

Glastonbury Together in prayer

A news sheet for members of Glastonbury churches during the crisis caused by Covid 19



Recognised in the breaking of bread

Holy Week follows Jesus in real time and this does not stop on Easter Sunday. Morning services have Gospel readings of finding an empty tomb in the morning. In Luke's Gospel the story continues with two of the community walking to Emmaus in the afternoon and this passage is given as the set reading for evening services. Who is this stranger who has not heard about what had happened to Jesus of Nazareth? Even when He tells them how the scriptures foretold these events they still do not recognise Him. It is only when he joins them for a meal that they recognise him when He blesses and breaks bread with them. As soon as they realise that this is Jesus He is gone. On Maundy Thursday we hear that we were told to break bread in Jesus memory and this command is strengthened by the Emmaus story as we too can recognise Jesus in the Breaking of Bread every time our ministers do this for us. The disciples then return to Jerusalem despite the late hour and report on their experience only to have Jesus appear again and say "peace be with you" when Covid restrictions are eased we too can pass on God's peace with our handshakes.

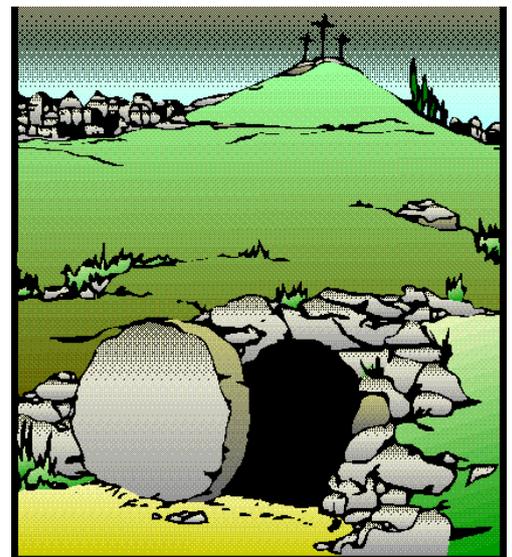
Springing to new life

In the northern hemisphere Easter occurs in the spring a time when many living things have new life. This is perhaps why this new life is used to help us understand the resurrection. Jesus came out of the ground in the form of a rock tomb and plants spring to life out of the ground at this time of year. In John's Gospel Jesus himself tells us that unless a grain of wheat dies it remains a single grain but when planted it produces a great harvest. A popular Hymn tells the Easter story through the grain of wheat. With the refrain "*Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green*" the resurrection story is told. He had been slain and laid in a tomb with the thought that he would not return but after three days, at Easter, he came forth again.

Gardeners know this season of new growth well and in many greenhouses and not a few windowsills there will be seeds being germinated at this time to produce a later harvest. Plants springing to new life in spring bring us joy as human beings especially the flowers like daffodils in abundance at the moment. The flowers also harbour new life as insects take nectar and at the same time pollenate the flowers - early plum trees can be heard buzzing with bees on a sunny day. And so new life goes on up the food chain creation provides.

Another Easter - different but the same

When this newsletter started we had moved into lock down and our churches were closed. Since then we have learnt a lot with services held on line, some live others recorded. Some of our churches have reopened but with a restricted capacity due to the requirements for social distancing. Others are waiting a little longer but hope to open soon. But the message of Easter does not change and we can still celebrate albeit in different ways. We know the way of the cross and the glory of the resurrection. We remember them in real time through Holy Week because they are important. Without the Cross there can be no Resurrection. Both are important in how God works with us. In these difficult times remember a saying attributed to St Augustine "Without God we cannot, without us He will not".



Easter - Hope for all

Messages from our Church Communities

Anglican Easter greetings from St John's and St Benedict's

The 1st April is best known as 'April Fools Day', the day when we can play practical jokes on one another and "get away with it"! This year, Maundy Thursday falls on the 1st April and you could say that Judas Iscariot was the fool on that day and the last laugh was on him when he betrayed Jesus, as he gave Jesus to Pontius Pilate to be tried and then crucified. Jesus had to die, only for him to be born again three days later. So why is this so important?

Jesus died a painful and lonely death knowing that he was going to come amongst his friends again three days later ensuring that all of us who have this belief and faith can receive a new life on Easter Day of Hope, of Light and of Joy. That is why, on Easter Day, we shout out the words: "*Alleluia, Christ is Risen*".

For many of us, we too will feel that this Easter is more poignant than ever as we have lost relatives and friends because of Covid who have also died a painful and lonely death. So, as we celebrate Easter, having started with 'fools' and gone to an 'Alleluia moment', and we go about our daily lives, may the simple things such as birdsong, new flowers and shoots appearing on trees, help us to know that we are not alone, that there *is* Light, there *is* Hope, there *is* Peace and there *is* Joy. May God Bless each and every one of us during Holy Week and Easter.

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

Methodist reflections - The empty tomb in Jerusalem

In Jerusalem there is a spot believed to be the actual burial place of Jesus. This Garden Tomb is located in a beautiful garden. As you enter, in the coolness, you see nothing until your eyes adjust to the darkness. You will notice that the burial chamber was originally designed for two bodies. However, one ledge was never finished. There is no body to be found in this tomb. As you exit back into the sunlight, your eyes will linger upon a wooden sign, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, for he is risen, as he said."

As we gather this Easter let us reflect on those words from long ago. The empty tomb is empty because Jesus Christ really did rise from the dead. When you know that the tomb is empty, when you really understand what that means to you personally, your life can never be the same again. That second ledge was never finished because in Christ we will all find eternal life. Today we celebrate the newness, the fresh possibilities, and new beginnings that Jesus' resurrection embodies. Jesus Christ is alive, here, in our midst, to be seen in the faces of those who believe.

Let us therefore proclaim with hope and in faith,

"Alleluia. The Lord is Risen Indeed!"

May the peace of the Lord go with you.

Reverend Craig Manley

From the Monastic Community of Our Lady of Glastonbury

When we look back at this time, we may remember many things, and the history books may write many pages about it. We may remember the deaths, the sufferings, the sickness, the struggle to keep things going... but what we should remember and what we should proclaim, first and foremost, is the Resurrection of Christ.

You see, the world has problems and crises and terror and horror, as well as joy and delight and love and charity, but the only thing that makes sense of it all, and gives any of it any importance is Our Lord's victory over sin and death, His resurrection from the dead. Our Church has been open since August to sing the Resurrection of Christ, and even when the door are closed, nothing will ever stand in its way!

Happy Easter, Happy
Resurrection!

New life from darkness thoughts from the United Reformed Church.

Well, who would have believed that this Easter would also have found us in another lockdown, albeit one we are hopefully emerging from. Hopeful seems the right word to use, for our faith encourages us to live in hope and that is not some wishy - washy hope but grounded in the reality of God and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

People have been remarkably resourceful in finding ways to communicate and to assist each other, technology has enabled us to continue with services and even sparked debate and discussion about what can and cannot be done on a screen as opposed to in person.

What is important is to remember the purpose of Easter to think not just of hope but of resurrection hope, new life for all emerging after the darkness of what for many, may have felt like being entombed,

May this Easter bring joy, peace, grace and hope to you and all those you love and have missed.

Revd. Tim Richards