



St Peter & St Paul's Church, Cranfield

NEWS & DIARY

April 2020

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For more information on Cranfield Parish Church look online at:

www.cranfieldchurch.org

Unprecedented Times



As I write this article for our April newsletter, church services have been suspended, schools are about to be closed, shops and supermarket shelves are emptying as a result of panic buying and our lives generally are being subjected to unprecedented change.

For the time being our Archbishops are calling on us to be “a different sort of church”. Our lives should be less characterised by attendance at church on Sunday and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day. We may not be able to pray with people in the ways that we are used to, but we can certainly pray for people and we can offer practical care and support.

By our love and service to others, Jesus Christ will be made known, and the hope of the gospel – a hope that can counter fear and isolation – will spread across our land.

One theologian said: ‘the way to be anxious for nothing is to pray about everything’. We are also taught that prayer is powerful and effective (*James 5*). The Christian message has always been a message of hope and that message is more pertinent today than ever.

I have recently conducted a number of funerals, with more to come, and the question of where God is in all this has inevitably cropped up. We know that God is present in the care and compassion shown by so many in times of crisis, but I always remind people of the story of Job, who suffered all forms of trials and tribulations and never lost his faith. In his dialogue with God, Job was reminded who was in charge and not to question God's ways.

As we draw close to Good Friday and Easter Sunday we are reminded of the dark days immediately preceding the joy and wonder of the resurrection. Spring flowers are blooming abundantly in my garden and we continue to be surrounded by the beauty of God's creation. We are currently in the midst of dark days, but there will be joyful days ahead.

Lord you are the Prince of Peace and the King of Love who casts out fear. Please help us not to be anxious about Covid-19 but to seek Your wisdom and stay vigilant about taking precautions, planning ahead and showing compassion to those who may be vulnerable. Amen

Trevor Dimmock

Commitment

“Mad as a box of frogs” – this was how the news of me taking on a new dog was greeted by one of my friends! I realise that a dog is a total commitment and that, at my age and with health problems, it probably is a bit crazy. Since I have been privileged to adopt Adam, a delightful four-year-old retired greyhound, I have been rewarded with companionship, affection and the need to go out for regular walks twice a day.

Because of the Covid-19 (Corona Virus) pandemic we could be in for a long haul of social isolation. On St Patrick’s Day the Archbishop of Canterbury suspended all regular public worship until further notice and the Church will be closed.

EVERYTHING has been put on hold – even the Eurovision Song Contest. How will we manage to live without it?!

Echoing Trevor’s thoughtful words, we are a caring community in Cranfield but we all need to look out for each other even more. If anyone needs help with shopping or other essential supplies they should let Trevor know (contact details on front page) and he will try to co-ordinate assistance. Volunteers from Hands Across Cranfield (07789 701 252) are always there to help. The manager of Budgens (01234 757 830) has kindly offered home deliveries for those in need.

Keeping in contact by telephone can be a lifeline – even if just for a chat and sharing of our experiences – it is all a bit surreal. These are challenging, unprecedented times. We need to have faith that we shall get through them and, hopefully, emerge stronger.

Without any services in our churches, there will be services on TV and radio and on-line. Watch the Church website (www.cranfieldchurch.org), where you will also find Pews News to keep you up to date, and that of the Church of England (www.churchofengland.org) for more details. However, we shall also miss that vital fellowship.

It is perhaps a good time to reaffirm our commitment to Jesus, especially this Eastertide. What we should have is plenty of time for quiet prayer and reflection. Jesus reminds us (*Revelation 3:20*) that he is standing at the door, knocking. He wants us to open our hearts and minds to him so that we can truly know that he is the very breath of our souls. The door can only be opened from the inside.

Holywell School, who kindly print the Newsletter for us, understandably have other priorities at the moment, so there will be no printed version. However, for those who have previously requested one I shall try to print off some and send them out. We shall also endeavour to have a few in church for visitors and for anyone who would like to pop in for one.

As there is no actual “Diary” this month, and for the foreseeable future, I am going to take each Sunday and Holy Day, looking at a selection of bible readings in the Church Lectionary. These will be sprinkled with verses of hymns. I hope you find these helpful. May the words speak to your hearts to bring you closer to Jesus.

Dr Marjorie Cotton

The Garden Tomb



In 2009 I was fortunate to go on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The Garden Tomb wasn’t on the official itinerary but we had some free time in Jerusalem and really wanted to experience this special place. The site, discovered by General Charles Gordon in 1883, has not been authenticated and the official site of the tomb is in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

We were able to go into this first century tomb and see the groove where the massive rolling stone would have been. Just beyond the tomb, overlooking the bus station, is a rock face which resembles a skull. There were small groups singing hymns and others praying in the garden. This place felt very special. Whether or not it was Jesus’ burial place, the tomb is empty as it would have been then. A resurrection service is held here at sunrise on Easter morning.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. *John 3:16*

The photograph is of the central light of the east window of our church. The original window was the gift of John Collier Harter, father of the Rector, George Gardner Harter, in 1851. The five principal lights illustrated the leading events of Christ's life: The Nativity, Baptism, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. The original window must have been magnificent.

Sadly, in September or October 1940, when the Airfield was a target for German bombing during the Second World War, a bomb which landed near Rectory Farm blew out most of the window. Local children were tasked with picking up the broken glass.

It was more than seven years before it was repaired at the cost of £180. "The existing figures that remain in the lights to be leaded with crazy background with the exception of the centre light, this being the only one allowing for repairing the missing figure of our Lord on the Cross.



Reflective Diary for April 2020

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Sunday 19th April – the Second Sunday of Easter

1 Peter 1: 3-5, 8

John 20: 19-21 Thomas was not with them and he refused to believe that they had seen Jesus. A week later Jesus again appeared to them and Thomas was there. Jesus said to Thomas (v 27-29) "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe. Thomas answered him, "My Lord and My God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Hymn – "Fight the good fight" by John Samuel Bewley Monsall (1811-75)

Faint not nor fear, His arm is near, He changeth not and thou art dear;
Only believe, and thou shalt see, that Christ is all in all to thee.



Sunday 26th April – the Third Sunday of Easter

Isaiah 40: 1-11 Comfort, O comfort my people, says our God (v 1)

1 Peter 1: 17-25

Luke 24:13-35 On the road to Emmaus

Hymn – "The King of Love my Shepherd is" – Based on Psalm 23 by Henry Williams Baker (1821-77)

The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His, And He is mine for ever.
Perverse and foolish oft I strayed; but yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid, and home rejoicing brought me.

Reflective Diary for April 2020

Bible readings taken from New Revised Standard Version Anglicized Edition (in italics) but have your bibles handy!



Sunday 5th April – Palm Sunday

Zechariah 9: 9-11 Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey. (v 9)

Philippians 2: 5-11 The Hymn of Christ

Matthew 21: 1-11 The liturgy of the palms.

Hymn – “*Ride on, Ride on in Majesty*” by Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868)

Ride on! Ride on in majesty! Hark, all the tribes hosanna cry;
Thy humble beast pursues his road, with palms and scattered garments strowed.
Ride on! Ride on in majesty! in lowly pomp ride on to die;
Bow thy meek head to mortal pain, then take, O God, thy power and reign.

Thursday 9th April – Maundy Thursday

1 Corinthians 11: 23-26 The institution of Holy Communion at the Last Supper

John 13: 1-17, 31b-35 Jesus washes the disciples’ feet at the Last Supper: v 34 “*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another*”.

Hymn – “*The Servant King*” by Graham Kendrick

From heaven You came, helpless babe, entered our world, Your glory veiled,
Not to be served but to serve, and give your life that we might live.
*This is our God, the Servant King, He calls us now to follow Him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering of worship to the Servant King.*



Friday 10th April – Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 Isaiah’s prediction of Jesus: “*struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.*” *Ch 53: v 4, 5*

John 18:1-19:42 John’s account of the crucifixion: *Ch 19 v 38-42* The burial of Jesus in the tomb.

Hymn – “*When I survey the wondrous cross*” by Isaac Watts (1674- 1748)

See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e’re such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown.
Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.



Sunday 12th April – Easter Day

John 20: 1-18 Mary Magdalene finds the empty tomb

“*Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.*” *John 20:18*

Hymn – “*Jesus Christ is risen today*” by Lyra Davidica (1708)

Jesus Christ is risen today, Hallelujah! Our triumphant holy day, Hallelujah!
Who did once upon the cross, Hallelujah! Suffer to redeem our loss. Hallelujah!
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