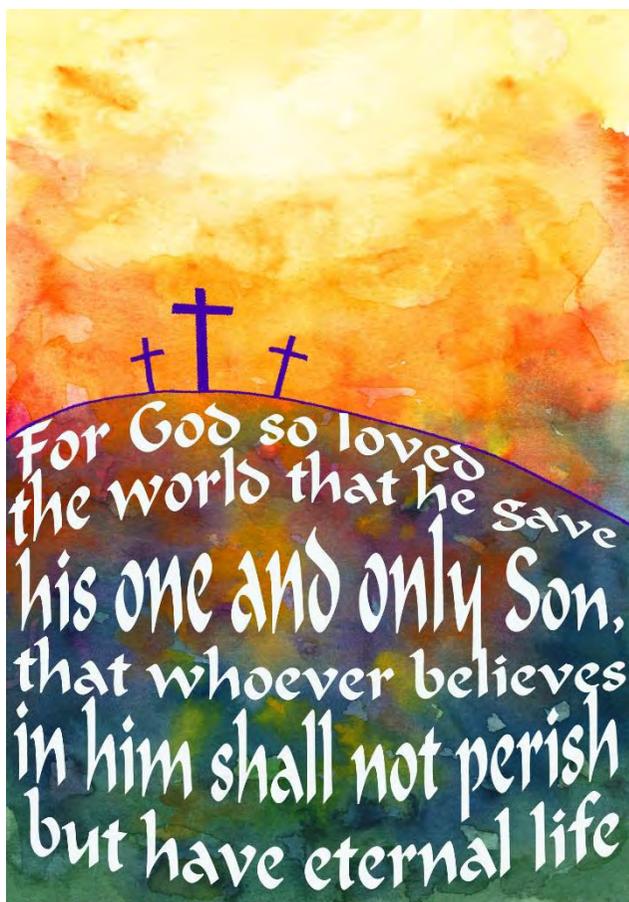


Ryburn
BENEFICE

Connected

April 2021

The Churches of:
St Luke's Norland,
St Peter's Sowerby
St Mary's
Cottonstones,



Church Contacts

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St Mary's Community Centre

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St Peter's Community Centre, Sowerby HX6 1HB

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Church Services

Sunday worship services in our Churches have now resumed, subject to the usual Covid-19 restrictions regarding the wearing of a mask; observing social distancing; handwashing on entering and leaving the building etc.

Sunday 4th April Easter Day

Eucharist Service St. Peter's Church 10am

Eucharist Service St. Mary's Church 11.30am

Eucharist Service St. Luke's Church 3.30pm

The RSCM invite you to join them on their YouTube channel during

Holy Week and on Easter Day for four short services led by Revd Canon Peter Moger, with choral contributions from those who participated in The Way of the Cross course. If you want links to any of the above please send an email to kencuttle@aol.com

Revd Jeanette will be on sabbatical **from 5th April to 16th July**. During this time the church wardens will be the primary contacts in their respective churches. Please hold Revd Jeanette, Julie and Dylan in your prayers during this time.

Don't forget to look us up on the web & Facebook

www.ryburnbenefice.org



SaintPeter's Church Sowerby

Vicar: Revd Jeanette Roberts tel 01422 646 371

jeanette.roberts@leeds.anglican.org

Reflected Faith: with all your soul, strength and mind

The Revd Dr Jo White: what it really means to wait -

This month I'm thinking about what we are all 'doing' in times of 'waiting'. It's very easy to just sit quietly and let the time pass by or just fill it in. Not exactly wasting time, but not using it for any useful purpose either.

But as Christians we live in expectation all the time, don't we? We live in the hope and promise of Christ's return – even though we don't know the 'when' or the 'where'.

Of course, there's waiting and there's waiting. I won't say I'm the most patient person I know! If the internet goes down or something mechanical takes a few seconds too long to process, you can often hear me chuntering. But there are other times when the waiting itself is precious. I'm thinking this month of when we receive the bread and wine at the distribution of Holy Communion.

Perhaps you have avoided church since the original lockdown in March, or been going but not receiving communion, or indeed you have been participating with an online service with your own equivalents at home. Whichever it is for you, cast your mind back to when you were last in that position – or indeed look forward to when we are all able to gather together again and we 'queue' to approach the altar.

Actually, we don't 'queue'. We 'process' to the altar. We join the procession – a line of like-minded people with a similar intention to receive Christ. A time of physical movement and spiritual anticipation for holding those elements of Christ Himself: God being placed into our hands. How amazing is that!

What do you think about when you are processing and waiting for Holy Communion? Are you conscious of those around you or immersed in the moment? Do you pray quietly to yourself, join in with the singing or let your mind focus on the moment?

Hello God ...

Easter Morning

(John 20:1-18)

Who is it you are looking for?

Who?

Mary,

Looking for her Lord,

Early in the morning,

While it was still dark,

Looking for Jesus,

Expecting His death-wrapped body,

Finding, instead, the stone of surprises and loss.

The men come and go,

But Mary stays and weeps

For the love of her Lord.

Looking, looking into the darkness,

She weeps.

Angels in white turn her to the light,

And the possibility of grace.

And in the speaking of her name,

the world changes.

Mary.

Looking, looking no longer,

The Lord lives, gloriously,

For Mary.

He lives for all who look.

Who is it you are looking for?

Who?

By Daphne Kitching



The Way

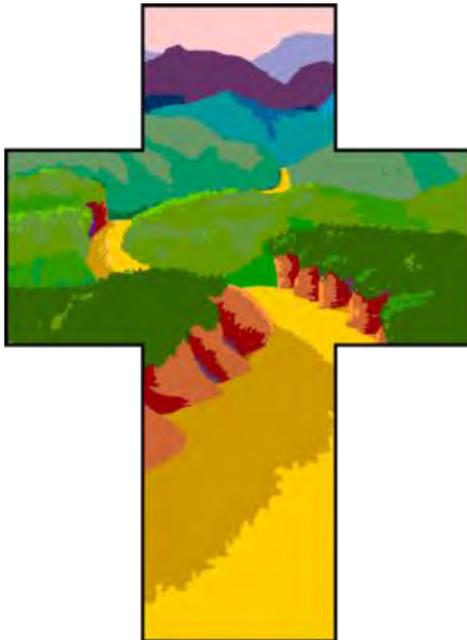
Come, still your hearts, let troubles go
For you believe in Me,
And I am with you, I will show
The way ahead of thee.



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



Thy Kingdom Come global prayer movement's plans for 2021

Thy Kingdom Come, the ecumenical prayer movement for evangelisation, uniting Christians in nearly 90% of countries worldwide from the Ascension to Pentecost, will be run differently this year, from the **13th-23rd May**.

Thy Kingdom Come - which is led by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and has attracted the support of His Holiness Pope Francis in recent years - will offer a selection of new resources and ways in which worshipping communities can participate - despite ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

New resources for 2021 will include an 11-part family-friendly animation series; video reflections from influential Christian voices such as Bear Grylls, Bishop of Dover Rose Hudson-Wilkin and Archbishop Angaelos, and this year's Prayer Journal, penned by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell.

A special **video message from Archbishop Justin Welby**, who will be on study leave during this year's 11-day prayer period, will also be shown.

While prayer for evangelisation remains at the heart of Thy Kingdom Come, this year the resources are designed to encourage worshipping communities, families and individuals who may have struggled with the idea of Church at Home.

For families, there is an 11-part children's video series called Cheeky Pandas – packed with Bible stories, prayers, animation, worship songs and interviews with special guests including Adventurer, Bear Grylls, CBeebies Presenter Gemma Hunt, Revd Nicky Gumbel (HTB and Alpha) and Pastor Agu and Shola (Jesus House) to name a few. The video series (which will be available from early April onwards) can be used as part of church at home, gathered church (online and offline) and in

school assemblies. Similar to last year, the series will be the main content in the **Family Prayer Adventure Map and App**.

For Youth, Thy Kingdom Come are working with the Archbishop of York's Youth Trust to produce a selection of youth resources including a series of video reflections from young influential Christians such as the current Methodist Youth President - Phoebe Parkin, rapper and author - Guvna B, Worship Leader- Elle Limebear, Spoken Word Artist - Joshua Luke Smith and many more.

Other new resources include the Prayer Journal, written by the Archbishop of York, - aimed at inspiring readers to re-encounter the love and joy found in Jesus Christ and this year's Novena.

The award-winning Thy Kingdom Come app, available in nine languages, will for the first time, include audio content from 24-7 Prayer's Lectio 365 with audio reflections from Pete Greig, Archbishop Justin and 24-7 Prayer GB UK Director, Carla Harding.

This year Thy Kingdom Come is also giving away 100,000 copies of the Prayer Journal and Family Prayer Adventure Map to UK churches, as long as P&P is covered.

Emma Buchan, Thy Kingdom Come Project Director, said: *"We really want TKC to inspire people in their relationships with Christ, and to resource children and young people in fun, spiritually nourishing ways.*

"We hope and pray Pentecost is a time of great joy after what has been such a challenging season."

Now in its sixth year, Thy Kingdom Come has grown from an initial call to prayer from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Anglican Communion, to a worldwide ecumenical prayer movement.

The story of Norland Church continues ...

When St Luke's church was built, Colonel Ackroyd kindly donated a Silver Communion Set which for many years was stored in a large box in church as it was as far too big for present day use. It was donated to Bankfield Museum for safe keeping several years ago and is now on display at the entrance to the Chapel there.

On February 9th, 1922 the Parish of Norland became united with the Parish of Christ Church Sowerby Bridge, whose vicar was Canon Elphinstone, and so he became the vicar of both churches until 1931. This situation continued until 2006 and the vicars that served throughout this time were:

1993-35 Rev Hugh G Potter

1936-46 Rev Douglas W Scott

1946-55 Rev Harold Palmer

1957-73 Rev Frederick Lambert

1974-85 Rev John Townend

1985- 98 Rev Peter Jeffery

2000-06 Rev Peter Stoodley

In April 1930 after an interval of many years, presumably because of the war, a 2 day Daffodil Bazaar was held to raise money for the Church Day School Norland and a proposed organ fund. The aim was to raise £200!

The present organ was subsequently installed in the 1930's.

It had to be hand blown until the 1950's, when it was electrified.

Lt. Col. Tom Jagger who was born at Pickwood Scar, and attended Norland School, recalled being brought out of school to pump the organ for funerals.

He also sang in the Church Choir, which was very strong in the 1930's, and remembered rehearsing for the Messiah, when the famous singer Walter Widdop, who was born in Norland, was invited to sing with them. He also

remembered the Whit Walks that went down Dye House Lane, along Harper Royd Lane and up by the Golf Links, following the then Parish Boundary.



This photo was taken after the organ was installed in 1934 and the oil lamps showing on last month's photo had been removed.

Jenny Longbottom

#####

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?'

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

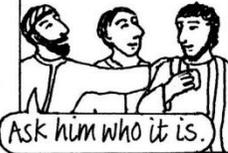
It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 26: 20-25, 31-35, Mark 14: 17-21, 27-31
Luke 22: 22, 31-34, John 13: 21-30, 36-38

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.



Jesus dipped a piece
of bread in sauce, and
gave it to Judas.



What you are about to do
you must do quickly.



Why has Judas gone out?



They continued
the Passover meal

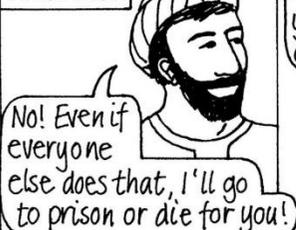


Jesus then told the rest of the
disciples

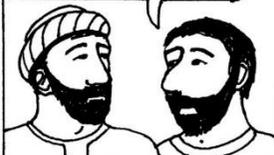
When the time
comes, you will
all run away.
'When the shepherd is struck,
the sheep scatter.'* * Zech 13:7



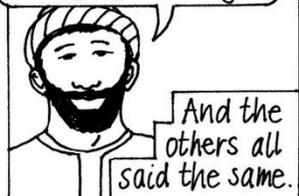
Peter said

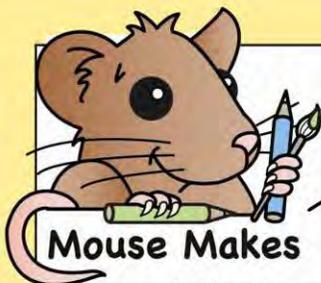


Before tomorrow morning
you will have denied you
even know me 3 times.



Even if I have to die, I
will never disown you!





Mouse Makes

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

SON OF GOD

Matthew 3:16-17



KING OF KINGS

Revelation 17:14

PROPHET

Luke 24:19



PRIEST

1 Timothy 2:5

ROCK

1 Corinthians 10: 4

LORD

1 Corinthians 1:9

AMEN

Revelation 3:14

LIFE

John 11:25-27

MESSIAH

John 1:41

SHEPHERD

John 10:11

LIGHT

John 8:12



WORD

John 1:1-50



BREAD

John 6:35

CREATOR

1 John 1:3



CHRIST

Matthew 16:16

SAVIOUR

John 3:16-17

HOLY ONE

Mark 1:24

VINE

John 15:5



DOOR

John 10:9

THE WAY

WAY

John 14:6

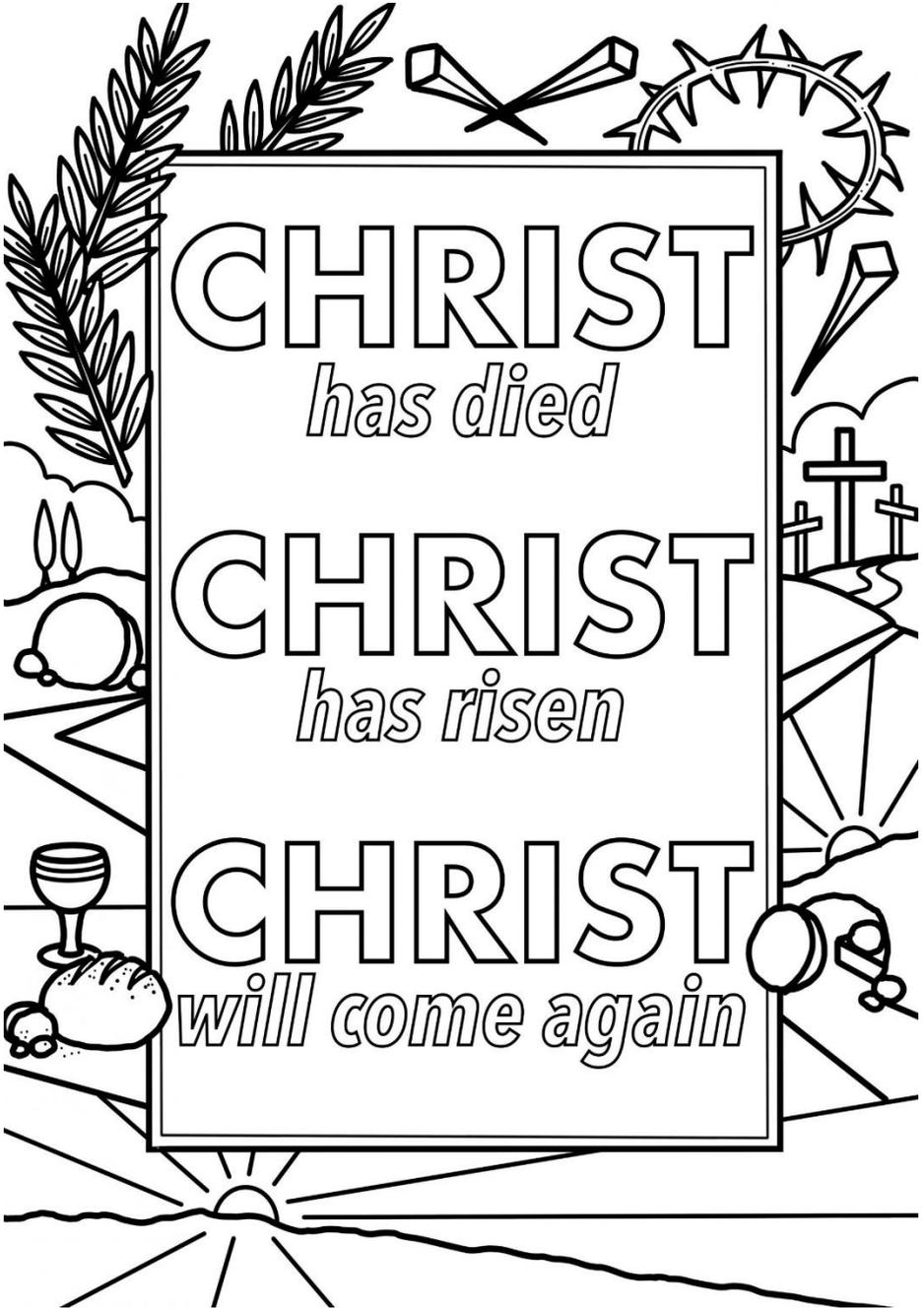
LAMB

John 1:29



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

To Print out and Colour ...



Easter Story Biscuits for young children

Prep. Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 1 day

Ingredients:

110 grams of pecan nuts

5 grams vinegar

3 egg whites

1 pinch salt

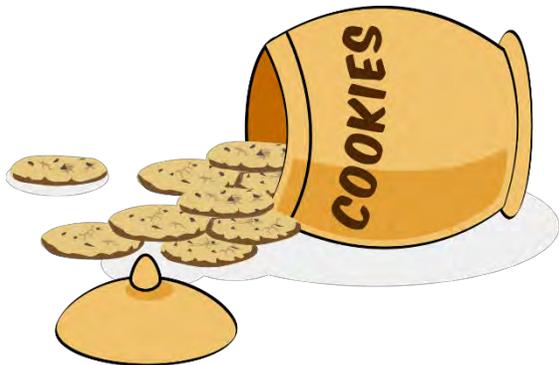
200 grams sugar

large plastic bag

wooden spoon

tape

Bible



Instructions:

Preheat oven to 150C

Place pecans in the plastic bag and let the children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, He was beaten by the Roman soldiers. Read John 19:1-3.

Let each child smell the vinegar. Put vinegar into mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross He was given vinegar to drink. Read John 19:28-30.

Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life. Read John 10:10-11.

Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin. Read Luke 23:27.

So far the ingredients are not very appetising...

Add sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know and belong to Him. Read Ps. 34:8 and John 3:16.

Beat with a mixer on high speed until stiff peaks are formed. Explain that the colour white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. Read Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3.

Fold in broken nuts.

Drop by teaspoons onto non-stick baking parchment-covered baking sheet. Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. Read Matthew 27:57-60.

Put the baking sheet in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF. Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed. Read Matthew 27:65-66.

GO TO BED! Explain that they may feel sad to leave them in the oven overnight. Jesus' followers felt despair when the tomb was sealed. Read John 16:20 and 22.

On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On the first Easter Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty. Read Matthew 28:1-9.

#####

Notice found in a church newsletter that didn't quite come out right:

Smile at someone who you find hard to love. Say 'hell' to someone who doesn't much care about you.



Rosemary Wright

Dear friends,

We know we haven't written to you in a while and many apologies for that! As you know schools closed in January and have only just reopened in the last week so much of our regular activity remained stopped or restricted.

In the last 3 months the Todmorden team have been Zooming to produce some excellent Tod Bible Tales videos which have been shown in various Primary Schools The team have also produced a few video Question Points for use in Todmorden High School.

In Brighouse the team have continued to run a few mentoring sessions but as pupils were home-schooling these were on hold. The team are hoping to be back in school this week.

Please continue to pray for those involved in the life of schools as well as our CICS workers and volunteers who are doing amazingly in spite of the restrictions and complications.

It's Your Move Update:

Having almost reached the end of a challenging year for schools, we at CICS are currently considering the most appropriate way to help the church in Calderdale with regards to this year's It's Your

Move initiative.

We know that many of you have been finding a variety of ways to support your local schools and this is another excellent way of continuing!

Scripture Union have just announced their sale of books for this year and so we have approached our regular distributors to see if they are able to take part in delivering It's Your Move to schools (for those young people moving from Primary to High School) this year.

If you haven't been involved in the past and would like to be email finance@cicscalderdale.org.uk and they will pass more information to you.

In a way it doesn't seem 13 months since Halifax Young Singers inspired and entertained so well at the start of CICS celebrating its 20th anniversary. That was our launch and final event of the 20 that were planned for 2020! Thanks to all who stand with CICS in prayer, finance and support.

#####

Divine Intervention?

A little boy was playing outside with his mother's broom in the garden. That night his mother realised her broom was still missing and asked her son to go out and bring it in.

When the little boy confessed, he was afraid of the dark, his mother tried to comfort him: 'The Lord is out there too, don't be afraid.'

Hesitantly, the little boy opened the back door and peered out. He called softly: 'Lord, please will you pass me the broom?'

From February e-Newsletter



FOOD BANK

As we are coming out of lockdown 3.0, we are feeling the impact of a year of COVID-19 at The Gathering Place. We have always been there for the most vulnerable but now, more people suddenly fall into that category and need our help.

Last weekend at Ebenezer Church, we handed out:

- **Total Parcels: 190**
- Adults in Families: 234
- Children in Families: 148
- **Total People Helped: 382**

Our Food Bank is open for clients on:

Fridays : Family Food Bank (with 1 or more children) : 10am - 12pm

Saturday : Food Bank : 10am - 12pm

We are open for food donations:

Thursday and Fridays - 9am - 12



SHELTER

We opened The Gathering Place as a 24/7 Homeless Hub in March. We have gone from running a small Winter Shelter from 7pm - 9am to running a 24/7 COVID-19 Hub. We have two support workers on during operation and always have clients in.

Last week at The Gathering Place, we helped out:

7 new clients into the Hub.

13 beds on average filled over the week.



FREE CAFE

At the Free Cafe, we are open every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
12.30pm - 1.30pm - supplying hot food at the door.

Last week at The Gathering Place, we gave out:

75 meals from our door

136 meals made for our Shelter residents

DONATE

- Set up a Facebook Fundraiser for us on your profile - so all your friends and family can see you're helping Halifax's Homeless Shelter, Food Bank and Free Cafe.
- If you're not on Facebook, you can also fundraise for us here - <https://tiltify.com/christians-together-calderdale>
- Or donate straight to our account here.

#####

High Days and Holy Days

Easter

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 7th April 30 AD or Friday 3rd 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 22nd March, which last fell in 1818. The latest is 25th 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.



Nice

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

ACROSS

8 'He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the — ' (Isaiah 53:12) (13)

9 'When they had sung a hymn, they went — to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30) (3)

10 Comes between Galatians and Philippians (9)

11 'Your heart will — and swell with joy' (Isaiah 60:5) (5)

13 Muslim holy month (7)

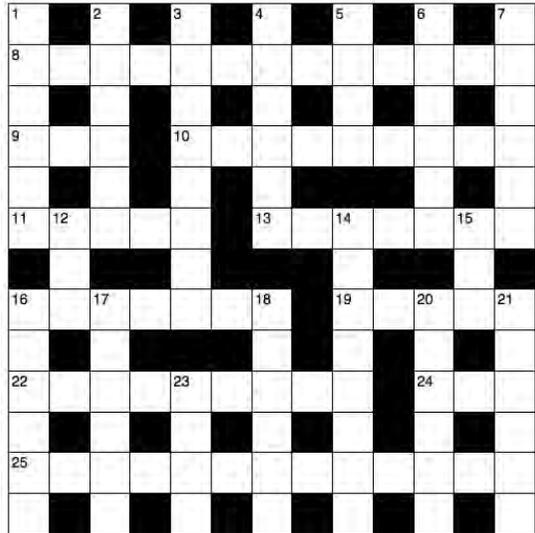
16 Ten ears (anag.) (7)

19 Under (poetic abbrev.) (5)

22 How Abram described himself to God when he complained that his inheritance would pass to a servant (Genesis 15:2) (9)

24 'Go to the —, you sluggard' (Proverbs 6:6) (3)

25 Debar from receiving Communion (13)



(Solution on page 28)

DOWN

1 My — for His Highest (Oswald Chambers' best-known book) (6)

2 Festival of the resurrection (6)

3 'His sons will prepare for war and — a great army' (Daniel 11:10) (8)

4 'Let not the — string his bow' (Jeremiah 51:3) (6)

5 Name of the River Thames in and around Oxford (4)

6 'From then on Judas watched for an opportunity — — him over' (Matthew 26:16) (2,4)

7 'But Christ is faithful — — — over God's house' (Hebrews 3:6) (2,1,3)

12 Long-handled implement used to till the soil (Isaiah 7:25) (3)

- 14 Order to which monks and nuns devote themselves (8)
- 15 Appropriate (Proverbs 15:23) (3)
- 16 I, uncle (anag.) (6)
- 17 'They gave him — — of broiled fish' (Luke 24:42) (1,5)
- 18 'Weren't there three men that we — — and threw into the fire?' (Daniel 3:24) (4,2)
- 20 Mountain where Noah's ark came to rest (Genesis 8:4) (6)
- 21 'Don't you know that friendship with the world is — towards God?' (James 4:4) (6)
- 23 Prominent architectural feature of large cathedrals such as St Paul's (4)

#####

My Lent Challenge: A Plant Based Diet

Jemima Parker, Environment Officer for the Diocese of Leeds

Note: All food carbon “forkprints” figures are given as kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent for a kilogram/litre of the product and taken from My Emissions Food Carbon Calculator.

“Wow, that’s hard!” my friend texted back to me. Having a plant only diet (vegan) had felt like the right sort of spiritual challenge for me this year.

To be honest I’ve not been much good at Lent challenges. Lenten prayers, reflections or daily good actions have often not motivated me and I’ve failed to be disciplined in implementing them for six weeks. But as Ash Wednesday approached, I realised this brought together both the spiritual and practical sides of my Christian faith. Here was a way that I could express love, joy and hope within the context of the Lent themes of discipline and self-sacrifice.

“It’s not too bad, it’s really only cheese (7.4), eggs (4.5) and butter (9.7) to cut out” I texted back. My family and I have been changing our diet gradually over many years. We cut back our meat consumption initially because of health concerns about processed red meat linked to bowel cancer. Later, as we became

more climate aware, taking on board the greenhouse gas cost of eating beef (43.3) and lamb (20.8) (cows and sheep burp a lot of methane).

Gradually trialling new recipes, we have moved to be “flexitarians”, just having meat as a treat, with lots of tasty vegetarian meals as our main fair, with plenty of protein from beans and pulses such as chickpeas (0.8), from nuts (1.3) and seeds (0.8) and also cheese and eggs. This has echoes of an older, more traditional diet, pre cheap unsustainably produced meat, but thankfully with a lot more variety and flavour.

We have come to enjoy eating seasonally to avoid excess transport emissions, particularly from perishable fruit and veg being air freighted. Waiting for plums (1.1) to come into season in August or feasting on corn on the cob (1.5) in September all adds to our appreciation of what we have on our plates.



“I sorted out milk (1.3) last year” I explained to my friend. I have to own up to this being my second attempt at a vegan Lent, I tried in 2020. I gave up at the end of March when the first lockdown swamped our regular organic supplier with new delivery orders and we had to fall back on our store cupboard tins for a few weeks. The thought of not using dairy milk had been a big one for me then, but I switched to oat milk (0.3) and soya (European grown) milk

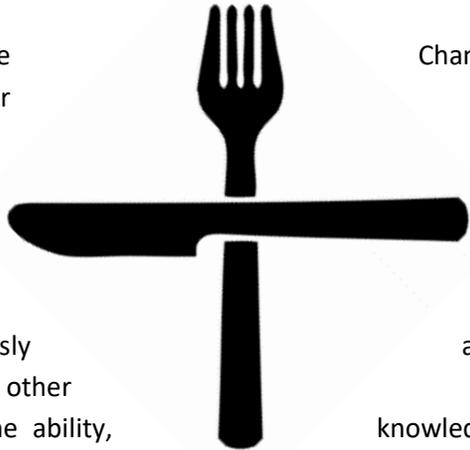
(0.5) and yogurt and now a year on I actually prefer it!

So where is the spirituality in this? Focusing on my diet reconnects me with God, as creator and provider. None of us can exist separately from the natural world, although often we seem to act as if we are not an integral part of Christ’s cleverly woven together planetary ecosystem. What I put on my plate reminds me of this, making me consider where it from, how it was manufactured and of my impact my food has on the soil, water and ecosystems where it is grown or reared.

It also brings me great joy; I love eating with others and I love food! Our nuclear family meals have been special this year, we have had more time for each other. I also look forward to eating with my wider family and friends again.

Preparing food for others is a great way to show our love. But our love for our friends, neighbours and future generations can also flow through our food choices. Globally 20-30% of greenhouse gas emissions are generated through the food we eat and throw away.

The UK Committee on Climate Change who advise the government on our national carbon budget, call for a reduction in our consumption of high-carbon meat and dairy products by 20% by 2030. This is an average, so some of us will have to act generously and do more, because, as with other inequalities, others don't have the ability, or skills to change.



Isn't my diet going to put our local livestock farmers out of business? Our farmers, the custodians of the land, are on the front line of climate change, they need our prayers. I know a Ripon farmer who has joined Extinction Rebellion, such are his concerns about climate breakdown and how changing weather patterns make managing his land less predictable.

The transition to low carbon farming techniques will take time. Supporting this transition by eating seasonal, local fair and paying an appropriate price for meat and dairy products is part of the way forward, remember meat is a treat. The new government Environmental Land Management Scheme which pays farmers public money for public "goods" is starting to steer our countryside to a more sustainable future.

“We’re doing a family sugar-free Lent” replies my friend. I think this through... that’s no puddings, jam (2.1), biscuits (1.3), cake or chocolate (5.7) and text back “Wow, that’s really hard!”

You can explore your own carbon forkprint at www.myemissions.green or look in more depth at decarbonising UK land use and food production by reading the Zero Carbon Britain Report on the Centre for Alternative Technology website.

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GOD and the Arts

Editor: The Rev Michael Burgess continues his series on God and the Arts with a look at ‘The Supper at Emmaus’ by Caravaggio. It now hangs in the National Gallery.

*Come, risen Lord,
and deign to be
our guest*

I like the story of the vestry noticeboard of a church in Hampshire: after a Holy Week performance of Stainer’s



‘Crucifixion’, the

choirmaster wrote: “The Crucifixion” – well done, everyone!’ Later that day, someone had added, ‘The Resurrection – well done, God!’

For the two disciples treading the road to Emmaus, there was no such sense of victory and celebration. Their minds and hearts were numb with the sense of loss and failure. They had seen their Lord tried and crucified. As Luke recounts that walk in his Gospel, he shows how it began with absence and loss, but journeyed to presence. It was a road that took the disciples from blindness and despair to sight and insight. They talked over past events with the stranger who joined them, and

Luke uses ten different Greek words to describe that conversation – all stages in their understanding. And when they share a meal with the stranger, who becomes the host, taking the bread and giving thanks, then the understanding becomes vision and insight.

That meal is the theme of Caravaggio's painting of 1601, 'The Supper at Emmaus.' Caravaggio had a reputation for being a violent, irrational artist, given to bouts of anger and forced to spend part of his life in exile in Naples and Sicily. His paintings as well as his lifestyle shocked and provoked comment. This portrayal of Jesus with a plump, youthful face and his depiction of the apostles as ordinary labourers upset the church authorities. But by giving Jesus a beardless face, Caravaggio was trying to show Him in the new likeness of Resurrection – an Easter image of our Lord. The light from that Easter Jesus fills the scene as the two disciples look on, astonished and finally understanding.

When we read the Gospel, we are drawn into the scene. For Caravaggio the movement is the other way: the scene reaches out to us from the canvas. Look at the outstretched hand of Jesus, the elbow of one disciple and the left hand of the other: they are being projected into our world. And that basket of fruit, full of apples and figs and grapes, symbols of the fall and the eucharist: it is about to topple off the table and into our laps. It is an Easter encounter two thousand years ago, reaching out to us through light and shade and the skill of the artist.

In many ways the Gospel story in Luke is of an ordinary encounter between travellers and a stranger. But it is made extraordinary by the transforming power of the risen Lord, talking with the disciples in the open air and then going inside for a meal. However, the doors are not shut to us. For Caravaggio shows how that special moment of encounter for the two disciples can reach out to enter our world. And he shows the hand of the risen Lord beckoning us to step into that Easter world of sacrament and new life.

And Finally....

Miscellaneous observations on daily life...

- Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat.
- If you think nobody cares whether you're alive or dead, try missing a couple of mortgage payments.
- In order to keep a true perspective of one's importance, everyone should have a dog to worship him and a cat to ignore him.
- The trouble with doing something right the first time is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was.
- The most effective way to remember your wife's birthday is to forget it once.
- I ate a kid's meal at McDonald's today. His mum got really angry.

April 2021 Crossword Solution



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