

St Mary's News

April 2022



Holy Week and Easter

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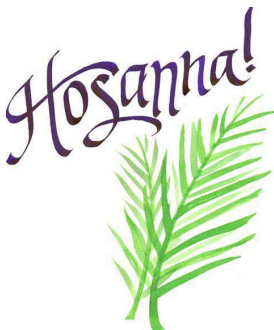
.... and much more!

Walking with Jesus through Holy Week

If you went out into the street and asked people what the biggest and most important Christian festival is I'm pretty sure most people would answer Christmas. It gets all the headlines when it comes to Christian festivals in Western culture. It's got its own well-known music, its own decorations, its own food. And yes, the birth of Jesus competes with the narrative of Father Christmas for many outside the church, but I think it's still well known that Christmas is a Christian festival. It means for Christians it's a time when our own faith is brought to the forefront. We might be busy with lots of different things, but I think Christmas feels extra special because of all the attention it gets in church and out.

It's strange therefore that the most important Christian festival of Easter gets nothing of the same attention. Whereas Christmas gets the main spotlight, Easter I feel gets very little. Were it not for the bank holiday weekend it would probably go under the radar and unnoticed by many, and this lack of attention from the secular world can hold danger for us as Christians as Easter Sunday can sneak up on us and end up for some as just another Sunday. Whereas Christmas has constant reminders of its importance from the outside world, Easter is reliant on ourselves to give it time and attention within our busyness. It is down to each of us to ensure it holds and plays the key role it should for our faith.

I think one of the best ways to do this is to immerse yourself fully into Holy Week, to go on the journey with Jesus, step by step. Holy Week, for those who don't know, is the name given to the final week of Jesus' life. It begins as we accompany Jesus in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on **Palm Sunday**. We experience with him this high as he is welcomed like a King to cheers and a joyous reception by large crowds. We note the excitement felt at Jesus' arrival while knowing this all occurs within the shadow of plots against his life and that he enters having predicted his own death. We know that quickly the mood changes from one of celebration and joy to anger and violence.





We then move to **Maundy Thursday** a much more intimate affair with many different themes for us to pick up on. Here we accompany Jesus as he washes the disciples' feet and commands them to do likewise. A reminder of his humility and of the need for his followers to serve others in love just like he did. We also share with Jesus in his last meal with his friends, an act we remember when we celebrate the Eucharist each week. And then finally we move with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane and his growing sense of being alone, with the disciples unable to stay awake, and the emotional anguish of his prayers about all that is to come.

Finally, we come to **Good Friday** the day of Jesus' crucifixion and death. The day of turmoil and anguish for the disciples and all who loved Jesus. The day they see this man, who only showed love to all those whom he met, humiliated, tortured, mocked and nailed to a cross. A day when we look to the cross and remember all Jesus did for us, all he sacrificed for us. The sombre nature of Good Friday and the death of Jesus is maintained into Saturday with no church services on this day. What service could on Saturday even try to encapsulate or recall the day when the Son of God lies dead. And yet within the silence of this day we inch minute by minute, hour by hour towards the dawn and the growing excitement of what is about to happen.



If we journey through Holy Week, then we partake in each step of the journey with Jesus. We go through the highs and lows, all the feelings, all the emotions and we arrive at **Easter Sunday**, not as any other Sunday but as the moment where everything changes! The moment when brilliant dazzling light emerges from ultimate darkness. The moment of all being lost to all being gained. The moment where the grief and mourning of death is replaced by the hope and joy of new life. Easter Sunday is the ultimate celebration of the power of God's love for us. It is the celebration that nothing can stop God's love and not even death can separate us from it. And so yes Easter might not get the secular spotlight like Christmas does, but it generates its own spotlight as the moment when the light of the world shines brightest, when God's love shines for all to see!

He is RISEN

As we approach Easter together, can I encourage you to give Holy Week the attention and spotlight it deserves. This might mean joining us for our Holy Week services. They are there to help us walk with Jesus, to go on this journey with him. In being part of them we continue the centuries old traditions of the Church to mark these events together as a community. But if you can't make a service, then find time to mark that day yourself, whether it's Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday or Good Friday. Perhaps read the Gospel passages and imagine yourself present in the stories, spend time in prayer speaking with Jesus. Allow each day to be a step in the journey to Easter Sunday. And then having been on the journey and entered into the full emotion of the week allow yourself to celebrate Easter Sunday for the glorious day it is! Celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus and all it means for us, our community and the entire world. And the great thing is our celebration is not limited to just one day as the magnitude of this moment means we celebrate it for the next seven weeks in Eastertide. A chance for our celebration and joy to overflow and be shared with those around us as we can show our community in loving service that God loves them and nothing, not even death can separate us from it!



God bless,

Josh

An Update on Work with Children and Families

Dear Reader



I thought you would like just a quick update on how things are going with Family and Children at St Mary's...

It has been wonderful to see a significant number of old and new families join our Creche, Scramblers (Sunday School) and Pathfinders' provision on a Sunday morning recently. A huge thank you to the small, wonderful, dedicated team who keep this invaluable and core part of our mission and purpose as a church alive. It has been wonderful that a couple more people have come forward to be helpers, but if we want to ensure that we provide a safe and sustainable provision which doesn't stretch those who serve too much then we could really do with a few more helpers. As with any area of childcare, a DBS and safeguarding training is required, but we are happy to pay for this and support prospective helpers through the administration. If you can help in any way, please do let me, Margaret or Caroline J. know.

The clubs we run are also doing well – we run a kids club with crafts, games and activities on a Monday afternoon from 3.00 to 5.00pm; a toddler club on Tuesday mornings from 9.30 to 11.00am, and a Youth club on the first Sunday of the month in the evening after the Encounter Service from 6.30 to 7.30pm. Please do let me know if you would like more details regarding any of these.

We are very excited that we are able to throw our traditional Good Friday Eggsperience this year on 15th April from 10.00am to 12.00 noon. There are a few spaces still free so do sign up if you and your child/ren would like to attend. This event is lots of fun with games, crafts, hot cross bun making and an Easter Egg hunt! Cost is £1 per child.

Still on an Easter theme, a very huge thank you to everyone who knitted Easter chicks and donated Easter Eggs – we received 225 chicks in

total! What a joy it was to deliver them to the Reception Classes at our own St Mary's Preschool and to Central Primary, St John's Church of England Primary School and Watford Fields Infant School with just a few left over to give out to children who live close



to St Mary's itself – they were so very enthusiastically and gratefully received, and I have been asked to extend a huge thank you from all. Thank you to all who contributed in this beautiful, Easter-spirit filled outreach. So often in my school visits during the Easter season, children come up to me to tell me that they still have their chicks and how much they treasure them.

It has been a time of exciting new beginnings – on the first Tuesday of March we launched our first Language Café in St Mary's Church Centre, and our next café takes place on 5th April. This has been made possible through partnership with Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership and other charities who have a heart to help those for whom English is not their first language. The café provides a safe place for people to practice their English and make friends and takes place on the first Tuesday of the month between 11.30am and 1.00pm. If you would like to participate in the café

– either as a customer or a helper – then please do get in touch.

Finally, I would like to wish each of you and your families a Happy and blessed Easter. May it be a time of great joy and going deeper with God.

God Bless

Cath Da Costa

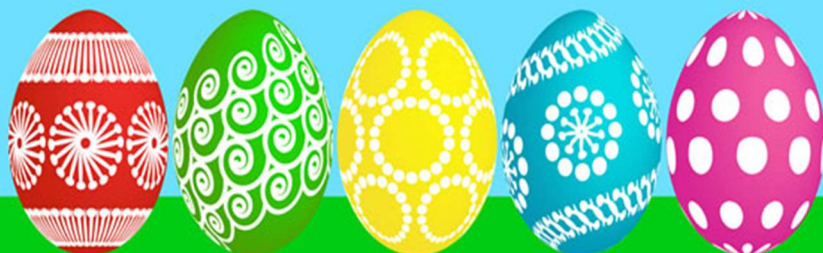
Children and Family Worker
St Mary's Watford

Familyworker.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

07961564385



EASTER EGGSPERIENCE



Games * Craft * Cookery

Date: Good Friday, 15th April

Time: 10 am—12 noon

Where: St Mary's Church Centre

Cost: £1 per child, payable on the day

All children are welcome,
but under 5s will need to bring a parent or carer.

**Places are filling up quickly so
Book NOW!**

07961 564 385

familyworker.stmaryswatford@gmail.com



St Mary's, Watford

PCC Report – March

Meeting on 21st March (*in person*)

The following report briefly covers some of the matters considered at the meeting.

Finances Peter Dean noted that while some monthly expenditures appeared to be high, these concerned annual charges that were incurred in the first months of year; in general, it was too early to tell whether overall income and expenditure lines were consistent with the forecasts.

Buildings Roger Courtney reported that he had received an estimate for the installation of children's toilets and would now seek grant funding for this work. Also, the faculty for the relocation of the New Hope memorial stone had been received. New Hope in conjunction with Watford Council would be responsible for the works. The supplier of the wifi system installed in the church as part of the refurbishment (and not yet commissioned) had indicated that some pieces of equipment now needed replacing; advice had been sought from the diocese.

APCM The Council considered a draft Report for 2021. It noted that the Report would need be submitted to the Independent Examiner before the Report and Accounts could be approved: a meeting would be arranged to approve a final text. The Council also received draft Annual Accounts.

Churches Together A note from St Mary's representatives on Churches Together (Brian and Jackie Mee) was considered. The Council agreed that St Mary's should offer hospitality after the March of Witness planned for Good Friday. It also noted that Churches Together was examining its aims and had invited comment; however, further information was needed before this could be discussed – it was an item for a future meeting.

Mission Action Plan The Council noted the report of the Away Day which had appeared in St Mary's News and the intention that future Connect Together meetings should consider the Plan. It also received a brief report

on the activities of informal Climate Change group which had been established to support the Mission Action Plan.

Vicar's report In Tony's absence there was no Vicar's report, but Josh commented that there had been a number of visits to the church from Watford Girls Grammar School and the presentations given to these groups had been appreciated.

Roger Courtney

World Day of Prayer



A simple but beautiful Service was held at the beginning of March. It had been prepared by the National Team of England, Wales & Northern Ireland. (Scotland prepares its own Service each year.)

The Mayor of Watford Peter Taylor and the MP for Watford Dean Russell both attended the Service.

The positive comments received afterwards, by our Watford secretary, included:

. . . very good indeed, very moving. Music was lovely and all the readers were clear and used lots of expression. The stories of the "women" in particular, were very moving. Successful and friendly afternoon . . . best Service for a while . . . so relevant. There was a lack of rush with the readings and in the powerful stories of the three women.

After the Service, the Mayor said he had enjoyed the Service, and Rosemary Clemas talked to Dean Russell about her personal reason for choosing the story of the deaf lady. He expressed interest in making facilities for the deaf more widespread.

Having the refreshments in the Oasis seating area at Beechen Grove Baptist Church was much appreciated and people enjoyed the smaller space.

Next year's Service will be written by the Christian Women of Taiwan. Locally this will take place at St Luke's Church on Friday 3rd March 2023.

Rosemary Clemas

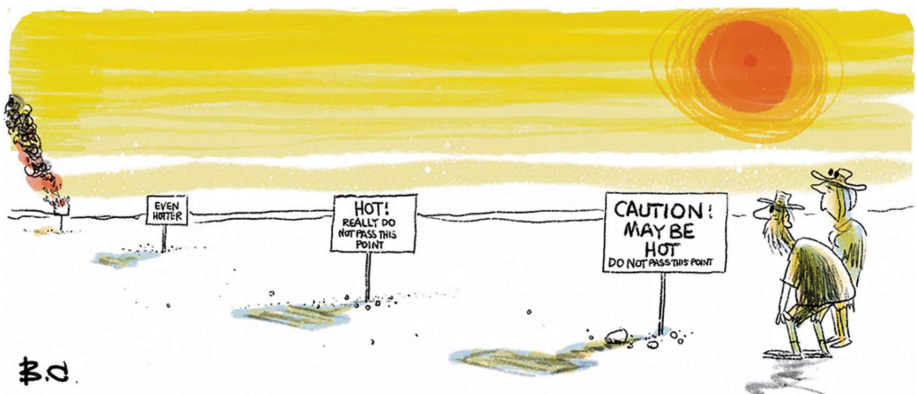
Current Affairs Connect Group

Report on the Current Affairs Debate on Reducing Our Carbon Footprint on 11th March 2022

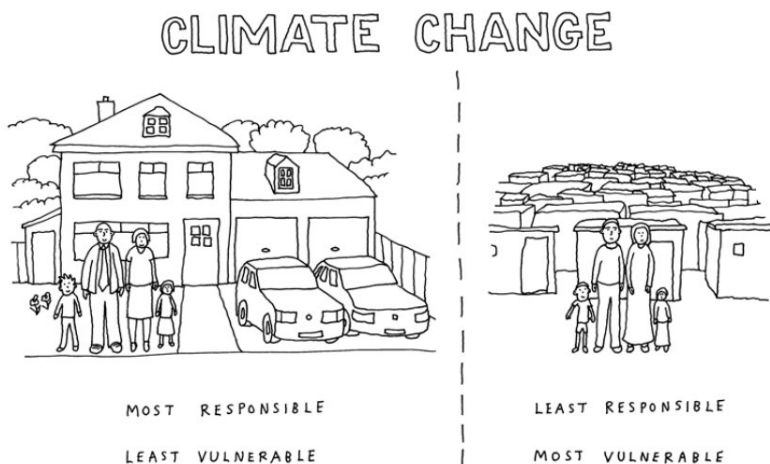
This discussion was based on a review by James Field and Marcus Jones of the book “How Bad are Bananas” by Mike Berners-Lee.

We started by recognising the urgent need to limit the rise in global temperature and to start to change our lifestyles. As Christians, this is part of our responsibility to steward the earth and its resources in the first two chapters of Genesis. But much like evangelism, we also felt we should encourage this change rather than use coercion or the guilt trip. The book is a tremendous help as it identifies the things we can easily do and that will have most impact and helps with those daily choices as well as longer term decisions and investments.

The book covers not only carbon dioxide, but also the more dangerous methane and nitrous oxide gases which are calculated for consistency as carbon dioxide equivalents. Everything must be added in to obtain a true footprint. Britain frequently congratulates itself on a low footprint but fails to note the impact of the production of goods and services it has outsourced to China and other countries. To give another example, the footprint of a car is not only what comes out of exhaust but the extraction of the oil, its refining and transport to the pump, as well as the manufacture and maintenance of the car.



We immediately dived into a practical real-life dilemma of personal transport - “does taking the bus really make a difference”, and then we were right into the meat of the book and the options we have; a mile by bus produces just 46g of CO₂ equivalent - that is one tenth of a jar of jam - but this figure does depend on the number of people in the bus - a full bus would reduce the individual impact significantly....but then the bus would still run if you got on it or not, and whether full or empty, so we concluded that the marginal extra CO₂ from getting on that bus is negligible. In any case public transport is far far less damaging than driving a mile in an average car, which produces 530g CO₂ equivalent. And it brings the health benefits of a walk to and from the bus stop, and the opportunities to meet people.



CartoonChurch.com

After transport we covered food in the same way, again using the book, and again it worked well - the dilemmas and true impact of our choices were revealed with some really practical recommendations of shifting to a plant-based diet, eating seasonal fruit and veg but also recognising that buying food (eg. bananas) from far distant countries is fine if it is shipped by boat which may have less impact than, say, eating tomatoes grown in a heated poly-tunnels in a remote part of Britain.

We then debating the “just one thing” question/tip which revealed useful tips about food waste and shopping habits.

Then Brian Thomson and Maurice Lisley shared the St Oswald's Croxley story of their COP26 community event – a debate with pledging and then follow up. This involved local politicians, schools and churches, and led to a pledging tree covered in post-its being handed round schools and other local organisations and so having substantial impact in the community. We concluded this would be something St Mary's could do in Watford and it would also help us hit all our 3 Mission Action Plan Pees (Parish, Profile, Partnership) really well.

We finished with the idea that we might organise a whole church climate lunch, with vegetarian options, and a guest speaker like Ian Port from Food for Future who could speak about food waste, and we could share the food recipes and other tips and make some pledges. Watch this space for a date!!

There was also appetite in the meeting to form a Watford and 3-Rivers churches cluster - something the diocese environment coordinator is keen on - which could serve as a means of lobbying, sharing best practice and developing action-based partnerships in our community.

The complexities of life choices raised the need for a helpdesk to provide advice/resources/recommendations for confused people on what has the most impact and where to turn to for practical help. We might start with helping people work out their personal CO2 equivalent footprint - the average in the UK is about 13 tonnes per person per year and it needs to come down to about 5 tonnes to keep temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. The closing chapter on page 193 of the book is *What can we do?* and suggests many practical steps we can all take many of which were picked up in the article Josh wrote back in St Mary's News in September. This is not just about reducing our personal footprints but also to push for change in broader society, in line with the aims of the informal Climate Change Action Group.

And change starts at home, in the heart, right?

Andy Roby

(inadequate stand-in for Marcus who was not well)

If anyone is interested in finding out more, please contact Andy on andyroby2001@yahoo.com or 07414 832983

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT UKRAINE AND ITS PEOPLE?

We have all been shocked during the past few weeks by the images and stories emerging from the war-torn country of Ukraine. We cannot imagine the terror and desperation of those trapped in bombarded towns, those fleeing to unknown futures with the minimum of possessions, leaving behind those too sick or frail to travel and husbands and brothers risking their lives to defend their country.



It has been uplifting to see the response from neighbouring countries in Europe and inspiring to hear about the generosity of people in our own country finding creative ways to collect and deliver essential supplies and those willing to share their homes with the imminent flood of refugees.

You may be wondering what is happening locally and in the St. Albans Diocese to support these efforts. For those with internet access there are links below to take you to websites explaining everything in more detail, but for the benefit of those who do not have this access I hope the following information taken from the websites will be helpful.

Watford Council

The Council is working with **W3RT (Watford and Three Rivers Trust)**, **Goods for Good** and **Taylor Made Former Players Club** to collect supplies and raise money to transport goods donated in the town to where they are most needed and can make a real difference to those impacted by war.

Only very specific items are currently needed to support those fleeing from Ukraine. In particular, donations of clothing are **not** needed and would cause real difficulties for those working on the frontline.

Financial Support

If you are able to help financially, the money raised will help cover the costs of trucks to deliver supplies and essential relief aid (£3,000 is needed for each truck).

Christian Aid Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal.

DEC Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal

Oxfam Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal

Food and Goods

If you want to donate goods, the items needed are: **non-perishable food, first aid items and hygiene goods.**

- **Non-perishable food** - tinned food* (with a pull-tag), pasta, rice, chocolate spread, peanut butter, jam, nutrition bar, chocolate bars, sweets, cuppa soups, pot noodles, coffee, tea and sugar
- **First Aid** - bandages, cotton wool, antiseptic wipes, plasters, first aid kits, paracetamol, aspirin, antibacterial hand gel
- **Hygiene goods** - baby wipes, toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, shower gel, deodorants, nappies, packs of tissues and soap dispensers

Where to donate

If you have goods that you can donate from the list above, you can drop them off at:

Watford Leisure Centre (Central), Peace Prospect, WD17 3HA, Monday to Friday, 6.30am - 9.30pm or 9.00am – 4.00pm on Saturday and Sunday.

St Albans Diocese

Financial support

We have established a diocesan fund which can offer immediate financial support to refugees that need it for items such as food and travel. We shall keep a careful eye on disbursements from the fund. Should it turn out to be not, or only a little, needed, any surplus will be sent to the Christian Aid Ukraine Appeal .

To donate to the diocesan fund

- Barclays Bank **Account Name:** The St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance
- **Account Number:** 20776041
- **Sort Code:** 20-05-03
- **Reference Code:** 2103161
- Payment by BACS is most welcome, but we also accept cheques. In either case, please include the reference **2103161** as we will need this to identify it. Also consider filling in a Gift Aid declaration to make your donation go further.



UK visa support for Ukrainian nationals

Sponsor a Ukrainian person or family

From Friday 18 March, it has been possible to sponsor a named Ukrainian and their immediate family members through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. You should get in contact with them directly and prepare to fill in a visa application with all their details and yours.

If you do not personally know a Ukrainian person or family, you can register your interest in becoming a sponsor in the future.

You can offer a spare room or separate self-contained accommodation, and you must be able to provide it for at least six months. You will receive £350 per month for up to 12 months.

Web links:

<https://www.stmaryswatford.org/supportukraine>

<https://www.watford.gov.uk/news/article/119/watford-stands-with-ukraine>

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org>



The Ukrainian prayer station in church

We can all PRAY – the following prayer issued by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York is a good way to start:

*God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.
Above all we pray for all your precious children,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.*

Alison Saunders

Lord,
we thank you for your warming sunshine
and the new buds of Spring,
showing your creation to us once more.
Amongst all the trials and challenges
and our steadfast prayer for those suffering,
whether in body, mind or spirit,
help us to be thankful that you place all this at our feet,
that we can soak it up and be drenched in your love.
Amen.



[Prayer: David Knights; Painting: Nancy Taylor]

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**Covid restrictions may apply.
Refreshments available
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Who's Who at St Mary's

Vicar

The Revd Tony Rindl | 01923 225189 / 07792 505480
tony.rindl@gmail.com

Curate

The Revd Joshua Brocklesby | 07764 738596
jbrocklesby.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Churchwardens

Alison Saunders | 01923 244390
Peter Dean | 07876 154387

Children & Families Worker

Cath Da Costa | 07961 564385
familyworker.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Facilities Manager

stmarysfacilitiesmanager@gmail.com

Church Office

office@stmaryswatford.org
St Mary's Church, Church Street,
Watford WD18 0EG
01923 225189

www.stmaryswatford.org

Services

The Church is open each week

Monday to Friday
between 9.30am and 3.00pm
and on Saturday
between 12.00noon and 2.00pm

Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (said) in church
on 1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday only each month;
10.30am Morning Service in church and via Zoom
every Sunday;
5.30pm Encounter in church and via Facebook Live
on 1st Sunday of month only
(preceded at 5.00pm with refreshments)

Wednesday

12.30pm Holy Communion in church

Monday to Friday

9.30am Morning Prayer via Zoom

(for Zoom links please contact Church Office)

Please keep up to date with what is on offer
via our Facebook page
or the website www.stmaryswatford.org

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

Sunday 10th April
Palm Sunday service
10.30am

Wednesday 13th April
Mid-week Holy Communion
12.30pm

Thursday 14th April
Maundy Thursday Holy Communion
7.30pm

Friday 15th April
Good Friday service
2pm

Sunday 17th April
Easter Sunday Holy Communion
10.30am

