

St James Church Fordhouses

Weekly Newsletter

Number 4 – 11th April 2020



Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

A blessed and glorious Easter to everyone.

What a time, place and circumstances to be celebrating Easter! Yet here we are God's people in the midst of all this, let us resolve to show everyone that there is a better way, that God is real and that He has a plan for their lives. Let's resolve even more to draw close to Him, to pray for the needs of the world around us, to celebrate all that is good and to face down all that is evil.

This newsletter contains a special message from Molly and a real encouragement from Pukka as well as other words of encouragement and spiritual sustenance. Two things are enclosed sent by Jacquie, an Easter Word search and some information from the diocese which can help and equip all of us to mentally cope with isolation. It has some useful questions to ask ourselves and additional places to go for more information if needed.

As leadership we have been trying to find ways of sharing some form of 'virtual' service with as many as we can. This has been tried by St Mary's using as 'app' called Zoom, and at the Church of the Good Shepherd using WhatsApp to deliver sections which make up a complete service. Some of us joined St Mary's on Maundy Thursday for a service using Zoom which worked quite well. We then delivered some thoughts and other items on Good Friday using WhatsApp. The trouble with all of this is that you need some form of technology to join in, however without the technology you can still join in with the Zoom meetings using your telephone, see the details of how to do this below.

How are you all doing finding things to do? I know that for me I have never been so busy, I do one thing off my list and then add two more to do at the bottom. This week's garden activities for me have included sowing parsnips, French beans, parsley, two types of lettuce, courgettes, cucumbers, French marigolds, poppies and dianthus. The tomato plants are also doing well.

I think the most unusual thing I have seen done this week is by Robert Deacon. A neighbour of mine gave me an old box which once had brandy bottles in it, Robert has polished it, put legs and a top on it and made it into a table - Well done Robert!

How about joining in with a series of spiritual insights, thoughts or scriptures from your times with God. Molly shared some from Psalm 121 last week and I challenge you to take a look at this psalm yourself and see what God says to you - let me know. Please keep things coming - tell us what you are doing, give us your thoughts and items to put in the Newsletter. Please send to Editor Nick by phone, text, WhatsApp or email: 07488 389033 - 01902 784713 - n_gardner2@sky.com (there is an underscore between n and gardner).



Following last week's prayer request, I think that this week we should celebrate, support and pray for our other St James key workers, these are the ones I know about, let me know about any more:

Greg Mullett (Lidl), Chris Astley (train driver), Peter Bate (Homeless Shelter), Keith Bradshaw (local council), Catherine Tromans (teacher), Julian Holt (police officer), James Wilson (police officer).

New Life - a message from Molly



During January, in spite of the ground being hard due to frost, the gentle snowdrop, the crocus and the daffodils began to push their shoots through the ground. Each shoot was so delicate, but because God is in all creation, and is a miracle worker, this wonder of new life happens every year. Even grass and weeds push their leaves through pavement cracks, through the very life that God has created.

As a gardener tends their garden, so we see God as the great Gardener, who sends rain and sun to help growth, and watches tenderly as plants respond to His provision and His care. We need to take God's love and care into the dark places, so that as we depend on His strength, and go through life in obedience to Him, harmony will follow chaos, peace will follow war and love will overcome conflict. Part of our responsibility is to be a Christian in the world.

MATTHEW CHAPTER 5. Verse 16

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven" (NIV). During this time of Coronavirus epidemic there is a real opportunity for us to show God's love in many different ways. Jesus spent much of his time in towns and villages, moving among people who needed His compassion. We need to follow His example!

As we look at nature we can learn from the profusion of His gifts, and as we see the signs of 'NEW LIFE' we can proclaim 'the Lord is risen - He is risen indeed', so as we move closer to Easter, let us seek and find the 'New Life' given us by Jesus, which is never ending, enables us to go from strength to strength, to experience life in all its fullness, and then find peace as we seek to do His will.

THE LORD IS RISEN - HE IS RISEN INDEED - HALLELUJAH

A happy and blessed Easter to you all, Molly

Food and Supplies:



Please remember to support the **Well Foodbank** at this time. You can make donations on-line (or ask a friend to do this for you) or you can leave food at some supermarkets such as the Coop on Bushbury Lane.

Notice Board & News:



An announcement - Denise Bull has become a Grandma - she has told me that her youngest son's wife gave birth to a baby boy on Monday 6th April, three weeks premature, so a bit traumatic for them.



Let's Celebrate: We missed Sheila Hague's birthday which was on 15 March and it is Kiren's birthday on the 14 April! Many happy returns to you both.

Anniversary: Alan and Val celebrate their wedding anniversary on 13 April - 38 years, no jokes about prison sentences please!

Don't forget, please let Nick know about news birthdays or other celebrations or if you think this Newsletter needs anything else adding or any ideas you may have. Is there something you would like to see on future sheets? Please share special events, items of good news, answered prayer, things which are happening, etc. so we can put them here for everyone to see.

Please don't forget to be in contact with your neighbours at this time to ask how they are and if they need anything. Share the love of God with them.

Craft Items

How are you getting on with Jacquie's suggestion for anyone who knits? If you would like a project, then why not join in and knit some blankets for church (keep those knees warm). If you need wool there is some in church, let Nick know and we will drop some off to you. If you need the pattern, see last week's Newsletter.

Spiritual Food:

Graham has provided his message from last Sunday which was sent out on WhatsApp, this is enclosed.

The readings for this Sunday are: Acts 10:34-43 and Matthew 28:1-10


Acts 10: 34-43

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had

already chosen—by us who ate¹ 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 whom God appointed 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."

Matthew 28:1-10



After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Here are Grahams brief thoughts on the readings. He is also providing a full message on WhatsApp, Dropbox and as a Podcast, it will also be sent with next week's Newsletter:

Easter Sunday - the Greatest Day in History?

At the cross, man did his worst, and marvelled at the passive reaction of God the Son, and God in heaven. Yet the crucifixion of Jesus was the most significant and meaningful day in world history - because it dealt with the insoluble problems of the world, atoning for our sin in a single day, opening up for every human being the possibility of forgiveness, reconciliation with God and transformation and eternal life. But Easter Sunday not only revealed that all this was true and effective, but as God showed his greatest power and men and women struggled to turn from fear to joy, the new creation began with God's firstborn from the dead, and a whole new order was initiated - truly the greatest day in history!

Spiritual Resources:

There are special resources on the Church of England website, take a look. Texts of all related Bushbury Podcasts will be on the Bushbury Parish Church Website. Here are a few more suggestions:

Easter Day

- **St James are attempting a service using WhatsApp at 10:10am, do join in if you can.**
- Following the call for all Christians to proclaim '**It is finished!**' on Good Friday at 3pm, which gave opportunity to stand together, pray for and share Jesus with our neighbours. The Church of England is encouraging us to go onto the street on Easter Day at 10am and

sing, or play through our windows, our favourite hymn or Christian song, to which we are adding or substituting a shout of 'Jesus is risen!' Yet another opportunity for us to share Jesus with our neighbours.

- Observe an Easter Vigil in some form at home.
- Listen to/join in with appropriate Christian worship.
- The BBC will broadcast Archbishop Justin's Easter Day service, with the Bishop of Dover.
- Also attached is an Easter word search for us all to enjoy.
- Light a candle at dawn using the following prayer:

Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega, all time belongs to him, and all ages; to him be glory and power, through every age and for ever. Amen.



Spring Harvest

For all of you who know about or have been to Spring Harvest, as well as you who don't know, well, Spring Harvest is a great Christian conference every year just after Easter. However, this year it will be different it is *Spring Harvest at Home*. It will be available from Easter Monday all week on YouTube and other social media. Go to springharvest.org for more information or here are the links:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10157344073712956&id=79150592955?sfnsn=s_cwspwa&d=w&vh=e&extid=gzNZ55v4hZ3w8Sdn&d=w&vh=e

Please let Nick know of any further spiritual resources which have had meaning for you or you have found useful (e.g. TV Programmes, Internet sites, books, etc.). We can then share this with everyone.

We can still obtain copies of the UCB 'Word for Today' material which gives readings and thoughts for each day - please let Graham or Nick know if you want these.

The Power of the Cross - an encouragement from Pukka

Easter weekend for us brings back many memories of 14 years go. Pam was pregnant with twins, and had gone to hospital for a routine scan. While she was at the hospital she was told she could return home, but that she had to return later the same day as there seemed to be complications with the pregnancy.



The following day we were proud parents of two beautiful girls, born 2 months premature. However, Bethany, the younger of the twins was rushed as an emergency to Birmingham Children's Hospital, while Jessica stayed at New Cross neonatal.

Bethany was in a very serious condition, this required an operation the same night, this was Good Friday 2006. During the operation Bethany suffered a cardiac arrest, then a short while later, miraculously, the medics were able to get her heart working again. By now, 3 hours were still needed to complete the rest of the procedure, however the odds on a positive outcome had now dropped from 50% to just 20%. That night while Pam and the rest of the family prayed in Wolverhampton, I went to the chapel at Birmingham Children's Hospital. That Good Friday night I knelt at the big wooden cross which hung in the chapel and thanked God for what He did 2000

years ago, also knowing that He could do something special for Bethany. As I cried and poured out my heart to the Lord, I could feel the power of the cross and its meaning.

Three hours later as the consultant brought our little baby girl out of the operating theatre, his words were that she had made it despite the odds! Both twins are now thriving - Glory be to God. We thank God that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday (2000 years ago), today (2020) and forever. *Bethany's story appeared in the newspapers and can still be found on the internet. Bethany is a little miracle.*

In this terrible time the stories of what God did 2000 years ago and 14 years ago give the world hope.

Virtual or Socially Distant Meetings

St Mary's have been broadcasting services using an 'app' called Zoom. This was used on Maundy Thursday. The 'app' allows multiple people to access a 'meeting' from the comfort of their own homes using their computer, tablet or smart phone, see details below of how it works. It is also possible to hear (but not see) and join in the church service using your landline or mobile telephone, again see details below.



Zoom instructions:

1. You will be prompted to download the Zoom 'app' the first time you click to join a meeting. This is straightforward and free.
2. To join a "live" meeting you will need to click on the link sent for the meeting. It will look something like this:
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/282171689?pwd=U29SSVNxOU8wblVabGFtZ2hDN09YQT>
3. You may then be asked for a meeting ID which will also be sent to you.
4. You may be asked for a password; this will also be sent to you.
5. If you don't have a camera or microphone on your computer, tablet or phone you can still "see and hear" the service...it's just that they won't be able to see or hear you. If you do have a camera or microphone - you can click on the sound /video icon at bottom left to turn them on or off at any point. The organiser of the meeting is able to 'mute' everyone when certain people are speaking.

Telephone instructions:

1. Ensure you have the 9-digit meeting number available, this should have been sent to you.
2. At the appointed time for the service, ring one of these numbers from your mobile phone or landline: 0131 460 1196 0203 481 5240 0208 080 6591
3. You will be asked to enter the 9-digit meeting number followed by the hash (#) key. This number will be sent to you.
4. You will now be asked to enter your participant number followed by hash - but if you just press # it will work!
5. You will now be told that you have accessed the meeting, and how many other participants there are at that point; after this you will be connected immediately and be able to speak to the others and hear what they say. The organiser of the meeting is able to 'mute' everyone when certain people are speaking.
6. When the service ends, just put down your receiver.

