

APRIL 2026

## *From the Editors*

*Welcome to this April edition.*

*As this is being written we are in Holy Week, a time for reflection on our core Christian beliefs: love, humility, sacrifice and hope. We are invited to participate in prayer, repentance and spiritual renewal. From the joyous welcome of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the terrible betrayal before Good Friday leading to the death of He who forgives all our sins and to the glorious resurrection of Easter Sunday we can reflect on what these mean for each one of us. Surely we are joyful when we hear and understand the words of Christ but we suffer on our own cross when we try to lay down our own ego lives with all its preconceptions, preoccupations and habits. But once this is complete we enjoy the great news of hope and renewal, our own individual resurrection. So in this Easter-tide let us go forward in spiritual renewal.*

*“Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5)*

*Spring is certainly on its way with Nature making all things new. We’ve had a couple of tastes of warm weather, let us enjoy continued blessings of Spring.*

*"The roofs are shining from the rain,  
The sparrows twitter as they fly,  
And with a windy April grace  
The little clouds go by.  
Yet the back yards are bare and brown  
With only one unchanging tree--  
I could not be so sure of Spring  
Save that it sings in me."  
- Sara Teasdale, April*



## **Dates for your diary**

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) Sunday April 26th after 10.15 service

Penwortham Live 8th and 9th May

Our Vicar's last service Sunday 24th May (Whit Sunday/Pentecost)

Penwortham Gala 13th and 14th June

## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING – 11.30AM SUNDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL IN CHURCH**

This is the time when elections take place for

- **Churchwardens** (3 positions to fill)
- **Lay members on the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for three years** (4 vacancies to fill)
- **Deanery Synod representatives for three years** (2 vacancies to fill)

All the necessary application forms for each of these roles are available at church and the statutory notices are also displayed on the notice boards in church. If you are unable to get to church and wish either to self nominate or propose/second another person, please let me know and I will arrange for you to receive the necessary forms.

### **Important note;**

**At the Vestry meeting, which forms the first part of the APCM and which is open to all residents of the parish of St. Mary, there will be a presentation about our building project and our current financial position. As we are seeking financial assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund it is important that we seek the views and opinions of all the people in our parish and community. We encourage anyone from our parish to come along and see what our plans are and ask any questions about them. You will be most welcome.**

## *St Mary's News*

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*Editor; Here is a most interesting article from Lucy Moss one of our parishioners on the theme of faith, hope and renewal*

As the days grow longer and the first blossoms begin to appear, there is a quiet but unmistakable sense that spring has arrived.

Here in Penwortham, gardens are stirring back to life, birdsong fills the morning air, and the chill of winter gradually gives way to warmth and colour. It is a season of renewal, hope, and fresh beginnings. I say this in all good faith as the rain hammers on the kitchen window as I type!

For Christians, this turning of the seasons carries a deeper meaning. Spring echoes the message at the heart of our faith: new life emerging where once there was darkness. In the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we see the ultimate expression of this promise—that hope is never lost, and that love brings life even out of death.

Just as the earth awakens, we too are invited to renew our hearts, to notice the beauty around us, and to share kindness within our community. Whether it's a walk along familiar paths, a moment of quiet reflection, or a friendly greeting to a neighbour, spring reminds us of God's presence in the everyday.

I personally have found this a real comfort, especially when thinking of the daily news stories that seem to bring more sad news as time goes by. It can be important to remind ourselves of small things that mean the world is still turning, the sun still rising. For teachers like myself in church schools, this is, as you would imagine, a busy time!

One Spring production, assessments, report writing and data analysis out of the way, I am now putting my energy into the Easter Service in the church where I teach, making sure all the children know where they are supposed to stand, what they are supposed to say, and when. Talk of a real donkey being involved has got a buzz going round school, let's hope the donkey got the memo to behave well!

May this season bring peace, joy, and a renewed sense of hope to all in our parish.

*Lucy Forbes Moss*

***Faith and hope...are the wings by which our souls, rising above the world, are lifted up to God.***

***John Calvin***

## **Card Reader**

We now have a new SumUp card reader which is better and more easy to use than the previous model. If you would like to give in this way just have a word with a churchwarden and they will show you how to use it.

## **Parish Giving**

The Parish giving scheme is a system controlled centrally to assist in the giving made to parishes. It is a replacement for the existing direct giving via standing orders and has the following advantages:

- All moneys given to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) are collected at the same time of the month and recorded under one bank entry. Giving can be monthly, quarterly or annually.
- The gift aid is also collected automatically and paid into the account monthly as one entry.
- This simplifies the work of both the gift aid officer and the treasurer as a lot of their work is done centrally.
- The system can automatically up rate your giving annually by the current rate of RPI to account for inflation. You will be contacted in advance, giving you the option to review your giving on an annual basis. If you do not want to increase on any occasion, you are free to tell PGS not to amend your giving that year.
- There is an option when completing your application to say that you do not want to consider an annual increase.
- The money is collected even if you miss a service in the same way an existing standing order acts.
- This is an opportunity as you move across to reflect on your current giving and increase it to take account of inflation since you set up your standing order.

The treasurer and the PCC believe this is a good scheme and the PCC are converting to using the scheme. We would urge other parishioners to use this system, especially if they don't currently give to the church on a regular basis. A reminder for those who do have an existing Standing Order, it will be your responsibility to tell your bank to stop it, otherwise you will be paying twice. If there are any questions, please ask.

## Please help us

St Mary's Church has recently been given permission to renovate and extend the existing extension at the church

We have money to help pay for this work but that will not cover the whole cost of building and fitting the replacement extension

As part of the application process, we need to show that the whole community have an interest in us doing this work to help us to make the church a sustainable building, that will preserve and publicise important heritage in Penwortham and provide a resource for the community

As a result, we are making an application to try to get funds from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to cover the difference.





**PENWORTHAM FOODBANK**

PENWORTHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE  
KINGSFOLD DRIVE PR1 9EQ

EVERY FRIDAY\*\*  
BETWEEN 0930 AND NOON

**DONATIONS OF NON-PERISHABLE FOODS ARE  
URGENTLY REQUIRED**

*We thank all who have donated food in the past but we need further supplies: particularly pasta, pasta sauce, tins of soup, tins of baked beans and canned fruit*

**BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO CHURCH, OR TO THE  
FOODBANK ON A FRIDAY MORNING**

OR

**ARRANGE A BANK TRANSFER/STANDING ORDER\* TO:**

Account name: Churches Together in Penwortham  
Sort Code: 30-96-85 Account No: 00415955 (Lloyds Bank)

OR

**MAKE A DONATION (cheque or cash)\***

\*We are registered for Gift Aid so if you are able to make a financial donation and are a UK taxpayer then please let us have your contact details so we can arrange for a Gift Aid form to be sent to you.

\*\*opening times vary over the Christmas period

### Bishop Philip North's Easter message for 2026

What stops you from despairing?

That's the question posed by Rt Rev Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn, in his Easter message to the people of Lancashire for 2026.

In the message, the Diocesan Bishop for The Church of England in Lancashire (Blackburn Diocese) says he was recently chatting to a group of older people on a parish visit.

Bishop Philip describes how they were worn down and anxious because of the recent news of war in various parts of the world; coupled with the seemingly endless cost of living crisis. Instead of giving a long, complex theological answer in response to their concerns, Bishop Philip told them about a friend of his - Joseph - who is a Bishop in South Sudan.

The Bishop says: "His Diocese is in a warzone. Two thirds of his people are displaced and living in refugee camps. There is no functioning state apparatus, so the people turn to the church for a solution to every problem. In his homeland, the houses and schools and churches have been destroyed so his Diocesan vision is a plan for rebuilding a whole nation. "He serves the poorest people on the planet. But there is never the merest hint of despair to Joseph. All you ever hear from him is hope and joy and optimism for the future. And that hope is not self-generated in any way. He has hope because he believes in the Resurrection."

Bishop Philip reminds us that, at Easter, we celebrate an extraordinary miracle and that is what wipes out despair: "A corpse has come back to life. A battered, torn and wounded body, laid in a stone-cold tomb, has risen again. For those who accept that Jesus is risen, there can be no despair. "Yes, there might be times of suffering and pain and self-doubt. Life may still at times be hard. But if you accept that Jesus is risen, there can never be despair."

And the Bishop continues: "Jesus is alive again. He has been through all that torment and emerged victorious. And here is the amazing thing. You and I can share in his victory.

For when we invite Jesus into our lives and receive baptism into his Church, his death becomes our death. His new life becomes our life. His triumph becomes our triumph.

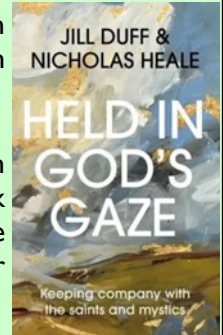
"Despair means you have given up hope. But because Jesus is risen there is always hope. Even in conflict, even in pain, even in uncertainty, even in grief, there is hope. Jesus has triumphed and so love has triumphed, and so all in the end will be glory."



### County authors explore wide sweep of rich spiritual heritage in new book

'Held in God's Gaze' by Rt Rev Dr Jill Duff, the Anglican Bishop of Lancaster and Fr Nicholas Heale, a Priest in Blackburn, has its local launch soon at Whalley Abbey.

The authors draw on their distinct perspectives within the breadth of the Church of England to create a work together that is all the richer for their respectful dialogue and common commitment to the gospel. This is their first collaboration.



'Held in God's Gaze: Keeping Company with the Saints and Mystics' (to give the book its full title) is about how reconnecting with Britain's rich spiritual history and includes a treasure trove of ancient and often forgotten saints from across the centuries. In so doing, the book also explores how those saints can offer us valuable insight into our culture today. The book also reveals how the wisdom and rich spiritual inheritance of these saints and mystics - who despite having lived centuries ago, experienced many of the same trials we encounter today, including personal suffering and societal division - are key to understanding modern Britain. 'Held in God's Gaze' also speaks to how these holy figures - from ancient and Celtic saints to medieval mystics, women spiritual leaders, the Spanish Mystics and modern voices of faith - can offer deep spiritual transformation and hope for our society.

Through short, engaging chapters, the authors explore how these saints encountered God through prayer, scripture, and devotion; offering reflections that help readers grow in spiritual maturity. Bishop Jill continued: "These saints and mystics described charismatic and contemplative experiences in ways I had not encountered before ... and my discovery of them has fired in me a deep-seated longing for God to call out 'giants of faith' in our day. "My prayer is that we may have the same faith in the fiery renewal of the Church, and revival in our nations in our time."

### **The new Archbishop of Canterbury's first Presidential Address**

Here are some highlights from the first Presidential Address by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, at the February 2026 General Synod group of sessions.

“I stand here among you by no means for the first time, but for the first time as the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is a humbling privilege to be called to serve in this role. It brings with it huge weight of responsibility, at a time when people love to remind me that the church faces significant challenges.

But when the wind and the waves are rocking the boat, I am reminded that what I need to do is to focus on Christ, who calms the waters and stills the wind. With your help and with God’s grace, I pray that I am able to approach this ministry with calm, consistency and compassion – as we seek to be what the Church has for so long been: a stable presence in an unstable world.

Do, please, continue to pray for me in the months and years to come, as I will always pray for you. I do not carry my new responsibilities alone. We serve God’s church together, lay and ordained; uniquely reflecting God’s image into one another, and remembering His prayer that we should be one in our love for God and of one another.

At my Confirmation of Election, I was deeply moved to be asked, during the Charge which was given to me, to ‘help the Church love itself more ... believing that its best days are still to come’. And I do believe that this is true. Through every challenge, our hope in Christ remains - and our confidence in the Gospel, as good news for our nation and for God’s world, is not shaken.

I see God’s Kingdom, the pearl of great price, revealed in countless places across the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. The Church of England is a Christian presence in every community. In parishes and chaplaincies across the country, day in and day out, faithful clergy and congregations worship God and love their neighbours. With every Eucharist that is offered, with every prayer said; with every child helped to flourish in our schools; with every family cared for in times of celebration and of sorrow; with every night shelter and food bank; with

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each worship service, youth group and community lunch; with every effort to work for justice, dignity and fairness in our nation and our world – with all of this and so much more, we live out our calling to share the love of God with those around us.

And across the global Anglican Communion, in its profound diversity, we see Anglicans offering that same hope to a world around them: working for peace in places of war, caring for the sick and lifting up new generations of young people, and speaking of the hope that we find in Jesus Christ.

Because with Christ, the Church is there in all those places and with all those people, and the Kingdom is made known. I rejoice in every example I see of this – the pearl of great price - glimpsed in faithful, local, sensitive, intelligent ministry which embodies and speaks of the Kingdom.

So, what sort of Archbishop do I feel called to be? As I said when I accepted the nomination, as I respond to the Call of Christ in this new ministry, I remain rooted in my first calling: to follow Christ, to know Him – and to make Him known in the world. My Christian vocation first led me to become a nurse – then later a priest, then a bishop, and now an archbishop. The theme that has run through of all of these chapters of my life has been washing feet, and in serving and caring for others.

And so, I believe that I have been called to love and serve the Diocese of Canterbury, the Church of England, and the Anglican Communion, not through developing new programmes and initiatives, but by being a shepherd, who works collaboratively and in partnership, enabling others to flourish.

And I will work with you, Synod, with my fellow bishops, and with our national church bodies, striving to ensure that the Kingdom is being nurtured everywhere - in parishes, chaplaincies, cathedrals and schools, in the smallest and most fragile communities, as well as the larger and more confident expressions of church, wherever disciples seek to be salt and light.

The role of the Archbishop of Canterbury is a complex and challenging one. But at its heart is something profound and simple. Along with my fellow bishops, I am called to share the hope that we have found in Jesus Christ – and what that means for us all as individuals, and as a society. I pray that the thread running through my time as Archbishop will be that of nurturing confidence and hope, rooted not in institutions, but in God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With our confidence in God, we can believe that indeed, the best is yet to come for the church that we love and nurture, and therefore for the world that the church is called to serve.

As Archbishop of Canterbury, I commit myself to nurturing, supporting and praying for all our parishes, chaplaincies, cathedrals and schools, where quiet faithfulness is coupled with a readiness to respond to every opportunity, however small, to embody the hope of the Gospel at the heart of a community; where people, together, become places where the Kingdom happens.

As a shepherd, I will strive to be calm, consistent and compassionate to all. I commit myself to enabling the Church to be the Church. May we continue to offer ourselves in God's service for God's world: our hope rooted in the Gospel, and our confidence rooted in God, who holds the Church and its future in love. Please pray for me as I pray for you. Amen."

### **Church choirs receive £400,000 boost for programme to increase participation by children**

More than 200 church choirs aimed at children and young people are to be launched in a new programme.

'The Choir Project', working in partnership with the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), will engage children and young people with their local church choirs amid renewed interest in sacred church music.

The launch comes as campaigners press for English Evensong to be given World Heritage Status, to ensure that the centuries-old Christian choral tradition is recognised as an art form of global significance.

The number of cathedral choirs in England reached a record high of 207 in 2024, but 57% of local church choirs currently have no children.

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The new programme will tap into the country's rich tradition of choral worship with a view to sparking a revival of local parish choir membership amongst Generation Alpha, engaging them actively with Christianity.

'The Choir Project' aims to support upwards of 200 churches across England to establish or renew choirs for children and young people.

Research which suggests that young people are more likely to remain active in faith communities when they are given meaningful roles, intergenerational relationships and opportunities for leadership.

The Church of England's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board has agreed investment with RSCM of £400,000 to support the programme.

Starting choirs has proven to attract engagement from young people in churches. One church near Saltburn has grown from two to up to 18 children on a Sunday by starting a church choir.

As one young chorister said: "Every Sunday that you come, you better yourself in your singing and you better yourself in your knowledge of Jesus and God."

Another said: "I love the stories about Jesus, seeing my friends and singing with the choir."

### **C of E welcomes Government's Schools White Paper announcements**

The Church of England has welcomed the Government's Schools White Paper and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) consultation, "recognising the opportunity they offer to secure long-term improvements for children, young people and families."

As the largest single provider of schools in England, and with a long history of serving the most vulnerable, the Church - through the National Society for Education - has committed itself to "engaging constructively with the consultation process."

Notable inclusions relate to strengthening support for children with SEND and improving the coherence of the SEND system. Also, the White Paper's ambition to enhance collaboration across the school system aligns with the Church's experience that "well-led, vision-driven school trusts can enable children and adults to flourish together."

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### **General Synod backs Sustainable Church Flowers motion**

The General Synod recently backed a Diocesan Synod Motion from the Diocese of Worcester encouraging churches and cathedrals to explore ways of arranging flowers that are both beautiful and environmentally responsible.

The Sustainable Church Flowers movement began as a grassroots initiative in the small rural parish of Harpley, Worcestershire, when volunteers started exploring how traditional flower-arranging methods could reflect the Church's commitment to caring for creation. It has since grown into a national and ecumenical network offering practical support to parishes, arrangers and clergy.

It encourages churches, wherever possible, to consider using seasonal, locally sourced flowers and foliage, and to phase out single-use floral foam - a 1950s-era plastic product which cannot be recycled or composted, sheds micro-particles when handled, and contains the equivalent of up to ten carrier bags' worth of plastic per block. The Royal Horticultural Society has already prohibited floral foam at its shows, including Chelsea, since 2021.

The motion highlights long-established alternatives such as reusable vessels, twigs, moss, chicken wire, and metal "frogs", which for centuries enabled churches to create arrangements without single-use plastics. It also celebrates the creativity of volunteers and the opportunity to support local growers and community gardens.

The Bishop of Dudley, Martin Gorick, said: "The Sustainable Church Flowers movement

rejoices in flowers and foliage in church, and encourages us to source them locally and seasonally wherever possible: remember Jesus on that hillside, rejoice in what's around you. Think simple, natural, beautiful."

The Sustainable Church Flowers provides online resources, tutorials and local ambassadors. More at: <https://suschurchflowers.com>

***"IF YOU LOOK THE RIGHT WAY, YOU CAN SEE THAT  
THE WHOLE WORLD IS A GARDEN"***

***FRANCES HODGSON BURNET***

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### **Celebrate cross of St George as symbol of unity for everyone in England – bishops**

The cross of St George, the flag of England, should be celebrated as a symbol of unity in our nation, rooted in our Christian heritage, a group of leading Church of England bishops from across the country have said.

In a joint statement, they urge people to embrace or rediscover our Christian heritage but also call for a fresh recognition of the meaning of the cross as the symbol of God's love for everyone.

They warn against the use of Christian symbols

to intimidate others and call for a "mature debate" on the different impacts of migration, noting that churches can act as "spaces where different response to immigration can be listened to with respect and dignity".

The statement is issued by a working group of seven bishops set up late last year at the request of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to consider questions of national unity and diversity amid concerns about polarisation within society, as well as equipping local churches to help bridge divides.

Prompted by widespread discussion about the displays of flags in communities across England last summer and autumn, they say: "We rejoice that the flag of St George is the national flag of England and contains a cross as a sign of our Christian heritage.

"This heritage should be celebrated.

"However, the flag cannot be owned by any one group or cause. Rather it is a symbol of unity, inclusion and our common life around which we all gather."

They warn against the use of Christian symbols, such as the cross or flags to intimidate others, observing: "Sadly, in recent months, we have seen these symbols used by people who, far from working for unity in the nation, are seeking to sow division and misunderstanding.

"This leaves many in our society feeling anxious and afraid and is a long way from loving our neighbour in the way that Jesus taught."

Drawing from their own experience of inter-faith engagement, the bishops argue that "the vast majority" of people of all backgrounds and faiths accept the country's Christian heritage and "want to unite behind the flag as a symbol of national unity and inclusion, based on our Christian heritage and broader values of respect, compassion and care for all."

And they make a central invitation to people to come to their local church to explore the "true significance of the cross of Jesus Christ".

"There is little point claiming it as our heritage if we don't understand its meaning," they write.



### **5<sup>th</sup> April - EASTER, the most joyful day of the year**

Easter is the most joyful day of the year for Christians. Christ has died for our sins. We are forgiven. Christ has risen! We are redeemed! We can look forward to an eternity in His joy! Hallelujah!

The Good News of Jesus Christ is a message so simple that you can explain it to someone in a few minutes. It is so profound that for the rest of their lives they will still be 'growing' in their Christian walk with God.

Why does the date move around so much? Because the date of Passover moves around, and according to the biblical account, Easter is tied to the Passover. Passover celebrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, and it lasts for seven days, from the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which equates to late March or early April.

Sir Isaac Newton was one of the first to use the Hebrew lunar calendar to come up with firm dates for the first Good Friday: Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April 30 AD or Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 33 AD with Easter Day falling two days later. Modern scholars continue to think these two Fridays to be the most likely.

Most people will tell you that Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, which is broadly true. But the precise calculations are complicated and involve something called an 'ecclesiastical full moon', which is not the same as the moon in the sky. The earliest possible date for Easter in the West is 22<sup>nd</sup> March, which last fell in 1818. The latest is 25<sup>th</sup> April, which last happened in 1943.

Why the name, 'Easter'? In almost every European language, the festival's name comes from 'Pesach', the Hebrew word for Passover. The Germanic word 'Easter', however, seems to come from *Eostre*, a Saxon fertility goddess mentioned by the Venerable Bede. He thought that the Saxons worshipped her in 'Eostur month,' but may have confused her with the classical dawn goddesses like *Eos* and *Aurora*, whose names mean 'shining in the east'. So, Easter might have meant simply 'beginning month' – a good time for starting up again after a long winter.

Finally, why Easter eggs? On one hand, they are an ancient symbol of birth in most European cultures. On the other hand, hens start laying regularly again each Spring. Since eggs were forbidden during Lent, it's easy to see how decorating and eating them became a practical way to celebrate Easter.

### 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.

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

### **Resurrection life**

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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 fulness'.

Editor: Canon Paul Hardingham continues his seven-part series. This will conclude with the July issue.

### **The Seven Deadly Sins: Envy**

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

This month we are looking 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 to 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).

***Envy and jealousy stem from the fundamental inability to rejoice at someone else's happiness or success.***

*Matthieu Ricard*

### God in the Arts

*Editor: Have you ever thought how an actual church building might provide a series of visual aids to spiritual meditation? We continue our procession through a church building, this month pausing to consider the significance of the railings and kneelers. By the Revd Michael Burgess*

#### **'He gave us eyes to see them' – the screen at the east end**

"I am the light of the world," our Lord says in St John's Gospel. He is the One who can bring sight and insight to those born blind, and vision to those who feel they live in a world of darkness. In Him is the glory of God and life for all people. That radiant glory greets those who visit Wymondham Abbey in Norfolk and look down the main aisle to see the wondrous screen at the east end depicting Christ in majesty surrounded by our Lady and the saints.

Ironically, the history of the Abbey in the Middle Ages was one of darkness and conflict, where disagreement severed the harmony of monks and townspeople. The Abbey was dissolved in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but then restored to its former glory in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ninian Comper began working on the screen in 1922, and it was completed in 1934.

In front of the screen is a large altar with a crucifix and six tall, stately candlesticks. Their lights are signs of Jesus the Light proclaimed by the dazzling central figure on the screen behind. Originally candlesticks would have stood on the ground before the altar, or lamps were hung above. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century candles were placed on the altar.

Aesthetic judgement will vary from person to person, and some may find tall candlesticks like these obtrusive, detracting from the sacrament of the altar. Whatever their size, when lit they announce that Jesus is the true light, who welcomes everyone to find nourishment and guidance for life's pilgrimage in communion at that table. Here at Wymondham Abbey I think the pilgrim visitor will find that the beauty and grace of these altar furnishings complement the great mystery of divine light celebrated in Ninian Comper's masterpiece.



### God in the Sciences

This series is written by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge. Ruth writes on the positive relationship between Science and Christian faith.

#### *The Beauty of Good Friday*

*Some of the most beautiful things in the world have an ugly side. What about the emperor penguin chick, nestling in a feathery pouch above its parent's feet? There's a lovely moment when mum and dad greet each other over the gaping beak of their fuzzi-ball offspring. Heads bent together, making a heart shape in the air, we can't help seeing a reflection of our own ideals of love in the pair.*

*But the reality of what those birds are going through is even more gruelling than human parenthood. Father penguin has spent all winter sheltering the egg from freezing hurricane-force winds, while mother penguin was feeding at sea. When the chick hatched its parents started an exhausting game of tag, taking it in turns to walk across the ice and risk being eaten by leopard seals or killer whales, in order to catch fish for their new offspring.*

*The living world is truly wonderful in so many ways, but the darker side of the picture is never far away. Creation is groaning (Romans 8:22), and just waiting to be rescued. Enter Jesus, through whom all of Creation was made. The king of the universe came to live with us, bringing His great love and wisdom to the human population of first-century Israel. The Creator was relating to His creation in a very personal way, and this could have been a totally beautiful picture.*

*But there is a horrifically ugly side of Jesus' story that threatens to obscure the beauty of what He did on Good Friday. It was a brutal and terrifying day when human sinfulness resulted in the Son of God being executed by His enemies, but thankfully there was much more to it than that. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ set off a seismic wave of spiritual events whose effects are still rippling out across the world.*

*So that ugly day over 2,000 years ago is called 'good' because of what it achieved. Those who follow Jesus find their lives are changed for the better, even if their day-to-day existence may still be incredibly tough. When people come to understand what Creation is for and who it belongs to, they can begin to serve and preserve the earth as they should. These things are only whispers of what is to come, but they give me hope for the future redemption of all Creation. I can choose to dwell on the beauty of Jesus' death because it was not the end of the story – the future beckons.*

*This article is extracted (with permission) from [New Life: Reflections for Lent](#), edited by Amy Robinson and Wendy H Jones (£7.99).*

# 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've given up the most to follow him!

I'm the oldest!

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!

Are you really going to wash my feet?

You will understand later why I am doing this.

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

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

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 I, 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.

## Miscellaneous

### All in the month of April

**400 years** ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1626 that Francis Bacon, philosopher and politician, died. He served as Attorney General of England and Wales (1613-17) and then Lord High Chancellor of England (1617-21). Known as the 'Father of Empiricism', as his works influenced the scientific revolution in Europe.

**100 years** ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1926 that the Revd Ian Paisley, Baron Bannside, Northern Irish politician and Protestant evangelical minister was born

**Also 100 years** ago, on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1926 that Queen Elizabeth II was born.

**90 years** ago, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1936 that Roy Orbison, American singer, songwriter and musician was born. Best known for *Oh, Pretty Woman*, *Crying*, *Only the Lonely*, and many more.

**80 years** ago, on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1946 that John Maynard Keynes was born. The most influential economist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, his ideas formed the basis of the Keynesian economics.

**75 years** ago, on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1951 that the Peak District National Park was established. It was Britain's first National Park.

**70 years** ago, on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1956 that American film actress Grace Kelly married Prince Rainier III of Monaco and became Princess Grace of Monaco.

**65 years** ago, on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1961 that Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space and the first person to orbit the Earth.

**50 years** ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1976 that the UK won the 1976 Eurovision Song Contest with *Save Your Kisses for Me* by Brotherhood of Man.

**40 years** ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1986 that Halley's Comet made its closest approach to Earth during its most recent visit. It will return to Earth's vicinity in 2061 and 2134.

**30 years** ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1996 that during the BSE ('mad cow disease') outbreak, the government announced that it would begin slaughtering all cattle over the age of 30 months to eradicate the disease. In the end, 80,000 cattle were slaughtered.

**25 years** ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2001 that NASA launched its Mars Odyssey spacecraft to search for evidence of water and volcanic activity on Mars. It found water and ice below the surface.

**20 years** ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006 that the first case of H6NI avian flu (bird flu) in the UK was confirmed, following tests on a dead swan found in Fife.

**15 years** ago, on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2011 that Prince William and Catherine (Kate) Middleton were married at Westminster Abbey in London. They were given the titles Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

**10 years** ago, on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed. It came into effect on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

## Miscellaneous

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### **It's National Pet Month**

April is National Pet Month (NPM), an annual initiative dedicated to promoting responsible pet ownership, and supporting UK pet charities.

National Pet Month celebrates the companionship of our pets, educates owners on responsible care, and raises funds for pet charities.

Pet owners are encouraged to share their pet stories/photos, host fundraisers, and to visit [the National Pet Month website](#) for resources.

### **International Jazz Day – 30<sup>th</sup> April**

Jazz is a bit like marmite – you either love it or loathe it. For those who love it, look out for International Jazz Day at the end of this month.

International Jazz Day brings together communities, schools, artists, historians, academics, and jazz enthusiasts worldwide to learn about jazz and its roots, future and impact.

At the All-Star Global Concert 2025 in Abu Dhabi, UNESCO officials announced that Herbie Hancock's hometown of Chicago, USA will host the 15th anniversary International Jazz Day celebration in 2026.

For over a century, Chicago has been a jazz mecca. In the 1920s, jazz musicians sailed up the Mississippi from New Orleans and found Chicago to be a creative hub. Jazz legends such as Louis Armstrong, King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton made their names in the city, developing the 'Chicago style' of jazz. This style valued solos, improvisation, big band arrangements and a faster, more rhythmic sound.

For International Jazz Day 2026, Chicago will host a series of jazz concerts, educational initiatives, discussions and events for audiences of all ages, in partnership with the Chicago Jazz Alliance, the Ravinia Festival, the City of Chicago, the Illinois Arts Council, the State of Illinois and others.

### **National Gardening Week - 28<sup>th</sup> April to 4<sup>th</sup> May**

Led by the Royal Horticultural Society, this annual premier UK celebration encourages everyone to experience the joy of gardening.

Aimed especially at beginners, events and activities are run up and down the country, offering tips, events, and resources to promote the health, wellbeing, and environmental benefits of cultivating plants. The RHS provides expert tips, how-to guides, and fun, easy gardening challenges to build confidence in new gardeners

More at: <https://www.nationalgardeningweek.org.uk>

### **What does your child know about red squirrels?**

Sadly, red squirrels are now so rare in Britain that many of our children are not even sure what they are. A recent study found that one in 10 children are unable to even identify a red squirrel when shown a picture of one. And a third of British children do not know that red squirrels live in the UK. It all means that our native species of squirrel is at risk of being forgotten as the larger grey American invader takes over.

In order to combat this trend, Center Parcs, in collaboration with The Wildlife Trusts, has launched a campaign to create a red squirrel emoji. The aim is to help increase awareness of the species among our young people.

### **Dawn chorus**

If you sleep with your bedroom window open, you will know all about the dawn chorus around now. The birds are busy establishing their territorial rights, and the 'early birds' have probably already selected a nest site and started building.

The blackbird builds a solid cup of twigs, plant stems and leaves, lined with a thick skin of mud covered with finer grasses and leaves. The long-tailed tit forms a soft hollow ball of mosses, hair and wool, with a tiny hole as entrance. The wrens do it differently, with the male wren sometimes building several nests before his finicky mate will accept one. He gets his revenge, though, because he sometimes installs a second wife in one of the rejected sites.

### **Your Easter chocolate can be good for you**

It all began in ancient Peru over 5,000 years ago. They liked to sip cacao, the purest form of chocolate. It took many centuries to find its way to Europe, but when it did arrive, it was a big hit. Now, with sugar added, chocolate is one of the most popular treats we know. In the UK we munch our way through about 4.5kg of it, per person, per year.

Dark chocolate is soaring in popularity. If it is of good quality, it will have less sugar and more beneficial plant compounds such as polyphenols and flavanols, which can help protect your brain, your heart and your gut from inflammation, among other things.

*Chocolate is the greatest gift to women ever created." -  
Sandra Bullock*

### **A history of our Easter chocolate**

Chocolate. Just a mention of the word can trigger off all kinds of emotions: craving, greed, passion. Few foods have the ability to get such a hold on people. As you buy your Easter eggs and bunnies and whatever else this month, here are some of the facts of chocolate:

**Where does chocolate come from?** Chocolate is made from the seeds of the tropical cacao tree, *theobroma cacao*. The Greek word 'theobroma' means literally 'food of the gods'. The Cacao Tree is found in Latin America.

**Who first discovered it?** The Aztecs. The cacao beans were used to prepare a hot, frothy beverage with stimulant and restorative properties, something like hot chocolate.

**Who was (probably) the first chocoholic?** The Emperor Montezuma. He drank 50 goblets a day of the frothy drink.

**Who used chocolate as currency?** The Aztecs. 100 cacao beans would buy a slave; 12 cacao beans bought the services of a courtesan, etc.

**When did chocolate as we know it today begin?** Surprisingly, not until 1879. That year Rodolphe Lindt had the inspired idea of triglyceride cocoa butter. The cocoa butter in chocolate contains saturated fat, but a normal level of consumption doesn't have any bad effects.

**At what point does a chocolate lover become a chocoholic?** It is generally considered to be when a person feels impelled to consume 12 or more 60 gram bars of chocolate per week. Chocolate contains its own cannabinoid (a chemical that prolongs pleasurable sensations) and when you eat chocolate, there is an increased blood flow in areas of the brain which are also activated by addictive drugs such as cocaine. But scientists agree that occasional over-indulging will cause no long-term problems... except perhaps around your waistline!

*Your hand and your mouth agreed many years ago that, as far as chocolate is concerned, there is no need to involve your brain.*

*Dave Barry*

### What home gadgets do you regret buying?

You know what they are: those things you never knew you needed until you saw one in an advert. Then suddenly you felt that life would never be complete without one.

And so, you brought home the spiraliser that makes vegetables look like spaghetti. And the pasta maker that you can't quite figure out how to use. And the ice-cream maker that makes everything sticky and helped you put on another three pounds. And the robot vacuum which terrorises the cat. As for the bread maker, well at least it makes a good shelf on the kitchen counter.

If this is you, you are not alone. A recent survey by Saga has found that 65% of us have experienced 'gadget regret'. It occurs when we buy something and then wonder why we ever bothered, because who needs it anyway?

Top of the list of regrets is the spiralizer – 62% of us woke up one morning to realise that no one needs vegetables to look like spaghetti. Second place belongs to digital picture frames, which 52% of us regret buying. After that comes the pasta maker (45%), the ice-cream maker (42%), VR headsets (35%), the bread maker (31%), the internet-connected exercise equipment (31%) and finally, the robot vacuum (29%).

A printer consists of three main parts: the case, the jammed paper tray and the blinking red light.

Dave Barry

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 –  
It's cleverer than me!

I used to press a button once  
For music on CD  
But now – I must be such a dunce

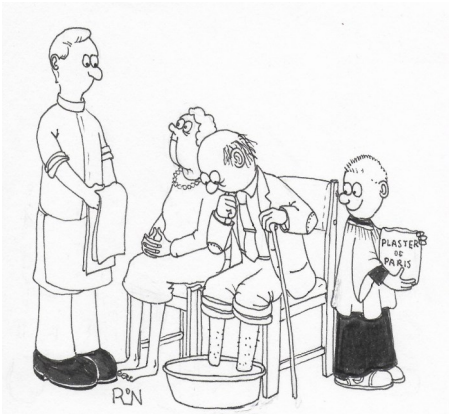
I can't find BBC!

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!

*By Nigel Beeton*



Maudy Thursday on April 1st - the last temptation of Eric



Shirley caught the flower ladies red-handed, dealing trugs

People are forever calling me a hypochondriac, and, let me tell you, that makes me sick.- Anon

**Wheels**

A boy was praying for a bicycle, and the vicar told him to persevere, as prayer could do anything. The following week, when the boy arrived for church on a bicycle, the vicar assured him that his prayers had been heard. The boy looked embarrassed. "Actually, I stole the bike, and now I'm here to pray for forgiveness".

**Polite**

A New York traffic expert says that some London taxi drivers are refreshingly different – and witty – compared to those in New York. He tells the story of the London taxi driver who screeched to a halt when a tourist bolted into the road, and then stopped, looking around in confusion. Leaning out of the window the taxi driver asked very politely: "I say, sir, may I ask, what are your immediate plans?"

**Sidesman**

Sidesman to newcomer at church door: "Good morning. How far down do you wish to sit?"

Baffled newcomer: "Well, all the way, of course."

**Family pride**

"Yes," boasted the woman to the visiting American priest, "my family can trace its ancestry back to William the Conqueror."

"I suppose," said the American, "You'll be telling me next that your ancestors were in the Ark with Noah."

"Certainly not. My people had a bigger boat of their own."

**Commandment**

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five- and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to "honour thy father and thy mother," she asked: "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

**Speeding**

A speeding motorist was caught by radar from a police helicopter in the sky. An officer pulled him over and began to issue a traffic ticket. "How did you know I was speeding?" the frustrated driver asked.

The police officer pointed soberly toward the sky. "You mean," asked the motorist, in awed confusion, "that now even God has installed speed cameras?"

# Picture Parable

## The Big Bash!



ONE STORY WAS ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY



BUT PEOPLE STARTED MAKING EXCUSES

