

Deane Parish News

April



2004



Diary for April

April 4th Palm Sunday

9am Communion CW

10.30am Family and Parade Service

6pm Communion

April 8th Maundy Thursday

7pm for 7.30pm Agape

April 9th Good Friday

10.30am Service of Meditation

April 11th Easter Sunday

9am Communion 1662

10.30am Family Worship, followed by shortened Communion

6pm Communion

April 18th Easter 2

9am Communion 1662

10.30am Family Worship and Baptism

6pm Service of the Word

April 25th Easter 3

9am Communion 1662

10.30am Family Communion

6pm Service of the Word

Communion Readings for 9am and 6pm

April 4th Palm Sunday

Isaiah 50 v4-9a

Philippians 2 v5-11

Luke 23 v1-49

April 11th Easter Sunday

Isaiah 65 v17-25

Acts 10 v34-43

Luke 24 v1-12

April 18th Easter 2

Acts 5 v27-32

Revelation 1 v4-8

John 20 v19-31

April 25th Easter 3

Acts 9 v1-6

Revelation 5 v11-14

John 21 v1-19

May 2nd Easter 4

Acts 9 v36-43

Revelation 21v10&22to22v5 John 5 v1-9

The Rector Writes

Can you believe God?

The only way you can ride a bike is by getting on and pushing off. It's scary but it is the only way. It's the same with the Christian faith. The only way we can draw near to Jesus is by trusting him more. And as we move towards Christ we move further away from the four "D"s of doubt, discouragement, depression and despair.

Are you struggling this Easter with one of these "D" issues?

Are you **doubting Gods love** because you are in a crises? "God! I've just found out I have a terminal illness! Don't you love me?"

Are you **discouraged because you don't think he cares for you?**

"God! Don't you see the trouble I'm in? Don't you care/"

Are you **depressed because life has not turned out the way you thought** it would? "God! My husband/wife is leaving me? Cant you stop this happening?"

Are you **despairing because you don't think he has forgiven you your latest sin?** "God! I still feel guilty. Haven't you forgiven me?"

The Bible says this in 1 John 5:13: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."(NIV)

There's a lot we don't know, but the most important question has already been answered.

The things written in Gods Word are written so that **you may know absolutely, for sure, for certain, and with confidence that when you die you are going to go to heaven.**

That doesn't mean you won't make mistakes. That doesn't mean you won't go through trials. That doesn't mean you won't disappoint people and they won't disappoint you. That doesn't mean you won't sin.

The thing is - you don't have to be perfect to get to heaven, but you DO have to put your faith in Christ.

Thank God you don't have to work your way to heaven; if that were the case, none of us would make it.

Jesus said, "I am the way...No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6,NIV). If we put our faith in him and not in our own efforts, then we can know for sure that heaven is our destination.

Where have you been doubting God? In the area of your finances? Your family? Victory over a bad habit? Maybe you've been doubting that you'll ever change.

The fact is, when Christ saved you, he solved your biggest problem. He has a solution for all the rest- but he's limited by your unbelief. There's a tragic verse in the Bible that explains when Jesus went to his own town of Nazareth " And Jesus did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith" (Matt.13:58,NIV)

If you want to see God work in your life, you've got to take some risks. Try that approach. Begin that Bible study. Get involved. And then watch God work in your life.

May the joy of the risen Christ be yours this Eastertide.

Notices found in church newsletters - that didn't quite come out right!

- Next Sunday Mrs Brown will sing a solo at the morning service before the vicar preaches on the subject of 'Terrible experiences and how to survive them'.
- At the church meeting last week the rector spoke briefly and delighted the audience.
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick both of our church and the community.
- Ladies are requested not to have children in the church kitchen.
- Pot luck supper: Prayer and medication will follow.
- Don't let worry kill you. Let the Church help!

April 23 is St George's Day

The Saint of an English Army before he was Patron Saint of England, St George may have been a soldier, but he was no Englishman. He was an officer in the Roman army under Diocletian, who refused to abandon his faith during the Terror, and was martyred at Lydda in Palestine about the year 300 AD - supposedly 23 April. Over the years St George became the example of a Christian fighting-man, a powerful helper against evil powers affecting individual lives. He was the soldier-hero of the Middle Ages, of whom remarkable deeds were reported.

In the Golden Legend of the 13th century, Jacobus de Voragine gave St George a handsome write-up. The story runs thus: One day, St George rode up to the heathen city of Sylene in Lybia, where he found the citizens in great distress. A neighbouring dragon had forced them to surrender two sheep each day for its dinner, and when the sheep gave out, two of their children; and now they were about to sacrifice the King's daughter, dressed as if for her wedding. St George encountered the little party by a stagnant lake, where the dragon lived, and persuaded the sobbing Princess to tell him why she was so miserable. At that moment the dragon appeared, looking inexpressibly revolting. The Saint charged, and drove his spear into the gaping mouth. To everyone's amazement, he tumbled the monster over and over.

Then St George borrowed the Princess' girdle, tied it round the dragon's neck, and persuaded her to lead it back to Sylene herself. The sight of her approaching with the befuddled dragon on its makeshift lead emptied the town. When the inhabitants timidly crept back, St George promised to behead the dragon if they would all believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised.

It was a most effective form of evangelism, for everybody said 'yes' at once. So 15,000 people were baptised, and four carts were commissioned to remove the dragon's body. St George thus became a symbol of the war against evil, and is usually portrayed trampling the dragon of sin under his horse's hoofs. The Crusaders had a vision of him helping them against the Saracens at Antioch, during the first Crusade, and so brought the story of St George back with them from Palestine. Presently England put herself under the protection of the Saint. His day was declared a holiday in 1222. A red cross on a white field is the flag of St George.



I hope these eggs sell soon; the christmas decorations and crackers are arriving next week!

How to grow Deane Church:

Growing as Disciples

Parents invest lots of time nurturing their children so that they grow and mature. For Christians, the issue is more about church health than church growth! If our churches are healthy, they will grow in the way God wants them to grow. A healthy church is one where its members are all growing in their relationship with God as disciples. Throughout the gospels Jesus' followers are called disciples, a word meaning 'a pupil or apprentice.' Growing as disciples of Christ involves 'learning from him how to live my life as He would lead my life if He were me.' (Dallas Willard in *The Divine Conspiracy*). This will include my job, family, neighbours and leisure time.

But how do we grow as disciples? It doesn't happen instantly or automatically, as Jesus calls us to be life-long learners. Also sermons and Bible studies are not enough on their own, as discipleship is about the whole of our life. If we going to be serious about growing, we do need to be accountable to other Christians, for example by being part of a small group that is committed to enable its members to grow.

Rick Warren comments: 'It takes a variety of spiritual experiences with God to produce spiritual maturity' (*The Purpose-Driven Church*). The following questions that he poses will help us to consider how effectively we are growing as disciples, both individually and as a church:

1. Are people learning the content and meaning of the Bible?
2. Are people seeing themselves, life, and other people more clearly from God's perspective?
3. Are people's values becoming aligned with God's values?
4. Are people becoming more skilled in serving God?
5. Are people becoming more like Christ?

SERMON NOTEBOOK

"Founding Fathers of Our Faith"

Isaac: Genesis 27: 1 - 40

Hebrews speaks of Isaac's faith in terms of the way he blessed his sons: 'By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future' (Heb 11:20). While we might focus on Jacob's deception in the story, Hebrews is more interested in Isaac's perceptive insight.

Human Weakness

Isaac sent Esau to hunt wild game for a meal, and then he planned to bless his firstborn. The picture given here is a frail old man who enjoyed the simple pleasures of life. However, although Isaac's weaknesses were more obvious than his strengths, God still worked through him as he does with us.

* In what ways do you see God using ordinary people today?

Human Deceit

With Rebekah's help, Jacob deceived Isaac into blessing him, by pretending to be hairy like Esau with coverings of goatskin. Despite his deceit, God knew that the family line must continue through Jacob, and so he helped and blessed him. God's blessings are given not because we deserve them, but because we need them.

* How has this worked out in your own experience?

Divine Perspective

Isaac blessed his sons with prophetic insight and faith, as he saw the future course of their lives. Even when he pronounced on Esau the blessing God intended for Jacob, God used him to achieve his will: 'I blessed him - and indeed he will be blessed!' (Gen 27:33). It reminds us that even when we get things wrong, God is still able to work his purpose through our circumstances.

* In what ways have you experienced God's blessing in unexpected ways?

Although Isaac never owned any land, he never doubted that his descendants would inherit God's Promised Land - an ordinary man with extraordinary faith!

Bits and Pieces

Parish Walks

The Social Committee will be arranging one or more walks in May. These are the arrangements, bearing in mind the weather! If the weather is fair, there will be an announcement in church on a Sunday morning that the walk is ON that day. The group will meet at the Memorial Hall at about 1.30 pm and go in cars to Rivington Barn. This will be the start and finish of the walk: indeed at no point will the group be very far from the Barn. So please listen out in church for the announcements.

Agape

On Maundy Thursday 8th April at 7pm for 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall there will be an Agape meal with Communion when we remember the Last Supper which Jesus ate with his disciples on the night before he died on the cross. Please look out for and sign the lists in church indicating what items you will be bringing!

APGM

The annual parish general meeting for St Mary's, Deane will take place in the Memorial Hall on the evening of Wednesday 28th April. This is when elections take place for the church wardens and parochial church council. Please put the date in your diaries and make it a priority to be present.

Tom Stokes - Thank you. Marjorie and the family would like to thank everyone for the beautiful cards, letters, donations, and expressions of condolence; and for those who attended the thanksgiving service at Christ Church. Tom will be fondly remembered and sadly missed by all. He is now at rest in the Deane Parish Garden of Remembrance which he created and loved. May God bless you all.

Deane Church News material. We are hoping to commission some articles for the magazine. If you have any ideas as to what you would like to see in the Church News please let Elizabeth Plant know. We will see what we can do.

Easter Reflections

by Canon David Winter

'When you die, that's it. Nothing. Out like a light.' That's what the man in the pub said, and his mates all nodded, though the one whose mother had died the week before wasn't really quite so certain. Still, it seemed to make sense. After all, we know what 'dead' means dead leaves, dead batteries, dead fish, dead pets... and dead people, to be honest. While we recognise that it's all too easy to go from alive to dead, we've got serious doubts about the possibility of any return journeys.

This is why Christians have an uphill task at Easter. Jesus was a great man, and people want to remember how he died. Fair enough. But it starts getting complicated when Christians insist that Jesus died but didn't stay dead - in fact, that he's alive now. That 'return journey' has happened, they say.

That's the problem about Easter, Christians persisting in what sounds like a ridiculous belief. If they just dropped the resurrection bit, and concentrated on the wonderful teaching of Jesus and his example of generosity, compassion and love then everybody would find Christianity much more believable. Wouldn't that make sense? And wouldn't that fill the churches again?

Well it might (or, more likely, it might not). But in any case, the trouble is that it wouldn't be Christianity at all. The faith of Christians actually depends on the resurrection of Jesus, and always has done, right from the earliest days. After the crucifixion the body of Jesus was taken down from the cross by some of his friends and put in a rock tomb with a heavy stone rolled across the doorway. Yet the following Sunday, the third day after his death, his followers claimed that they had met him, seen him, talked with him. So certain was their belief that nothing could make them recant it. Not ridicule, not torture, not even death itself. They couldn't do it because they were absolutely convinced that it had happened. Plenty

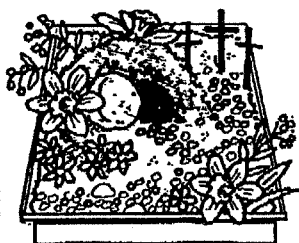
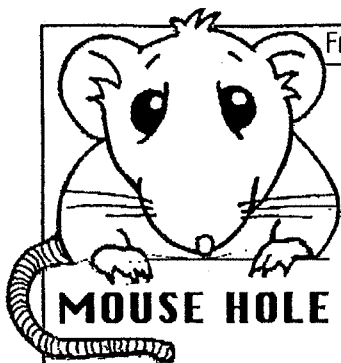
of clever and powerful people at the time had a vested interest in proving them wrong. It shouldn't have been difficult to prove that a dead man had stayed dead, especially when you have at your disposal the resources of the greatest empire in history. Yet they didn't do it, because it couldn't be done.

Still today millions of people all over the world believe that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead. They include brilliant scientists and philosophers as well as plenty of 'ordinary' men and women of all ages. They believe it because they respect the witness of those first Christians, and because in many cases their own lives have been transformed by a relationship with Jesus - a relationship that wouldn't make sense if He were dead!

Christians don't put their faith in a dead hero from the past, but in someone who is alive and active in their own lives and in the world. That, in a nutshell, is the real message of Easter.



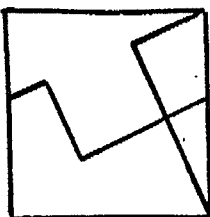
From my home in the church I learn about all sorts of things...



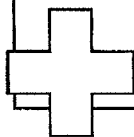
Easter Garden

- Fill a shallow tray or dish with soil.
- Use an upturned flower pot for the tomb and cover with moss.
- Make crosses with lolly sticks.
- Decorate the garden with little stones and flowers.

Enlarge this puzzle and cut out the shapes inside.



Now rearrange them into the shape of a cross!



Jesus
was hated and rejected,
cut and bruised and
suffered great pain...

WHY?

- he did it for us.

Jesus
was nailed to the cross
and left to die...

WHY?

- he did it for us.

We can't be friends with God
because of all the wrong things
we do against him.

But God sent his son Jesus
to the world, and when he
died on the cross Jesus took
the punishment we really
deserve.

Jesus took the punishment for our sins,
for all the things we have done wrong.

Jesus gave his life for us,
he became a sacrifice for us,
so that we can be friends
with God again and have
eternal life with him.

Thank you Jesus
for all you have done for me,
I believe in you, I want to do
things your way and be
friends with you forever.
AMEN

Read
Isaiah 53
1 Peter 2
v.22-25

