

**All Saints' Church  
Cottenham with Rampton**

**Pastoral Letter #71  
Wed 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022**



Dear Church Family,

I do hope that this letter finds you well. Covid-19 is still very much with us but it's encouraging to see that very few appear to be seriously affected, particularly needing to be in hospital. We are still very keen to keep people safe in church though, so if you have symptoms of the virus, do please stay at home until you recover to avoid passing it on to those who may be more vulnerable.

During Lent, Marie and I have been sharing, through the sermon slot, Tim Chester's book '*A Meal with Jesus: Discovering grace, community and mission around the table*' (2011). It's amazing to read so many stories in the gospels of Jesus either being *at* a meal, or on his way *to* or *from* a meal. So far we've looked at meals that Jesus shared with Levi, the tax collector, and his friends; Simon, the Pharisee, whose soiree was interrupted by a 'sinful woman' who anointed Jesus' feet with perfume; a meal on a hillside with 5000 men and their families; and Jesus' Parable of the Lost Son which concludes with a huge feast to celebrate the son's return. These stories have taught us much about who Jesus regarded as 'in' or 'out' of the Kingdom of God, with a clear rebuke to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law about looking good on the outside but not on the inside. But they also teach us much about the incredible love and grace of our heavenly Father.

This week, we will be thinking about the meal we all share together in church – the Lord's Supper, also known as Holy Communion or the Eucharist. In his book, Tim Chester asks the question: '*If your church stopped celebrating communion, what difference would it make to your life?*' Of course, Tim Chester could not have foreseen that within a decade of him penning that question, churches would be closed due to a global pandemic and no-one was able to receive communion. But, now that we can receive Communion again, I wonder what it means to you?

Your answer to the question may reflect your church tradition. I grew up in the Evangelical tradition where communion was celebrated monthly and where the Word was of greater importance, whereas Marie grew up in the Catholic tradition with a heavier emphasis on the Sacrament. Consequently, we experience communion very differently. If I'm honest, it wasn't until I was ordained a priest and started presiding that its real significance really hit me. What I love about communion is that we all receive as equals; it doesn't matter how old we are, our status in life, how long we've been a Christian, how well we're following Jesus, how much we know – Jesus' invitation is to *all*, and we *all* share the same bread. But there's also something happening as we all share together – we're being formed afresh as '*one body*'. It reinforces our identity as the 'people of God' in this place, shaped by the cross.

Just as Jesus told his disciples in Luke 22:15: '*I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer*', so we should eagerly desire to receive communion. With the Covid-safety measures in place, I'd hope that everyone would now feel comfortable in receiving communion, but it does of course remain an individual choice. But I'm aware also of what

you are missing. Furthermore, if you are unable to get to church and would like to receive communion at home, do please let me know and this can be arranged.

With Easter approaching, we have planned many opportunities during Holy Week for you to engage in Christ's Passion. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7pm, there will be reflections in the church. On Maundy Thursday, we will have a service of communion at 7.30pm with foot washing, and on Good Friday, we have services at 12 noon in Cottenham and 3pm in Rampton. On Holy Saturday, we are hoping that many children and families will join us for Messy Church, followed by the usual services on Easter Day at 6.30am (Sunrise Service), and Communion at 8.30am, 10.30am and 4pm (at Rampton). I always say, 'Don't arrive at Easter Sunday without journeying through at least some of Holy Week' which is why there's so much on offer and hopefully something for everyone.

We very much hope to see most of you at some point over the next few weeks, either in church or at home. Do remember that if you have access to the Internet, there is always a Zoom service on Sundays at 6pm. Just email Cheryl Lowe ([cheryl@cynewulf.co.uk](mailto:cheryl@cynewulf.co.uk)) for the link.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Revd Lynda Davies

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