

## **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024: Easter Day**

*For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or other suitable time.*



**Hymn StF 298 H&P 193 'Christ the Lord is risen today'** by Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

### **Opening Prayer**

Think of the past week and say both 'thank you' and 'sorry' to our loving God.

**Epistle set for today:** 1 Corinthians 15 v 1 – 11

**Gospel reading set for today:** Mark 16 v 1 – 8

### **To think about**

We don't know why Mark's Gospel ends in this abrupt way. But, given that it does, how would we explain the reaction and situation of the women to a non-believer?

**StF 302 'He has risen'** by Gerald Coates (b 1944), Noel Richards (b 1955) & Tricia Richards (1960) **OR**  
**StF 306 H&P 204 'Now the green blade rises'** by John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872 – 1958)

### **Message from a Circuit Friend**

I have been talking all through Lent (in services that I have taken) about the interesting dating of Easter this year. Easter is early because the first full moon after the Spring equinox was on 25<sup>th</sup> March and thus the first Sunday after that is today. Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent of course) was on 14<sup>th</sup> February – Valentine's Day. The last time this happened was in 2018 but, before that, not since 1945. The next occasion will be in 2029. These other years bring Easter Day in on 1<sup>st</sup> April (April Fool's Day) but not this year – because of the extra day with the leap year. How strange that the juxtaposition of Lent beginning on Valentine's Day and ending on April Fool's Day should occur 3 times in 11 years (except that it hasn't this year as explained!) but that there were 6 decades without it occurring at all... Our world, indeed, universe, is mysterious and wonderful. There are always so many things that we don't understand. Including, of course, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer so horribly? Indeed, why was it necessary for God to be a human being at all, and why did he have to die? Having died, the only way out of it was for him to come back to life – and the way he did so was on the one hand dramatic and, on the other hand, forcefully out of sight... in heaven, everything will be made clear. In the meantime, perhaps we should reflect on the juxtaposition of the day when Love holds centre stage, with the day when we celebrate the Fool. The ending of Lent in selected years draws our attention to the apparent foolishness of the gospel which, after all, turns out to be an amazing display of supernatural wisdom and strength. I will leave the last word to St Paul: *"We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called....Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength."* (1 Corinthians 1 v 23 – 25)  
**Jacqui Horton (Superintendent of the Central Norfolk Circuit)**

**StF 312 H&P 209 'The head that once was crowned with thorns'** by Thomas Kelly (1769 – 1855)

We pray for our world... for the church... for our communities... for our families & friends...

### **Collect for Easter Day**

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 in the unity of the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. Amen.

**Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...**

**StF 313 H&P 212 'Thine be the glory'** by E. Budry (1854 – 1932) transl. by R. Hoyle (1875 – 1939)

**May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.**