



Keeping in Touch Easter 2021



Rev Penny writes ...

What's so special about Easter?

What's so special about Easter? Well of course, it's the chocolate! At last, after 40 days of abstinence - a chocolate fest! And Spring is in the air – daffodils nodding in balmy breezes, bees buzzing, frolicking lambs, nest-building birds. The days are longer and warmer. There are signs of new life everywhere.



But of course, Christians know that this is not really what is so special about Easter? Instead, what is so inspiring and of crucial importance is the message of hope that we can take away from the Easter story. The story which begins with a man - Jesus – God's beloved son - appearing amongst the people he made, in a human form. Jesus living among us as a normal person, not granted riches or privilege or status. Jesus who walked the dusty roads, healing the unwell, feeding the hungry and all the time teaching us about how to love our neighbour.

The same Jesus who sometimes felt hungry, desperately tired, who wept when his friend Lazarus died. The same Jesus who was a baby refugee, often the target of hateful comments, plotted against, tried and convicted on trumped up charges, deserted in his last hours by his friends. Cruelly crucified by the Romans, a ghastly, protracted, painful way to die. A spear thrust in his side to confirm his death, he was taken down from the cross, his lifeless body sealed in a cold, guarded tomb. Jesus endured all of this because he loves us.

Three days later, the stone guarding the tomb was rolled to one side and Jesus appeared to Mary, to the other women who had followed him, to his disciples on the road to Emmaus. Finally, on that first Easter Sunday, he appeared to his closest friends, the ones who had run away and deserted him, and who were found cowering, terrified, in a locked room. These people gave their testimony that the living and risen Jesus had appeared to them after he had been in the tomb for three days.

Cont'd.....

At first, on hearing of Jesus' resurrection the disciples struggled to believe that this had really happened. Thomas, often named The Doubter, insisted that unless he saw the risen Jesus with his own eyes, he would not believe it. Hearing of the early reactions and doubts of Jesus' closest followers allows us not to beat ourselves up if we find the facts of the resurrection hard to understand and believe. We all struggle from time to time with our faith. When we feel unsure, sinking in the quicksands of doubt, Jesus asks us to cry out to him to save us, and he will come to rescue us.

And yet, after Jesus appeared to them, the disciples were changed. They became bold and stood up openly to speak about their experience of the risen Jesus. They were transformed by their encounter and were able to carry on Jesus' teaching of love, compassion and justice for everyone. This boldness and certainty can be our experience too when we ask the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus to help us with our faith, to empower us.

Jesus' resurrection gives us hope that death is not the end. Just as Jesus did, we will one day die. But, just as Jesus rose to new life, he has promised new life for his followers. One day, those who love Jesus and want to spend eternity with him, will be raised to a new and glorious life.

Hearing the Easter story fills us with confidence to continue sharing Jesus' Good News with others. And, when we struggle, we know that we are not the first to do so, and we are not alone in our moments of uncertainty. *"Anyone who calls on my name will be saved!"* promises Jesus. This is the true importance of Easter and why it is so special to us. This is our Easter hope - Jesus, alive and offering friendship to all who ask him.



Snowdrop
paintings by
children at
St Mary's School



The Hope Railings

Over the past couple of months the railings outside the church have been transformed offering hope to all those who see them either as they go walking or shared on social media where there have been over 2000 views. The next display will be for Easter and others are planned throughout the year.



Mothering Sunday



Mission Action Planning

Mission Action Planning is a central element in the diocesan initiative *Living God's Love*. It is a prayerful process of looking, listening and reflection leading into planning and prioritising; seeking, with the Spirit's guidance, to discern both a vision and also a course of action. So as a parish we are setting out to explore how our mission and ministry can be developed and shaped to Live God's Love more effectively, more faithfully and more joyfully. A Steering Group has been set up to start putting ideas together. The Group began by looking at the diversity that exists within our parish - schools, businesses, organisations, shops and everything else that makes up our community. With that information we can, as a parish, explore ways in which we can work with, for and in the local community in ways that bring the joy of God's love into people's lives. If you have ideas that you would like to share then please let Rev Ruth or Rev Penny know.



The *Living God's Love*

Prayer:

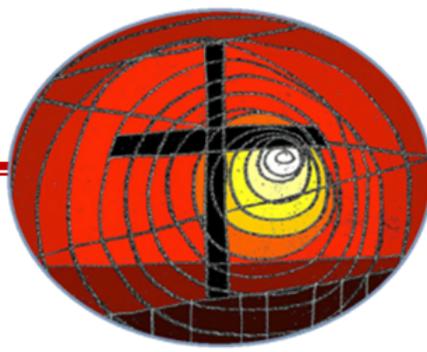
Living God,

Draw us deeper into your love;
Jesus our Lord,
send us to care and serve;
Holy Spirit,
make us heralds of good news.
Stir us, strengthen us,
teach and inspire us
to live your love
with generosity and joy,
imagination and courage;
for the sake of your world
and in the name of Jesus,

Amen.

Living God's Love

www.livinggodsllove.org



Services for Holy Week and Easter

The St Mary's Church PCC have agreed to re-open the church for in-church services for Holy Week and Easter. Church-At-Home Services including Sunday mornings at 9.30am will continue on Zoom until further notice.

Monday 29th, Tuesday 30th, Wednesday 31st March

9.00pm A short 15 min contemplative Compline Service
Church-At-Home usual Zoom codes – see website for details

Maundy Thursday 1st April

7.30pm Communion Service in church

Good Friday 2nd April

2.00pm Reflections around the cross will be live-streamed via the church YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/StMarysChurchNorthMymmsHatfield/featured>

Easter Sunday 4th April

11.00am Communion Service in church. Please let Lisa Large in the Church Office know if you are intending to attend the service





Easter at St Mary's Church

The Easter Story



Take a walk round the grounds of St Mary's Church to explore the story of Easter on a series of posters and "fun things" to do at each one.



Open from now until 10th April

Monday 5th April

**EASTER
EGG HUNT**

Tickets (free) for one of four time slots

If you go down to the Church on Monday April 5th you will find an Easter Egg Hunt taking place. There is a fun opportunity to hunt for and find the hidden eggs. Find 5 eggs, swap them for chocolate eggs and there is even an extra special egg to discover!

Tickets (free) must be prebooked on 'Eventbrite' to ensure social distancing can be maintained. You can find details and the link to book tickets on the church website: www.stmarysnorthmymms.org.uk



Christian Aid Week 10-16 May



Droughts are now more frequent and more intense due to the climate crisis. Rose and her family, and millions of people in Kenya, are struggling to get enough food and water. Our donations could help a community build an earth dam, so when the rains do come, they will have the water they need to live. People like Rose need every last drop to survive the drought.

In previous years St Mary's has given generously to support the work of Christian Aid through the use of the donation envelopes. This year we will have to do things differently and we are looking at ways to continue the good work done in the past.

A date for your diary

We will be holding a Zoom **Quiz Night** on **Wednesday 12th May at 7.30pm**. We are asking people taking part to make a minimum donation of £5 to Christian Aid.

Funerals

11th February	Julia Griffiths	15th February	Peter Cox
18th February	Marion Moore	8th March	Ruby Martin
23rd March	Ronald Gibson		

We remember their families and friends in our prayers.

Contact us

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