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St. George's Montezbury

Magazine 50p



April 2026

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Contributions for **St. George's Magazine** should be sent to the Editor by the **15th** of the **previous month**. It may not be possible to include until the following month contributions which are received after this date. Send e-mail & attachments to stgsmagazine@googlemail.com

Items for inclusion in the **Deanery News** should be sent by the **10th** of the **previous month** to Ann Jones annmorganjones456@gmail.com

QUOTE:

Life without God is like an unsharpened pencil - it has no point. - Anon

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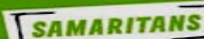
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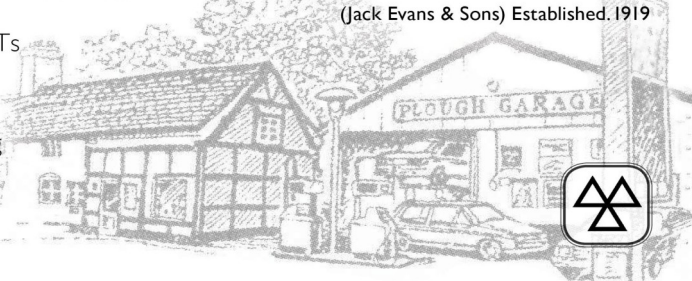


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LIFTING UP OUR EYES

With Rev Richard Lonsdale

The blue tits are using our nesting boxes in the garden. It is a joy to see them busily flying back and forth, mouths full of grass, moss and small twigs as they build their nests. This year they are also spending a lot of time sitting on the door handle of the french windows and tapping and flying at the glass. They see their reflection and think it is a rival for their "spot". It's entertaining and they look so beautiful up close. I haven't found a way to discourage them yet. as they do waste energy that could be better used for nest building or finding food.

It is perhaps easy to smile condescendingly at their little bird brains getting all riled up at a reflection, but then I wonder if we are any better? Social media in particular seems to do a great job of riling lots of people up for one cause or another - whether in sport or politics or international affairs. Why are we letting ourselves get played like this, wasting time and energy getting cross with someone in another part of the country or even halfway across the world?

I suggest our energies could be spent better. As St Francis said

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy."

With my prayers and best wishes.

Fr. Richard





We will be holding a Communion Service on **Pontesford Hill, at Lower Camp.** (Just up from the car park) **6.00am on Sunday, April 5th.** Everyone is welcome to join us.

Resurrection Prayer *By Daphne Kitching*

Loving Father,
Thank you for Jesus; for His life and death,
but most of all for His resurrection,
which makes all things new and possible.

Thank you for the reality that He defeated death by His work on the Cross and offers life forever with Him to all who believe in Him and receive Him into their lives as Lord and Saviour.

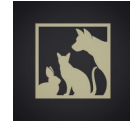
Thank you for that incomprehensible but very real resurrection peace that we can know even in our darkest times by the presence of your Holy Spirit in us.

In joy and thankfulness, we praise and honour you this Eastertime.
In Jesus' name.
Amen.

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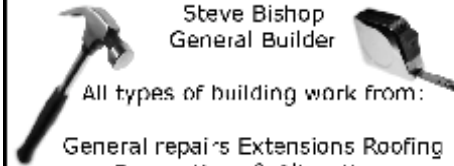
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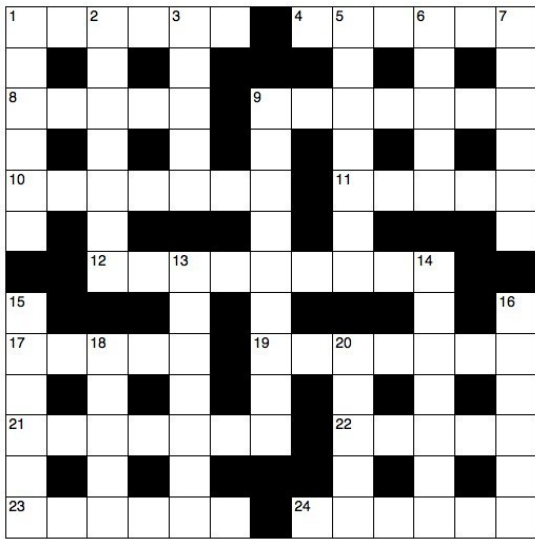


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Here's your crossword for April...

Clues Across

- 1: Relating to the whole universe (6)
- 4: The disciple who made the remark in 8 Across (John 20:24) (6)
- 8: 'Unless I see the nail marks — hands, I will not believe it' i(John 20:25) (2,3)
- 9: He urged King Jehoiakim not to burn the scroll containing Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 36:25) (7)
- 10: Baptist minister and controversial founder of America's Moral Majority, Jerry — (7)
- 11: 'Look, here is — . Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36)(5)
- 12: Repossessed (Genesis 14:16) (9)

- 17: Port from which Paul sailed on his last journey to Rome (Acts 27:3-4) (5)
- 19: Moses was not aware that his face was — because he had spoken with the Lord' (Exodus 34:29) (7)
- 21: Roonwit, C.S. Lewis's half-man, half-horse (7)
- 22: Grill (Luke 24:42) (5)
- 23: 'The lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the — apostles' (Acts 1:26) (6)
- 24: 'I was sick and you looked after me, I was in — and you came to visit me' (Matthew 25:36) (6)

Down

- 1: Coastal rockfaces (Psalm 141:6) (6)
- 2: Academic (1 Corinthians 1:20) (7)
- 3: Publish (Daniel 6:26) (5)
- 5: For example, the Crusades (4,3)
- 6: 11 Across is certainly this (5)
- 7: He reps (anag.) (6)
- 9: Liberator (Psalm 18:2) (9)
- 13: Man who asked the question in 11 Across was in charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27) (7)
- 14: They must be 'worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine' (1 Timothy 3:8) (7)
- 15: The human mind or soul (6)
- 16: 'O Lord, while precious children starve, the tools of war increase; their bread is — ' (Graham Kendrick) (6)
- 18: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not — '(Matthew 11:17) (5)
- 20: Bared (anag.) (5)

Readings and Services for this MONTH

Here are the Sunday Service details, and the readings which you may enjoy at home if you are unable to join a church service this month.

Date	Service	Readings
2nd April Maundy Thursday	Messy Church 3.30pm	
Group Service HTM	7pm	Philippians 3.4b-14 John 12. 1-8
3rd April Good Friday	Tenebrae 7pm	Isaiah 52. 13- 53.end John 18. 1-19.end
Easter Day 5 th April	 Holy Communion and Children`s Church 10.30am	Acts 10.34-43 Colossians 3.1-4 Matthew 28.1-10
7 th April Tuesday	Tea Service 2.30pm	
12th April 2 nd Sunday of Easter	Morning Worship without Communion. Children`s Church 10.30am Meditaion 7pm St.Ruthen`s Longden	Acts 2. 14a. 22-32 1 Peter 1. 3-9 John 20. 19-end
19 th April 3 rd Sunday of Easter	St. George`s Day Service 10.30am	Acts 2. 14a.36-41 Luke 24, 13-35
26 th April 4 th Sunday of Easter	Holy Communion 10.30am APCM 11.30am	Acts 2. 42-end Psalm 23 John 10.1-10

Our church COMMUNITY

APCM 2026

St. George's Annual Parochial Church Meeting
will be held at
St. George's Parish Church, Pontesbury
on Sunday, 26th April
following the 10:30am Service.

All members on the Electoral Roll are invited to attend the APCM, when we elect your three representatives on the Deanery Synod and your representatives on the Parochial Church Council.

We hope you will be able to join us.

Allen Marsden
Secretary, St. George's Pontesbury



Sadly, St.G's no longer has its own group of ringers, but our bells are rung by a group of visiting ringers about once a month on a Monday evening – have you heard them?

On Monday 2nd March they rang a quarter peal
of *Bob Doubles*, to mark the
140th anniversary of the Hereford Guild of Bellringers.

COMING SOON in MAY—

CREAM TEAS, 12.30 until 4pm on Sunday 17th May

Also COMING SOON in MAY—

A Free ORGAN RECITAL

With RICHARD WALKER ARCO FRCO

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Saturday 23rd May 11 am



1st April - Fooling Around

Probably the most famous April Fool's joke of all time was the 1960's BBC TV broadcast

feature on the spaghetti farms of Italy. A BBC reporter interviewed Italian farmers about their work and the progress of the spaghetti plants in great detail. Spaghetti plants were filmed being carefully planted, and then being harvested. And all in the BBC's most serious documentary manner. It took a while to appreciate that this was Aunty playing games. Whatever next!

The odd thing is that no one is quite sure of the origin of this very British tradition. Most attribute it to changes in Britain's calendar in the 1700s, when New Year's Day moved from 25th March to 1st January. Not surprisingly, the change caused a lot of confusion and mistakes around the start of April. Others look even further back, to the ancient Roman feast of Hilaria, when the goddess Cybele was celebrated with pranks and jokes around the Spring Equinox, 25th March.



1st April - All Fools' Day

In years gone by, the rules surrounding April Fool were this: between midnight and noon on 1st April, everyone is 'fair game' to be made a fool of. It is the morning of the practical joke. But the aim is not just to discomfort the victim: he must be tricked into taking action himself, sent on a 'fool's errand'.

And so children would be sent to the dairy for a pint of dove's milk, or to the bookseller for *The Life of Eve's Mother*. Practical jokes on a bigger scale were played: in 1860 a vast number of people received an official looking invitation to the Tower of London that read: 'Admit the Bearer and Friends to view the Annual Ceremony of Washing the White Lions.' Precisely the same trick had been played in 1698.

Then, on the stroke of noon, tradition decrees, April Fools is finished. If anyone attempts devilry thereafter, even while the clock is still striking, it recoils on his own head. A child would then race through the sing-song formula: 'April-Fool-Day's-past-and-gone-you're-the-fool-and-I-am-none!'

The London Marathon – 26th April

The London Marathon is the largest fundraising event on the planet, and each Spring attracts up to 800,000 spectators along the 26.2-mile course. Several Christians with a public Christian faith, or who are running for Christian charities have run in recent London Marathons.

Here are some notable examples from 2024 and 2025:

Chris Evans (Radio/TV Host): The Virgin Radio host, who has spoken about his faith and returning to running after feeling a "sign from God," has completed multiple London Marathons.

Glyn Wise (Former Big Brother Star/Aspiring Priest): A former Big Brother contestant who has since trained for the ministry, he ran the marathon to raise funds for The Salvation Army.

Chris Brown (Christians in Sport): A regular marathon runner who has participated to raise money for *Christians in Sport*, often aiming to set Guinness World Records, such as the fastest marathon in a field hockey goalkeeper kit.

Gary (Barnabas Aid runner): Ran to raise funds for 'Food.gives', a project supporting persecuted Christians.

The Revd Rod Reid ("The Running Reverend"): A regular participant in the London Marathon, running for mental health charity MIND.

The London Marathon also frequently features runners from the *Christians in Sports* organisation, which works to support athletes and promote faith through sporting activity.



Welcome to
The Tea Break



Cuppa, cake, and a chat

Wednesdays 2pm - 4pm
St George's Church
Pontesbury

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St. George's Prayer Chain, a small group of people who believe that prayer can make a difference, is being revived under Mary Worrall's leadership. Each person within the group offers daily prayer for anyone who asks for prayer—**would you like to join this group?**

Please contact Mary Worrall
maryew15mp@gmail.com or on 01743 791069
All information given is given in confidence.



Monthly Tea Service

(not August)
1st Tuesday afternoon
2.30pm to 4pm
St George's Church,
Pontesbury.

A moment of prayer,
A short Holy Communion followed by tea and cake

Our local COMMUNITY



Rea Valley Foodbank has become a Registered Charity

Supporting those in food crisis within the Rea Valley Community

We are now on the Charity Commission Register, Charity number 1217019. This will enable us to register with Gift Aid and claim more money back for our charity. In due course our Treasurer will email the kind individuals who make monthly financial donations to the Foodbank. If you do make monthly financial donations but have not previously had an email, please do contact Jonathan Brown 07497 142485 email: reavalleyfoodbank@gmail.com.

The Foodbank offers choice

Our Foodbank is run by local volunteers, so we can be flexible and offer those that come more choices about the service.

Once you have been referred to the Foodbank you can choose how often you come. If it's an emergency situation you may come just once. For those with ongoing needs you can come every week or when you need to. Over time we may need to review the service we provide for you.

When you come you can choose the items you need to help see you through the week. If you need help our volunteers are there to advise. There is a limit on the number of high-cost items that can be taken. Please bring your own bag(s). You are welcome to stay for a hot drink and chat with our friendly volunteers.

To use the Foodbank, get referred: from your local clergy, GP, school, nursery, social/health worker, housing provider or other support agency. Or call for a chat with Rev. Greg Smith 07902 794653 or Rev. Richard Lonsdale 07922 830488.

See our website: <https://reavalleyfoodbank.co.uk/> or Facebook



The Rea Valley Transport Scheme, which is entirely free, is designed to get patients to the doctors, dentists, hospital, opticians and other wellbeing services. To request transport, please contact our scheme administrator, Emma, at reavalleytransportscheme.info@gmail.com or by calling **07468115939**. She works Monday-Friday 10-2.30 and

3.30-5. We do not operate an answering machine service, so please call back if you receive no answer. If possible, please give us a minimum of a week's notice of when and where your appointment is. Whilst we can never guarantee to be able to help, we have so far been able to respond positively to most requests.

The world-wide COMMUNITY



CAP turns 30, and looks back on tens of thousands of people freed from debt

The well-known charity Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

It was in Bradford, back in 1996, that a local Christian, John Kirkby, felt called to leave his career in finance, and use his knowledge to help local people deep in debt.

With a modest donation and a lot of faith, John set out to make himself available to parents who couldn't feed their children, families facing eviction and desperate people living without hope. John used his expertise to negotiate with creditors, set up budgeting systems and offer a lifeline to those trapped in debt.

But John knew that people all over the country were struggling in a similar way. And so soon, he began looking to expand the work across the UK. With the vital ingredients of a church to partner with, a passionate person to be trained as a debt counsellor and the faith that God would provide, four new CAP centres were opened at the end of 1998.

Since then, CAP has rapidly grown its Debt Centre network, with services to tackle the causes of debt and poverty also introduced.

Its Debt Help department offers practical advice on how to live well on a low income, through CAP Life Skills groups, as well as supporting people stepping into employment through CAP Job Clubs. Through a UK-wide network of CAP projects, it has a vision of transformed lives, thriving churches and an end to UK poverty.

CAP has been accredited by the Money and Pensions Service, and has won national awards for excellence. Over the past 30 years, it has helped tens of thousands of families and individuals to break free from debt and poverty.

Today CAP provides free debt counselling, job clubs, and life skills training through local churches. The service is open to anyone who needs it. Go to: <https://capuk.org>

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Looking at GOD

There is a lot of talk about 'mindfulness' these days, and how to find calm moments in our daily lives. Both the BBC and Classic FM even have radio stations devoted to 'mindful' and 'calm' music.

But as Christians, we have an extra, divine resource to call on.....

Peaceful mind in Eastertide

Easter is a time of rejoicing over what Christ has done for us; the following may be helpful.

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. *1 John 4:9*

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6-8

But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you. *Romans 8:10,11*

4th April – Easter Eve or Holy Saturday

Easter Eve is the last day of Lent. It is the day between Good Friday and Easter Day, and represents the one full day that Jesus was dead. It is a day of quiet reflection and anticipation for Christians worldwide.

In various church traditions it is known as Easter Eve, Holy Saturday, the Great Sabbath, Hallelujah Saturday, Saturday of the Glory, and Black Saturday.

Easter Eve is sometimes incorrectly called Easter Saturday. But Easter Saturday is the Saturday *following* Easter Sunday.

Most churches do not have any services on Easter Eve. In the Catholic Church, the altar remains stripped completely bare. Many Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and other churches observe many of the same customs as the Catholic Church; however, their altars may be covered in black instead of being stripped.

In the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Methodist traditions, Easter Eve lasts until nightfall, after which the Easter Vigil is celebrated, marking the official start of the Easter season.

What did Jesus do on that one full day in the grave?
Christian understanding varies on this.

The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and most mainline Protestant churches teach that Jesus descended to the realm of the dead on Holy Saturday, to save the righteous souls who died before His crucifixion.

The catechism of the Catholic church calls the descent "the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission," during which He "opened heaven's gates for the just who had gone before Him."

Often called "the Harrowing of Hell," the dramatic image of Jesus breaking down the doors of Hades has proved almost irresistible to artists, from the painter Hieronymus Bosch to the poet Dante to countless Eastern Orthodox iconographers.

But some Protestants say there is little scriptural evidence for the detour to hell, and that even Jesus' own words contradict it. For on Good Friday, Jesus told the Good Thief crucified alongside Him that "today you will be with Me in Paradise," according to Luke's Gospel.

"That's the only clue we have as to what Jesus was doing between death and resurrection," John Piper, a prominent evangelical author and pastor from Minnesota, has said. "I don't think the thief went to hell and that hell is called paradise."

The Bible says little about the interlude between Jesus' death and resurrection. Churches that teach He descended to the realm of the dead usually quote 1 Peter 3:18-20. "Christ was put to death as a human, but made alive by the Spirit," Peter writes. "And it was by the Spirit that He went to preach to the spirits in prison."

The descent might not have become a doctrine if not for a fourth-century bishop named Rufinus, who added that Jesus went *ad inferna* - to hell - in his commentary on the Apostles' Creed. The phrase stuck, but it was officially added to the influential creed only centuries later.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 22:24, John 13:3-17

Jesus and his disciples were celebrating the Passover with the special meal. The disciples were bickering again.

I'm most important because I've known him the longest!

But I'm the oldest!

I've given up the most to follow him!

There was a reason why no one wanted to be the least important - the roads were mud and everyone's feet got very dirty.

It was the job of the least important servant to wash everyone's feet...

The disciples didn't have a servant, and none of them wanted to do the feet washing...

Jesus took off his outer robe and tied a towel around his waist.

He filled a large bowl with water and started washing the disciples' feet.

Peter couldn't believe what he was seeing!

You will understand later why I am doing this.

If you don't let me, you will no longer be my disciple.

Are you really going to wash my feet?

I can't ever let you serve me like this!

Then wash all of me!

If you've had a bath, then you only need your feet washing!

Once Jesus had washed all their feet, he put his robe back on and sat down.

Do you understand why, your teacher, did this? I am setting you the example of how you are to serve each other. Do it, and God will bless you.

that the colour white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus. Read Isaiah 1:18 and John 3:1-3.

* Fold in broken nuts.

* Drop the mixture, teaspoon by teaspoon, onto a baking sheet covered with non-stick baking parchment. Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid. Read Matthew 27:57-60.

* Put the baking sheet in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF.

* Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed. Read Matthew 27:65-66.

* GO TO BED! Explain that they may feel sad to leave them in the oven overnight. Jesus' followers felt despair when the tomb was sealed. Read John 16:20 and 22.

* On Easter morning, open the oven and give everyone a cookie. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On the first Easter Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty. Read Matthew 28:1-9.

ENJOY!

Easter Dawn *by Nigel Beeton. who wonders ...*

1. Creation holds collective breath
In darkness, cold and deep:
Has hope and joy been claimed by death?
Has love been laid to sleep?
The solid seal, the heavy stone
The chill of Friday's gloom
Leave faith to flicker all alone
Beside a borrowed tomb.

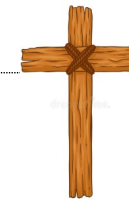
3. Let hallelujahs wake the earth!
Let bell-sound rend the skies!
For Christ has won our second birth
By His triumphant rise!
The empty tomb, the open door
Proclaim the darkness gone:
Death was defeated evermore
On Easter's glorious dawn!

*What utter despair and
hopelessness must Jesus'
disciples and followers have
felt during those dark hours
before morning ...*

2. But, as the night begins to fray
The soldiers faint with fright!
An angel rolls the stone away
At dawn's first glint of light.
No linen shroud can hold Him now
The grave has lost its prize.
No thorns are seen upon His brow
As Love and Triumph rise!

Canon Paul Hardingham considers the crucifixion...

The Cross of Jesus



*The cross is a picture of violence, yet the key to peace;
a picture of suffering, yet the key to healing;
a picture of death, yet the key to life;
a picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power;
a picture of capital punishment, yet the key to mercy and forgiveness;
a picture of vicious hatred, yet the key to love;
a picture of supreme shame, yet the Christian's supreme boast.*

The cross really is the key to everything! Although a horrifying instrument of torture and death, it is also a symbol of God's love and peace. On the cross Jesus died to deal with the problem of our sin and defeat the powers of death and evil. He identified with our sufferings and set us an example of self-sacrificial love.

As Peter writes, 'He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed' (1Peter 2:24). Jesus died in our place on the cross and took away our guilt, to pay the full penalty for our sin. Access to God's presence is now open to all, symbolised by the Temple curtain being torn in two from top to bottom. The barrier between us and God was torn down in order 'to bring us to God' (1 Peter 3:18).

The idea of substitution lies at the heart of understanding what Jesus did on the cross: 'For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting Himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be.' (John Stott).

QUOTE: Four freedoms:

The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world.
The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way,
everywhere in the world.
The third is freedom from want... everywhere in the world.
The fourth is freedom from fear... anywhere in the world.

– Franklin D Roosevelt

Resurrection life *By the Revd Roy Shaw.*

Did you have 'a good Lent'? Were you able to make the journey with Jesus through the turmoil of those last days of His earthly ministry as He set His face to go to Jerusalem, knowing He would be killed there? I find the Lenten journey, particularly Holy Week (the week leading up to the crucifixion) harrowing, and by 3 o'clock on Good Friday - the hour at which Jesus traditionally died - I am wrung out.

All of which makes Easter Day and the weeks that follow, with the joy and reality of new life, so much the sweeter. No wonder Christians make this the most important day of the year - much more so than Christmas. God, in the resurrection of Jesus, has vindicated the way of love, truth, sacrifice and service, kindness and hope over the self-serving and grubby ways that seek power, self-advancement, privilege, hatred and division. Hallelujah!

It's all summed up in the poem 'Easter Wings' by the 17th century poet and priest George Herbert. For me, it's not the words of the poem so much as its shape - it's written in the shape of a butterfly's wings. Now that's clever; - to let both shape and words express something lovely, like the freedom and beauty of a butterfly on the wing. That sums up Resurrection life.

We are not asked to explain how the Resurrection took place. That is known to God alone, and we would trip ourselves up in all sorts of ways as we seek to find a rational explanation as to how it happened. But we are invited to live it - yes, live the Resurrection in ourselves - as we ask the Risen Lord to lead us through each day. In time, this constant invitation to live out the Resurrection changes our whole being, as we try, in the words of Mother Teresa to 'do little things with great love.'

The more I try and live out Resurrection life (more properly, the more I allow Jesus to live the Resurrection life through me) the more boundless I find it to be. Which I guess is why God gives us a season - seven weeks up till Pentecost - to allow this stupendous fact of the Resurrection to sink into us, call out a response from us.

Enjoy your Easter eggs, your Easter bonnets, your egg-pacing; in fact, have a great Easter. But don't let the Resurrection pass you by. It's the gateway to what Jesus calls 'life in all its fullness'.

The Revd Roy Shaw is a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director.

If you have young children or grandchildren, or maybe just like eating or cooking biscuits yourself, here's a recipe to try for Easter this year:

Easter Story Biscuits

Prep. Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 1 day



Ingredients:

1 cup pecan nuts
1 tsp. vinegar
3 egg whites
1 pinch salt
1 cup sugar
large plastic bag
wooden spoon
tape
Bible



Instructions:

* Preheat oven to 150C.

* Place pecans in the plastic bag and let the children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, He was beaten by the Roman soldiers. Read John 19:1-3.

* Let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 tsp. vinegar into mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross, He was given vinegar to drink. Read John 19:28-30.

* Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life. Read John 10:10-11.

* Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin. Read Luke 23:27.

* So far the ingredients are not very appetizing... !

* Add 1 cup sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know and belong to Him. Read Ps. 34:8 and John 3:16.

* Beat with a mixer on high speed until stiff peaks are formed. Explain

On the third day, he rose again from the dead and changed our relationship with life and death, sin and righteousness forever. For 1350 years, Christians here have celebrated that day which is the heart of our faith and the hope of all creation. Those early saints who brought the faith here 1350 years ago brought us Jesus and Easter and the hope and desire for eternal life under our God on earth as it is in heaven.

Now, 1350 Easter celebrations later, we can still say 'Alleluia'.

Nigel Beeton writes: My poor old car was beginning to show its age, not helped by some of the potholey roads in Suffolk which would cause a challenge to a Challenger tank! I was beginning to dread that MOT time of year! And the new car is great, but it's stuffed to the gunwales with electronic gizmos and technical wizardry. I'm not going to test it in anger, but I don't think it would actually allow me to run into the back of a vehicle in front! But when it comes to finding some music to listen to! ...



My New Car

My old car was a little tired;
It failed its MOT!
So then it was I felt inspired
To go PHEV.

It is a good car – nice to run
And helpful as can be!
But now my troubles have begun –
t's cleverer than me!

I
I used to press a button once
For music on CD
But now – I must be such a dunce –
I can't find BBC!

I got it playing from my phone
By Bluetooth link maybe?
But then what truly made me moan –
I spoke – it misheard me!

It turned my lovely music off
And played some awful sound;
I tried to speak, I tried to cough
But no way back I found!

So if you want to buy a car
To get from A to B,
Don't forget you first require
A technical degree!

The Revd Dr Jo White considers various aspects of Christianity.

Reflecting Faith: Same Old, Same Old ...

Well, here we are at Easter – and guess what the sermon subject is likely to be? *Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!*

In so many ways it really could be 'same old, same old' and the preacher could just repeat last year's sermon. Let's face it, nothing will have changed in the Easter story in the last 12 months.

Or has it? For me, and I suspect for most folks, 12 months can be a 'long' time; and things change in our lives. Babies are born, youngsters change school, teenagers leave school, young people move out, friends die, accidents happen, and pains and sorrows come and go.

Around all of that personal business the world turns: there are holidays, seasons, catastrophes, people hurting people, people caring for others and on and on it goes. Things might repeat but they are never truly 'the same'.

So it is with the Easter story. Christ is risen – He is risen indeed! Really? In the midst of my life and the world around me? In the centre of your life and your community?

Is it any less amazing today than it was last year, or the year before, or a decade previously or when the women went to the tomb that first Resurrection Day?

In so many ways I need to hear this story again – but anew. New, not just because the preacher will (hopefully) have made it register with what's happening around my small community today and new because I am not the same person I was a year ago – for better or worse!

I shall hear those words differently this year than ever before. Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!

This month

Before you listen to this year's Easter Sermon, think about the changes you've had in your life since last year and the world around us. How much more do you need a living Christ today? May you say in your depths, with me:

Christ is risen – He is risen indeed!





Canon Paul Hardingham continues looking at the books of the Bible:

What's the Big Idea? - An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Lamentations

The Book of Lamentations consists of five laments over the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of Judah's leading inhabitants to Babylon. Tradition ascribes the book to Jeremiah, who witnessed Jerusalem's destruction in 586 BC. Each lament is an *acrostic* i.e. each verse begins in order with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet (except the fifth).

The themes of the laments can be summarised as follows: Jerusalem in Agony (1); the LORD's Anger (2); Judah's complaint against Adversity (3); Jerusalem's Anxiety (4); and Judah's prayer to the Almighty (5). Lamentations portrays the overwhelming sense of loss that accompanied the destruction of the city, along with its Temple with its worship and sacrifices. However, the book is not simply concerned about Jerusalem's destruction, but for the lessons that can be learned from it.

Jeremiah sees the Babylonians as human agents of God's judgment upon Judah's sin. It was God Himself who destroyed the city and temple. However, God's action was not arbitrary, for the people had deliberately sinned against Him and broken their covenant with Him. Although the people's tears and cries for vengeance are understandable, God looks for a sincere heartfelt sorrow from the people. The book begins with lament, *'How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she who once was great among the nations!'* (1:1), but finishes with repentance, *'Restore us to yourself, Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old'* (5:21).

However, in the middle of the book there is a reminder of God's goodness and faithfulness: *'Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.'* (3:22-23).



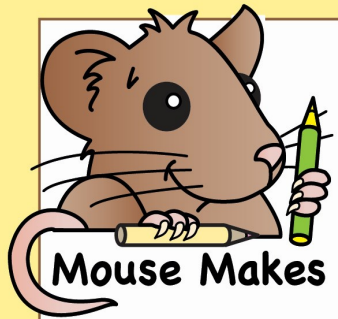
Thoughts from The Very Revd Sarah Brown, Dean of Hereford

As we reach the end of the first quarter of the 1351st year of the life of the Diocese, I find myself reflecting in a rather "Life of Brian-ish" kind of way on what the anniversary actually means. 'What', one might wonder, 'has Christianity ever done for us?'

Apart from define the character and culture of each one of our villages and towns visually, spiritually and ethically; apart from instil timeless rhythms of life and worship that have fitted hand in glove with those of land, weather and season; apart from put this place surprisingly often at the epicentre of national history through those called to serve under God in church, state and commerce; apart from inspire us to creativity in art and music and poetry and to endeavour in caring for others and offering freedom, education and sometimes just bread to all in need.. what has Christianity ever done for the people of this place?

Christianity has had a tangible impact on countless lives and wellbeing in these parts and has been part of the warp and weft of life. Sometimes it has led to terrible things, but mostly it has been the making of us, and though there is alarming and rapid change and apparent decline at present, it will prevail. In the last 1350 years, a pageant of nobles and peasants, artisans and farmers, businesspeople, clergy and laity have lived out life's joys, sorrows and unpredictabilities within these inherently Christian communities, which have sometimes flourished and sometimes not.

But all this stems from a single event and a single man. The man who was God came to show us what God is like and how much he loves us. He modelled love and peace and justice and wholeness such as no one had ever known, showed us that we are not alone in this difficult and wounded world and filled hearts with yearning for a promised Kingdom and with passion to see it fulfilled. His teaching captivated the needy and the pure in heart and made the powerful afraid and very dangerous. They nailed him to the cross in the most brutal of criminals' deaths and his friends tenderly laid his corpse in a tomb.



G O O D N E W S
 O H O S A N N A
 D E A T H Q B V
 V N C O E E U I
 U A H N A A R O
 M I R E V S Y U
 A L I V E T D R
 R I S E N E O K
 Y O T H O R N S
 P A L M S Q K A
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 O C J E S U S L
 S T O M B V D Y
 S R Y E M P T Y

JESUS • DONKEY • PALMS
 HOSANNA • PILATE • THORNS
 CRUCIFY • NAIL • CROSS
 QUAKE • DEATH • BURY
 TOMB • STONE • EMPTY
 ANGEL • MARY • HEAVEN
 RISEN • ALIVE • GOD
 GOOD NEWS • CHRIST
 SAVIOUR • EASTER • JOY

EASTER WITNESS - I WAS THERE

I carried Jesus into Jerusalem
 Read Matthew 21:1-11

I handed Jesus over to be crucified
 Read Matthew 27:11-26

I nailed Jesus to the cross
 Read Mark 15:16-32

We watched Jesus die
 Read Mark 15:33-41

I laid his body in my tomb
 Read Mark 15:42-47

I guarded the tomb
 Read Matthew 27:62-66

We saw the empty tomb
 and spoke to the angel
 Read Matthew 28:1-10

Jesus is alive!
 He ate a meal with me!
 Read Luke 24:13-35



The Seven Deadly Sins: Envy

Continuing Canon Paul Hardingham's seven-part series.

'A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.' (Proverbs 14:30).

This month we look at the Deadly Sin of *envy*. As a consuming desire to have what others have got, it's a major source of unhappiness.

It is different from jealousy: '*Envy* is wanting something that someone else has. *Jealousy* is the fear of losing something you already have to someone else' (Brene Brown). We can envy things like wealth, looks and, possessions, resulting in resentment, bitterness and anger. The pursuit of possessing what others have will always leave us empty and dissatisfied, as the use of social media demonstrates.

How do we overcome envy in our lives?

Gratitude: 'Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus'. (1 Thessalonians 5:18). A grateful heart has no room for envy, when we focus on God's love for us and what He has given us, rather than looking at others' gifts and opportunities. God has created us uniquely to be the people we are and different to others. As a result, we are better able to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

Trust: 'And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work'. (2 Corinthians 9:8). One of the chief causes of envy is FOMO: Fear of Missing Out! We can trust that God knows everything that we need and so we don't need to worry about missing out. By entrusting our lives to Him, we can confidently depend on God meeting all our needs.

Is God truly enough for me? '*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing*'. (Psalm 23:1).

Lester Amann considers how the risen Christ reveals Himself to us...

Never Far Away

We can only imagine how the two travellers to Emmaus felt, knowing that Jesus had died. Gone were their hopes for a bright future. They thought God had let them down. They had suffered a cruel blow and were bewildered and upset.



In their grief, the risen Jesus came alongside them and spoke with them at length, but somehow, they didn't recognise Him. Why was this, and why did Jesus intend to leave them at Emmaus without first revealing who He was?

The answers may be found by looking back at the encounters Jesus had with people. He never forced His true nature onto anyone. Every individual had to make up their own mind as to who He was, and to decide if the things He said were true.

Today, Jesus does not 'gate-crash' into our lives. In a number of ways, He gently and persuasively reveals Himself. So, the story of the walk to Emmaus should encourage us each time we feel His absence; at those times when we thought He would step in and immediately solve our problems! On *our* journey of life, we can have times of sadness, and it can seem as though God is far away.

But while we are thinking that Jesus has left us alone, He is actually with us. He knows where we are and what we are feeling. He can quietly draw alongside us. Surprisingly, it can sometimes be in situations of sadness and solitude that Jesus 'speaks' to us more clearly.

We don't have to go off in search of some 'religious experience' or to a special 'holy place'. He is present in the here and now. Jesus is the unseen companion on every journey and the unseen guest at every meal. In His way and in His time, our Lord reveals Himself to us in different situations. We may be aware of His presence in surprising circumstances and on unexpected occasions. How important it is that we stay alert.

There will be times when we will be like those two men on the Emmaus Road, searching for answers. We will earnestly desire clear and direct answers to our questions and the knowledge, understanding or revelation may be slow to come. But, with Jesus, there are many lessons to be learnt along *our* Emmaus Road that would not have been discovered any other way.

Further reading: Luke 24:13-35



After many rainy days at the start of this year, Lester Amann considers a man who knew all about too much rain...

Noah: builder for God



Mention the name Noah, and it's likely we remember he built an ark, and then filled it with animals. But did you know that Noah lived for 500 years before he started this massive carpentry project?

With such a long life before the flood, we may wonder what he did for five centuries! Apparently, Noah lived in an age of widespread depravity and violence, but he stood out as a man of righteousness. He was a shining example of goodness and holiness in a generation of corruption and evil. This didn't mean he was perfect, but at that time he was blameless before God.

Noah also preached to those around him. He wouldn't have preached in the way we think of preachers today, standing in a pulpit or on a platform. Instead, his *life* was the 'sermon' - an example of purity and faithfulness in a world defiled and rampant with wickedness.

We must admire Noah's courage and obedience to God. Perhaps we should ask ourselves, how well do our lives compare with Noah's, as we also live in a society that falls short of good qualities such as love, peace and trust.

Noah spent 120 years building the ark. No doubt he was plagued with inquisitive questions and hurtful comments about his work. Despite this, he kept doing what God had told him to do. There is no record that Noah had any converts. Only Noah with his wife, his three sons and their wives, were together on a voyage to a new life and to a new world.

If we are to have a new life in God's world we too must be dedicated to the task, He has given us to do - even if we fail to see others take hold of God's redeeming love. God deals with us differently according to His plans for our life and we are called to obedience and commitment.

Noah's task was *not* to save the world but to be a faithful witness. His life tells us not to give up witnessing in the face of ridicule and opposition, and to trust God that He has reserved for us a better future.