

Facebook Posts – April 2022

1st April



2nd April – Rev Cliff Shanganya

IN THE GARDEN

- Why were Jesus' disciples so unreliable?
- If you had been in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus that night, what would you have done when the soldiers came to arrest him?

He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." Matthew 26:42

With the weight of the world pressing down on him in the hours before his arrest, Jesus asked his closest friends — Peter, James and John—to accompany him to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus wanted to spend some time talking to his Father, and he asked his friends to keep watch while he prayed. Unfortunately, they couldn't keep their eyes open.

The stress on Jesus was almost unbearable. He fell facedown to pray. He prayed so fervently that his sweat was like drops of blood. He asked God to take the cup from him. He prayed until he was ready to face what lay ahead. Then he allowed himself to be arrested and taken to trial.

In his time of torment, Jesus gave us a model of prayer that we can use when life feels as though it's crashing down around us. He poured out his agony to his heavenly Father. He asked God to remove the situation he was about to face. Then he ended with the words, "May your will be done."

No matter how extreme our situation may seem, the best strategy is always to pray for God's will to be done.

Dear God, thank you for your Son's example of faithfulness. Help us respond by praying and seeking your will when we face difficult situations. Amen.



4th April



5th April – Deacon Jen Woodfin

I have returned to my theme of my Previous Sabbatical reflections for this thought for the day. During the three months we had a holiday in Guernsey, an occasional haunt of ours as Jacqui spent her early childhood there. Whilst there I had to visit the hospital for a blood test. As we walked down the corridor, I noticed this glass cross set in the wall. It was very distinctive and the way it was lit it stood out very clearly. A few yards ahead I saw the doorway to the hospital chapel and realised the cross was showing from inside there. Interestingly, when we into the lovely, peaceful chapel, we could see the same cross but it was a lot less visible or noticeable and the light did not shine through it so well. Surely one would expect the cross to be shown more clearly in the chapel?

To go with the photograph I chose the passage from Numbers 7:1 'When Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings'.

The positioning of this cross challenged me. We can so often be caught up with all the physical, and practical, elements of being in church, that, perhaps, we forget that the love and sacrifice of Jesus needs to be seen outside church not just shut away for ourselves. So, with Easter services coming up how can we be ever more present in our community?



6th April - Rev Rosemary Wakelin

The Trees Stand Waiting

The trees stand waiting
Strenuously still.
How improbable
That from their fibrous fingers
Should unfurl
The fragile fronds
Of infant foliage.

Stately they stand,
Patiently imprisoned,
Root sunk in sullen earth,
Sucking the sappy strength
To lift aloft stiff limbs.
In the surge and sinking of the sap
They celebrate the cycle of the seasons.

And still they wait.



7th April – Rev Anne Richardson



My mum would have been 100 on 5th April. I was very fortunate that she was a wonderful mum, always doing her best for myself and my sister. Her partnership with my Dad was very special. We had a great childhood, not rich materially, but rich in love and laughter. This is such a privilege in your early years and we have always been grateful for it.

My mum didn't have it as easy as she made it for us but was of the generation of 'make do, and mend' and 'just get on with it!' My sister and I still come out with some of her phrases and we still laugh over some of her more unique ways!

Love is such a huge blessing, however we may experience it – and whether we have been fortunate or not to know it in our early years, as we grow, we have the daily choice to reach for the greater love in God. God's love is ever present, always strong enough for our needs.

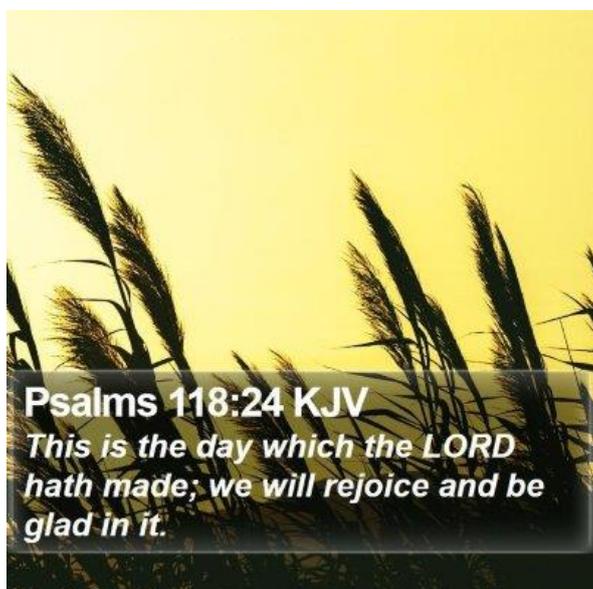
Life is not to be measured in years but in love given and received. The 100th birthday is not the reason to celebrate, but 100% of love – each and every day. As we read this today, may we open our hearts to receive from God, and open our arms to share with one another.

8th April



"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Luke 38:19
Photo from Brooklyn Museum c/o FreeBibleimages.org.

11th April



Psalms 118:24 KJV

*This is the day which the LORD
hath made; we will rejoice and be
glad in it.*

12th April – Rev Jacqui Horton

Last week, Rev Anne wrote that her mum would have been 100 on April 5th. My mum died on April 4th 5 years ago. And my older granddaughter was born 6 years ago the next day. She had just had her 1st birthday when my mum died. My mum had told us - a few months before - that she would die in April. She knew she had oesophageal cancer as well as an aneurysm. The latter burst at the end of March but she survived for a week and left us in April (as she had said) and just before her 84th birthday on the 8th. She would have been 89 this year. So, when Anne wrote about her mum, it set in train a series of memories for me! Both my daughters, and a grandson, and a niece, have birthdays at this time of year as well so April is always busy for both presents and memories... Of course, these dates often fall around Holy Week and Easter as well, as they do this year. My younger daughter's birthday is on Good Friday as it sometimes is.



My reflection today is that it is good that we have these special days - both personal and religious - because they help us remember, they help us think about things, and they have the potential to draw us closer to God. Today - the Tuesday in Holy Week - Jesus did and said some interesting things in the temple in Jerusalem. All the gospel writers record this but try Luke's version in chapters 20 and 21. Jesus predicts lots of tumultuous events including 'nation will rise against nation' and, of course, this has been happening in the world ever since. Lots of food for thought!

13th April



For the sound of war still thunders
through our planet, on this day.
Every hour new victims suffer,
even as we meet to pray.

God, we need your help and guidance,
in our constant search for peace.
Move us on to new solutions
as we pray that wars may cease.

Marjorie Dobson b.1940



15th April Good Friday – David Yarham

HAIKU FOR PASSIONTIDE

Gethsemane

A place of shadows
where dark foreboding deepens
and Love strives with Fear.

Calvary

Flies swarm where blood drips
from pierced flesh. Dicing soldiers,
irritated, swear.

Sabbath mourning

A cold rain falling
from leaden skies: such sorrow,
even Heaven weeps.

Easter Morning

Birdsong at daybreak.
One word dispels her sorrow.
Love whispers, "Mary".



God grant that the foreboding, bloodshed and tears of this year's Passiontide may end with Resurrected peace.

18th April

From Darkness to Light

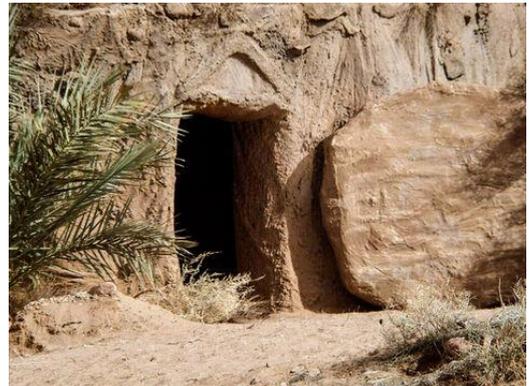
The grain of wheat, wrapped in dark earth, inert like death remains, 'til warmth, caressing, stirring into life - it breaks, and from the shattered shell the shoot ascends to meet the light.

The egg, like stone can stay,
but feathered warmth, and patient days
the shell cannot withstand,
and breaking out, the chick embraces life.

The womb is dark -
wrapped in wet warmth the new life grows - 'til ripe at last to
meet the light through painful travailing a child is born.

The tomb is sealed.

Wrapped in dark earth his body lay,
'til love caressing, shattering the gloom, awakens from the sleep of death the Lord of Life.
The shattered seals could not withstand
the primal energy of life,
nor death contain unconquerable Love.
The darkness yields to glorious light
and bathes the world in Easter joy
which power of Hell or death cannot destroy.



19th April – Deacon Jen Woodfin

In the Christian church we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in December and just a few weeks later we are preparing for Holy Week through the period of Lent. It is as though we concertina the key elements of our faith into these winter months. Through the darkness of the December, we mark when the light of the world arrived in our world. We then acknowledge our own weakness and flaws through Lent, with varied success! I, for one, set myself a challenge both in terms of spiritual growth and general well-being. I wish I could say I always keep to these challenges but I don't! (I do try!!)

But then we come to Springtime and Easter! This marks a time that completely changed the world. Through the resurrection, Jesus overcame death. That is for all of us. It doesn't matter what we've done in our life - Jesus told the criminal crucified with Him that he would soon be in paradise with Him.

God's love for us is so complete that he gave His Son so that we would know that his love is forever. As we enjoy this current lovely weather there is a real sense of God's blessings on us all.



20th April – Rev Rosemary Wakelin

The human new born baby is helpless, depending totally on its mother, or carer for survival. This goes on for several years as we acquire the necessary strength and skills to cope with life. So we learn to accept. If we were blessed with loving, caring parenting we may well respond with gratitude and love, if we grew up in spite of the way we were treated we may carry a large chip on the shoulder and pass on the pain, the prisons are full of such people. It seems that learning to accept is so important that we get the lesson twice. As we grow up most of us want to be in charge, in control, offering help to others. However old age catches up with us! Gradually we find we cannot do the things we once did. The spirit is willing but the flesh is not.



So I am so very grateful to Tony who takes the dog on the long walks I can no longer do; to the kindly neighbour who cuts my grass every fortnight; to Mike next door who insists I call his number if needed whatever the hour; to the neighbour who jumped out of her car to help me up when I tripped and concussed myself. Is God telling us something? God in Christ accepted being a helpless baby in Mary's arms, and the greatest work of Jesus, the natural born leader, who controlled crowds, commanded the sea, was to allow himself to become helpless in the hands of bullies. May be gracious acceptance is the essential training for the real life for which we are born. Try reading Singing the Faith 359.

21st April – Rev Anne Richardson

Did you have a good Easter?

People often say to clergy – oh, this is your busy time, isn't it? Yes, there are more services and activities over Easter, all good things of course and very enjoyable. Personally I had special services, children's activities, interpreting a Passion Play in Norwich, and all the preparation for going on sabbatical, (it's amazing how many loose ends there are!!)

But now the Easter weekend is over and we're back to normal..... aren't we??

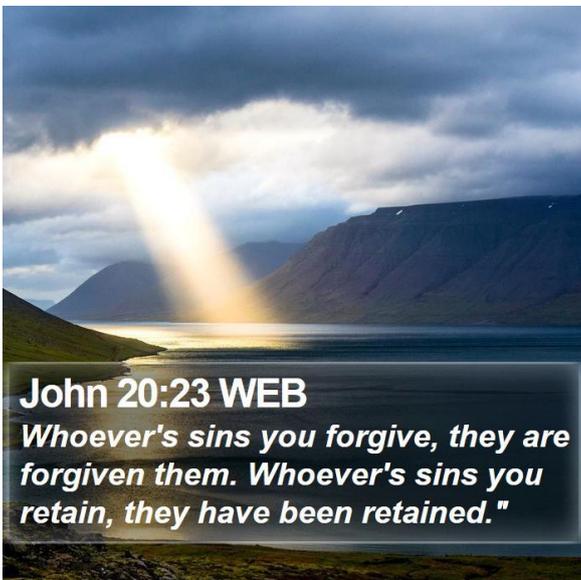
What is normal for the world, is not normal in God's kingdom. With God, the last become the first in the queue, the outcast is welcomed in, and the dead are raised. That doesn't stop on Easter Monday! We've followed Jesus on his way to Jerusalem. We have stood at the foot of the cross. We have waited and prayed. We have celebrated the resurrection! It's not over until next Lent and Easter..... we are the Easter People!! Like those first disciples, may we take the good news of God's love to all those we meet.



22nd April



25th April



John 20:23 WEB

Whoever's sins you forgive, they are forgiven them. Whoever's sins you retain, they have been retained."

26th April – Rev Jacqui Horton

I am writing today from our static caravan near Cromer. We were here on Sunday when we did not have our usual dilemma. To go to church on holiday and, if so, which church and when? We were very happy to use the Circuit Worship at Home sheet and to participate fully with a half-hour act of worship – just like we did throughout the two lockdown periods when there were no church services. We sang the hymns, prayed the prayers, read the readings, and engaged with the 'something to think about' section and Elizabeth's Wright's excellent reflection. What made this feel like we were attending church rather than simply having our own private prayer time in our own private space? The main, biggest, and perhaps only reason is that the Worship Sheet has been produced at Circuit level for this precise purpose and that some people throughout the Circuit are still using it for their Sunday worship. Therefore, there is a real sense of community in the worship and, therefore, it is in a very real sense – church. This amazed me on the 1st Sunday of the 1st lockdown and it continues to amaze me!



27th April – Sam Parfitt

I recently had a conversation with someone who is going through a really tough time. They know that I live with constant pain and were keen to know what keeps me going. My answer was that I've become really good at acknowledging positive things about life. Some days I might need to look really hard to find a very small positivity, but there is always something there, waiting, even if it's just the process of looking that is the positive thing. The person I was talking to replied that it sounds like acknowledging those things in life



that we often take for granted, and I would agree with that. After that conversation I remembered a TED talk that I listened to a long time ago that advocated gratitude as the key to happiness, which I think is interesting to think about as thanksgiving is very much part of our pattern of prayer. As I was writing this reflection the hymn Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart came to mind, particularly the lines 'let the weak say I am strong, let the poor say I am rich because of what the Lord has done for us'. Through Christ, who came to turn everything upside down (or maybe back the right way?) sadness can be turned to joy, despair to hope and, perhaps, gratitude to happiness. For that, today, I am truly thankful.

28th April – Rev Cliff Shanganya



Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. [9] Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

“We are an Easter People and Hallelujah is our Song!”

We become Christians through God's unmerited grace, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. Out of gratitude for this free gift, however, our hearts should overflow with a desire to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness. While no action or work we do can help us obtain salvation, God intends for our salvation to result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and to build up the church.

Easter love, thoughts and prayers from Rev Cliff Shanganya

29th April



My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:9

