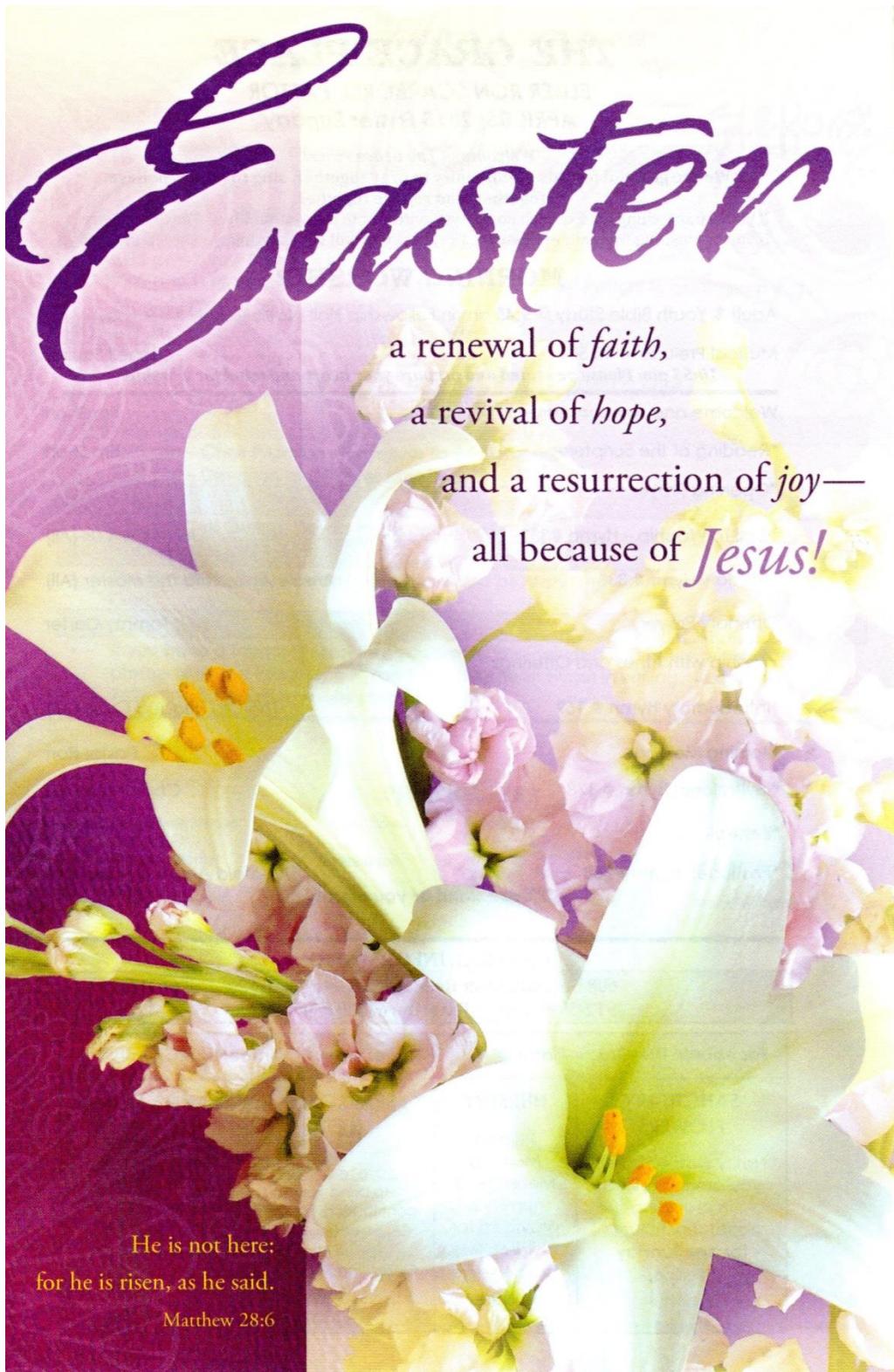


St. Mary's Church Cubbington



Sunday 4th April

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From Despair to Joy

Dear Friends

There are times in our life when we can experience both joy and pain, sometimes on the same day, the same week or the same month. Our ability to deal with the emotion which one of those things evokes depends upon what else might be happening in our lives.

Let me explain.....In life we have so much to be grateful for, namely our health, education, food and shelter, or family and friends.

As Christians, our faith in Jesus Christ who is our Saviour and our friend is perhaps the most important of all in our spiritual lives with which we rejoice in. But still we will experience loss and despair.

As the global pandemic continues to dictate our daily lives, it is all too easy to become frustrated, low in mood, lethargic and apathetic to the needs of others, but throughout each day it's so important to find the beauty or positivity in someone or something. It might simply be the chink of sunlight from behind a cloud or the intensity of colour to be found in a spring flower. Joy can sometimes be hidden from us and we must try if we can to seek it out.

Easier said than done, especially if you are feeling low.

As we become more and more socially connected, (hopefully with the slow relaxing of the COVID 19 restrictions - God willing), it will be interesting to see how we evolve as a community. In Cubbington and beyond, we are so blessed to have each other. We have been innovative in the way we have 'done church' for example. The weekly booklet available in both hard copy and the digital version, have resulted in the word and message of God being extended out of our own community to further afield over the past year.

Many people have told me how they get great pleasure in being able to forward digital links for our services, access the church website and give their weekly booklets to their neighbours or family friends. This is all a great example of everyday ministry

and we give thanks to God for our ability to ‘gift’ each other things, even if that might just be forwarding an email or a zoom link invitation to a church service etc. This is all evidence of mission and we praise God for it.

Each of us has our own daily struggles and challenges and for some the despair comes thick and heavy, especially with the loss of a dearly loved soul and it can take a lot of time for the notion of joy ever to reveal itself again. For some, it would seem a betrayal to a loved one if they explore a return to finding happiness and God understands that. He knows that time must be allowed for grief.

We find ourselves in Holy Week. Over a most challenging year, many have lost and grieved for loved ones who have died, not only from Covid-19 related illnesses, but also from the many other diseases that blight our modern lives. We read in the press that some life saving treatments for other diseases have also been impacted upon due to the pandemic and we pray that all those who continue to suffer can still access their own important life saving treatments.

As Jesus hung on the cross and accused of being a false prophet, we witness the hurt and pain that Mary the Mother of God experienced, and our hearts break for her, as they do for any parent who has mourned the loss of their most special child-there can be no worse suffering surely. When Jesus dies and is resurrected on Easter Day, as Christians we are given a gift of hope that one day we too can be reunited with our loved ones. This is a priceless gift to us, that is why we are called to share our faith with others and not keep the ‘Good News’ to ourselves.

You may have been reading some daily dedications or scripture study throughout lent and they will usually always underline the importance of sharing your own story of faith with others. A lot of Christians feel uncomfortable doing that, but there are ways to achieve this: In the #LiveLent: God’s story, Our Story booklet, The Archbishops of Canterbury and York ask us all to try to do this in our own lives.

Some people describe it as evangelism and people will find their own way to do this and in their own time. Ultimately it is

just simply about sharing your own story of how or why you came to your own faith. For some people it might be an entirely private matter, but evangelism doesn't always need to be in spoken form, it could be revealed through your acts of kindness or a prayer or by inviting someone to church or a Christian related event. Some people express their own faith through art, flower arranging or singing and music....the list is endless....that's what makes it special and personal.

In day to day life, our despairs will challenge us. People might describe them as wounding us and we have to navigate a way in which to deal with life's hardships - it is all relative. It is important to remind ourselves that for some people in the world - 'despair' may be not having access to clean drinking water or enough food. For others it might be denied freedoms- simply because of their faith, or living in countries where the relative freedoms we enjoy are simply not available.

Suffering comes in many guises and is evident in lots of places in the bible. Apart from the despair we read about in the crucifixion of Jesus in: Matthew 27: 32-56, Mark 15:21-38, Luke 23:26-49 and John 19:16-37, you will find other examples of suffering, especially in the Old Testament that give accounts of poverty, famine, hardship and war with many populations paying a terrible price.

For us as Christians, it is ultimately the death of an innocent young man who is put to death on a cross and then resurrected to new life just three days later by God's most awesome power and love that truly defines hope for our own lives.

Clarence W Hall writes that:

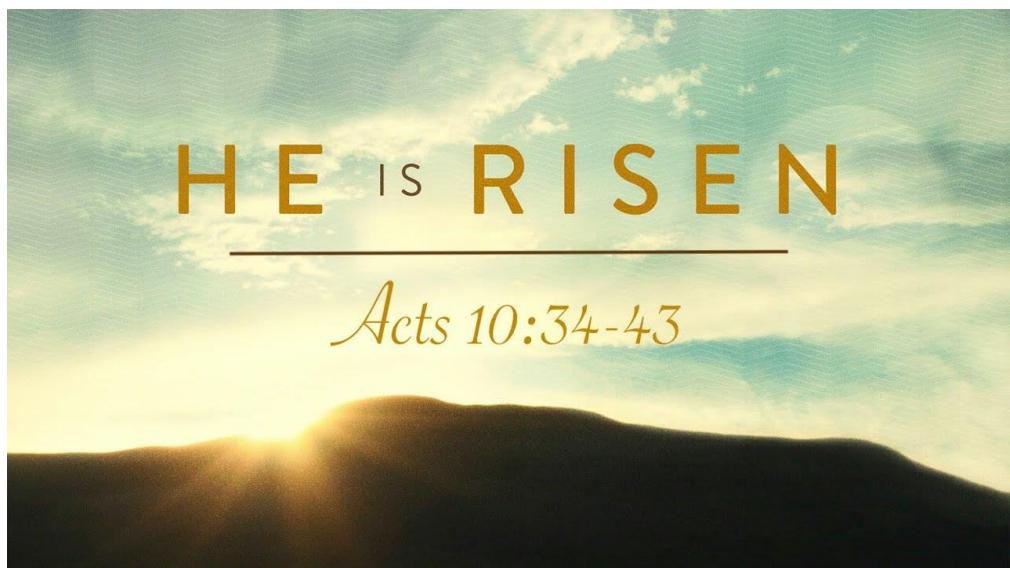
"The resurrection of Jesus changes the face of death for all of His people. Death is no longer a prison, but a passage into God's presence. Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there".

As Christians, we can live in the knowledge of hope for the future and give thanks that Christ LIVES in each of one of us. How truly blessed we are.

Sending Easter blessings and love to you all from the Vicarage.
Sam x
'Alleluia, he is risen indeed'.

**Easter Sunday
and our readings are**

Acts 10: 34 – 43



³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism³⁵ but accepts men from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.³⁷ You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

³⁹ “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree,⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

and the Gospel reading is

Mark 16: 1-8



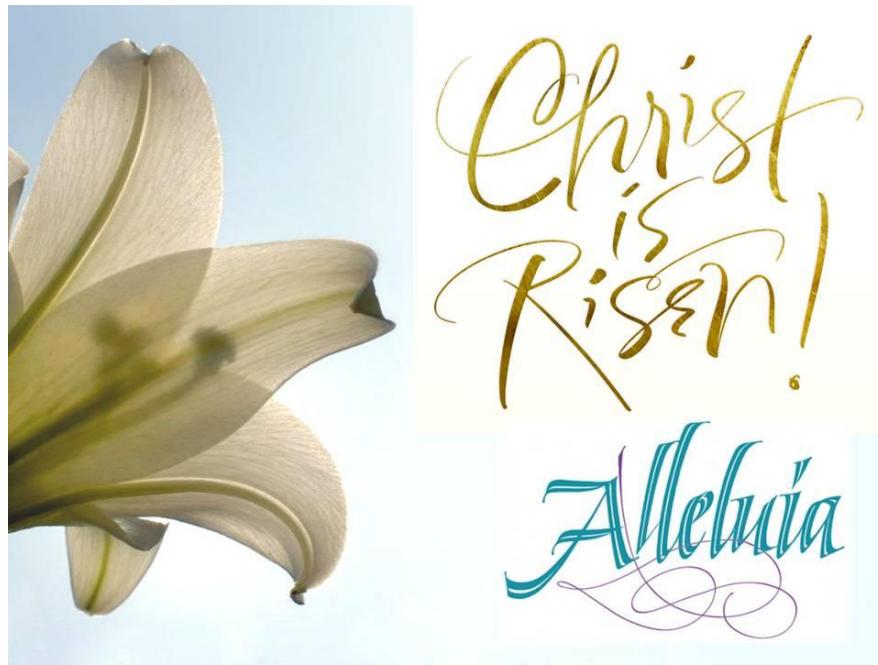
The Resurrection

16 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

⁶ "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.



Collect

Lord of all life and power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity.

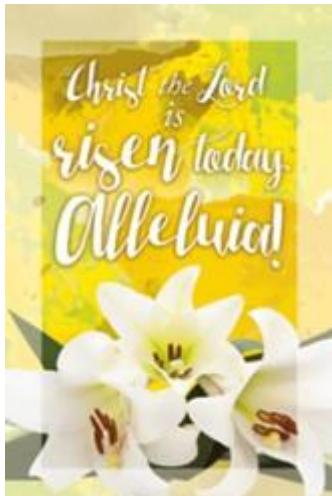
Amen.



SUNDAY 4th April

Easter Sunday

Many thanks to the **Ladies of the Flower Guild**
for our beautifully decorated church.



SERVICE TODAY

Easter Day
Invitation only
10.00am: Easter Holy Communion

Service for **Sunday 11th April**

Invitation only
10.00am: All Age Service

REVISION OF CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

Notice is hereby given

that the Church Electoral Roll of the parish of Cubbington will be revised by the Parochial Church Council, beginning on **Sunday 11th April 2021**, and ending on Sunday **25th April 2021**.

Application Forms for enrolment can be obtained from the Church Electoral Roll Officer, **Chris Hall**, or from Church. In order for a person to be entitled to attend the annual parochial church meeting and to take part in its proceedings, an Application Form for enrolment must be returned by the date shown above for the ending of the revision of the Church Electoral Roll by the Parochial Church Council.

If you are unsure if you are entered on the Electoral Roll, please check the existing Electoral Roll in the Church Porch.