

In & around the Benefice....

12th April | Easter Sunday

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Please visit our website for information on worship during the lockdown including a video of our own Benefice Easter Day Service:
www.yardleyhastingsbenefice.co.uk

Easter Reflection:

It always strikes me as extraordinary that the first words a congregation hear at a funeral service are:

'I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord'.

As the coffin is brought into the church the priest proclaims the triumph of Easter.

To turn a well known phrase around: 'in the midst of death we are in life'.

You can see where this is going can't you? In the middle of the darkness of a global pandemic we can still rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus. 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can not overcome it'. That is the truth at the heart of Easter. The darkness of Good Friday is indeed dark, but Easter Day is the proclamation of Jesus's victory over death and despair. In the words of a prominent preacher: 'It's Friday....but Sunday's coming!'

So, as well as eating your body weight in chocolate this Easter, light a candle. Start your Easter lunch with these words:

Christ is risen! Alleluia! (Alleluia indeed)

With prayers for you and those whom you love and pray for.

Please hold in your prayers this week:

- ◇ Those suffering from, affected by or working to prevent the spread of Coronavirus, including the NHS, council workers, teachers in schools offering childcare for those who work in key jobs.
- ◇ NHS staff caring for Covid-19 patients, that they may have strength and resilience for their task, and be kept safe.
- ◇ Persecuted Christians across the world, especially in North Korea
- ◇ Those in residential care and the housebound, among them: Audrey Desborough, Ruth Williams, Gwen York, Ann and Colin Dix
- ◇ Those who suffer in body, mind or spirit, among them: Chris Sayles, Tom Stock, Nicholas Vaughan, Freddie Hogan, Diane Claber, Mandy Bates, Sue Parry
- ◇ The recently departed, amongst them Marcia Higgs, and all who grieve at this time

On Easter Day the Church of England's weekly online service will be led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin reflecting on stories of how churches are stepping up to the challenge of Coronavirus in Canterbury Diocese, and Theodore (aged 10) leading the prayers.

This broadcast will also be available on the Church of England's website and Facebook page at 9am each Sunday and Easter Day can also be heard from 8.10am on BBC Radio 4.

On BBC 1 at 10.45am The Very Reverend Kathy Jones leads the Easter Sunday service from Bangor Cathedral in north Wales. The preacher is the Right Reverend Andy John, Bishop of Bangor.



Easter Blessing:

God,
who through the resurrection of
our Lord Jesus Christ
has given us the victory,
give you joy and peace in your faith;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and
remain with you always.
Amen

The Collect

God of glory, by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned and the way to life
stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

First Reading

Acts 10: 34-43

Peter began to speak to those assembled in the house of Cornelius.

'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.

That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Colossians 3: 1-4

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

John 20: 1-18

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Spiritual Communion Prayer

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. **Amen**