



CROSSWAYS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ST PAUL'S AND WHITWORTH

All shaken up by Easter

By Revd Canon Matt Tarling

THE chocolate egg has become so closely associated with the festival of Easter that for many it is the only thing associated with Easter! Nevertheless, it has, for some, become a symbol of the stone rolled over the entrance to Jesus' tomb or a reminder of the empty tomb as the egg is opened. Even the chocolates that are sometimes hidden inside the egg remind us of the surprise of finding mere grave clothes or perhaps angels in the tomb, but no body of Jesus.

However, one thing you may never have thought about is the act of breaking into the egg. Sometimes they come ready to open, but occasionally you need to smash them on a hard

surface to be able to eat the chocolate. Perhaps that is helpful reminder of the drama of the first Easter.

One thing we may miss in the Easter story is the events around the stone that was rolled over the tomb entrance. Matthew, in his gospel, helps us to think about this:

Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb (Matthew 27:59-61).

It would have been conventional to cover over the entrance with a



stone. Tombs were often used multiple times so the stone would be removable for future use. However, there was some anxiety among the religious authorities about this particular tomb. As we read on with Matthew he says,

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. 'Sir,' they said, 'we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, "After three days I will

rise again." So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.'

'Take a guard,' Pilate answered. 'Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and

continued on page 2

PARISH

CHURCH

SERVICES

ST PAUL'S CHURCH

Sundays: 10.30am Holy Communion ('All Together' non-communion on first Sunday)
(live-streamed at www.facebook.com/stpaulsspennymoor)

Wednesdays: 9.30am Holy Communion

Fridays: 10am Play Church (term-time only)

WHITWORTH CHURCH

Sundays: 9am Holy Communion

CLERGY

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All shaken up by Easter

continued from front page

posting the guard
(Matthew 27:62-66).

We get so used to the stories of Easter that we might miss the fact that the tomb was unusually difficult for anyone to get into after the burial, or for that matter, to get out! This seems to be a point that Matthew wants us to understand. So much so that when the women went back to the tomb on the Sunday morning (the first Easter Sunday), Matthew says that, *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* (Matthew 28:2-4).

It was dramatic! The

tomb had to be “smashed” open with an earthquake and a dazzling angel. It was so scary that the Roman guards fainted with fear!

If you have an Easter egg this year, enjoy smashing it open. Remember the drama of the first Easter. Remember that when the women found the tomb open that morning they discovered that Jesus had risen from the dead. Remember how something happened which doesn't happen every day and happened with a bang!

When we think about it, the drama at the tomb makes sense. Jesus was defeating death, bringing new life, taking away the punishment for wrongdoing and saving the world. It was the most dramatic event in history! Have a smashing Easter!

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

**St Paul's Spennymoor
Whitworth Church**

Palm Sunday - 29th March

9am - Whitworth : Holy Communion
10:30am - St Paul's : Holy Communion*

Monday 30th March

7pm - Whitworth : Meditation

Tuesday 31st March

7pm - St Paul's : Meditation

Wednesday 1st April

9:30am - St Paul's : Holy Communion
7pm - Whitworth : Meditation

Maundy Thursday - 2nd April*

7:30pm - St Paul's : Holy Communion

Good Friday - 3rd April*

2pm - St Paul's : Contemplation at the cross

Easter Day - 5th April

6am - Whitworth : Sunrise vigil service
9am - Whitworth : Easter Holy Communion
10:30am - St Paul's : Easter Holy Communion*

Services marked with an asterisk will also be live-streamed
facebook.com/stpaulsspennymoor

Mothers' Union celebrates 150 years serving communities

THIS year the Mothers' Union is celebrating 150 years of supporting communities at home and overseas.

A special festival service will be held at Durham Cathedral on Tuesday, 16 June at 2pm, sharing the history of the MU, founded by Mary Sumner, so do pop this date in your diary and attend if you can!

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Vicar Matt assists in formally electing new Bishop of Durham



The College of Canons at Durham Cathedral

Photo: Durham Diocese

AS a member of the College of Canons at Durham Cathedral, the Revd Canon Matt Turling took part in a historic ceremony to formally elect the Venerable Rick Simpson as the next Bishop of Durham.

The ceremony, on Wednesday 11th March, saw canons and officials gather in the Cathedral's historic Chapter House – a place where decisions in the life of the cathedral and diocese have been made for more than 900 years – to express the consent of the Diocese of Durham to the nomination made by His Majesty The King acting on the advice of the Crown Nominations Commission.

Rick's consecration as a Bishop will take place on Thursday, 30th April at 11am at York Minister, at which point he will legally become Bishop of Durham. All are welcome to attend this public act of worship.

The date of Rick's installation as Bishop of Durham has now been confirmed for Sunday 7th June, 3pm at Durham Cathedral.

Following Bishop Sarah's translation to the see of Ely and until Rick's installation, Bishop Frank White, assistant Bishop in the Durham Diocese will become Acting Bishop of Durham. Please do pray for all three at this time of change.

Whitworth Church Easter Egg Hunt



THE annual Whitworth Church Easter Egg Hunt will be on Easter Monday, 6th April 2-4.30pm.

The event will include craft activities for children, stalls and afternoon teas. Do go along and enjoy having fun at our historic church building and beautiful grounds!

Diocese gives thanks to outgoing Bishop of Jarrow



THE diocese bid a farewell to the Rt Revd Sarah Clark in March as she prepares to become the next Bishop of Ely. At a service on the Feast of St Cuthbert, she was presented with a St Cuthbert's Cross, carved from Durham stone by the cathedral's stonemasons. **Photo: Durham Diocese**

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FOR YOUR PRAYERS

For the new Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Sarah Mullally.

For the Venerable Rick Simpson as he is consecrated as Bishop of Durham in April.

For our clergy, the Revd Canon Matt Tarling and Revd Lee Earl, and our annual church meetings in April as we give thanks to God for all that was achieved in 2025 and look forward to the rest of 2026.

For a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Iran.

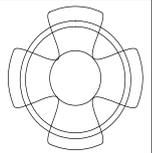
PRAYER FOR APRIL

Holy God, our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole in
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Source: The Church of England



Parish Registers



HOLY BAPTISM

St Paul's

8th March	Caitlyn Jade Rodda
22nd March	Hudson Whitfield
22nd March	Renae Whitfield
22nd March	Oliver Gibbons
22nd March	Jaxon Gibbons

CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

St Paul's

2nd March	Michael Halpin
4th March	Sheila Powley

Wear Valley Crematorium

16th March	Doreen Persaits
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Durham Crematorium

20th March	Mike Hutchinson
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Swift boxes installed at St Paul's

INSTALLED high up in the bell tower at St Paul's church are a number of swift boxes as part of an initiative to encourage safe nesting for the birds. The Durham Wildlife Trust boxes are designed to only allow swifts in, and later in the spring an electronic call player will go live which lets out a pitch sound which can only be heard by the birds to help them find the nest site. It may take a couple of seasons for the birds to nest, but do look skywards around the bell tower and you may, in time, spot some swifts!

Picture left: the swift boxes in the bell tower

Annual church meetings

OUR Annual Meetings will be held on Sunday 19th April, 9am at Whitworth, and on Sunday 26th April, 10:30am (St Paul's). The meetings are an opportunity to reflect and give thanks for the past year and will see the election of churchwardens and church council members. For anyone wishing to stand for elected office, nomination forms will be available in church soon.



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