



Easter Sunday, 17th April 2022

Dear Friends,

I hope you are all well and able to enjoy this beautiful Spring weekend. As we come to our final weekend we have many memories. It has been a huge privilege to get to know folk and share important moments. We have gained four grandchildren and had two sons married from here. The vicarage has been a wonderful home. Our young grandson is grappling with the dilemma of what nanna will be when she isn't married to a vicar anymore. We have many ideas!

This last week has seen some challenging events unfold. Yesterday Sean Dyche was fired and Joe Root resigned. Our prime minister has received fines and our government has decided to deport illegal immigrants to Rwanda. The war in the Ukraine is becoming more and more brutal and inflation is rising. This is when we hold tightly to the Easter message.

ON EASTER SUNDAY WE SAY TOGETHER

Alleluia. Christ is risen
He is risen indeed. Alleluia

On Easter Sunday we celebrate 'the' new beginning. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus is alive. The empty tomb, the eyewitness accounts, the miraculous growth of the church, the millions who have met and known the risen Jesus personally over the years are some of the many good reasons for believing Jesus is alive. Our loving, living God is a God of new beginnings. And we can share in Jesus' resurrection.



FAVOURITE BIBLE VERSE

If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you,
then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies
by the presence of his Spirit in you.

(Romans 8.11)

Many of us have at one time or another been worn down by what the world has thrown at us. Some of us are lonely, some live in a loveless relationships, have lost their job or are drowning in debt, have lost a loved one or discovered that they are seriously ill, have lost their sense of direction and purpose. Our loving God is a God of new beginnings. A God who offers each of us new life.

FROM A FAVOURITE EASTER HYMN

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won*

Jesus rising from the dead doesn't just offer us the hope of a new beginning and sharing in his new life. It also offers us the prospect of sharing our new life and new beginnings with him as our friend and guide. Jesus is alive and has promised to be with us always, both in joy and in sadness and to guide us safely through this world so we can spend eternity with our loving heavenly father.

A SPECIAL PRAYER FOR EASTER SUNDAY.

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open.

Tomorrow is also a new beginning here in Church. The parish enters a vacancy. We pray whoever becomes your new rector will enjoy their time with you as much as we have. It has been a real privilege for Judy and I to have served here since I returned to Lancashire nearly ten years ago. We thank everyone for the support and friendship we have felt. We have really enjoyed worshipping God together with you. We have made so many friends and will truly miss you all.

If you are free, do come and join us tomorrow at Church to worship and meet with the risen Christ and do join us for our retirement BBQ at the Vicarage. We would love to be able to say goodbye in person. If not we send you our sincere thanks and all good wishes and God's richest blessings for the future.

VERSE FROM A FAVOURITE HYMN

Jesus, stand among us
At the breaking of the bread;
Join us as one body
As we worship You, our Head.
*O Jesus, we love You, so we gather here;
Join our hearts in unity and take away our fear.*



This will be our last weekly letter. We think this is about one hundred! I will pass on details of our mailing list to our Church Wardens so that they are able to keep you informed of all the wonderful things going on at St Mary's. If you would prefer I didn't pass on your contact details, please let me know.

Every blessing and much love,
Rev John

