

St Mary's, Watford

St Mary's News

March 2024

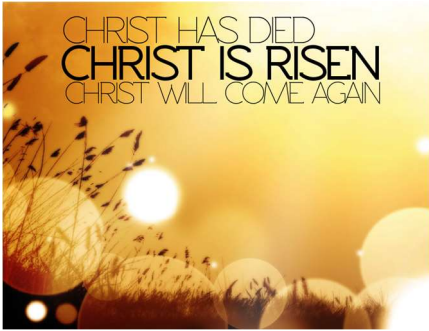


Includes

The Best is Yet to Come
PCC Report
News from the Climate Group
Holy Week & Easter Services

The Best is Yet to Come

Prior to the events of Holy Week and Easter, Jesus predicts his death three times. On each occasion it would seem the disciples are unable to comprehend what Jesus is saying. What did Jesus mean when he said, “the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again”?



We, of course, have the benefit of hindsight and are therefore familiar with the Easter story. Each year, beginning with Palm Sunday, we are invited to pray and meditate on the Gospel narrative and re-live the events of Holy Week culminating in our Easter celebration. Easter is at the very heart of our Christian faith.

One of the earliest creeds or statements of faith that is repeated pretty much every time we have Holy Communion is *Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again*. It is quite an outlandish statement we make, and yet for many millions of Christians around the world we believe this to be true.

That belief is made possible by the credibility of the eyewitness accounts of those early disciples who were with Jesus as he entered into Jerusalem, was arrested, put on trial, sentenced to death, crucified, buried and on the third day rose again. Even a casual reading of the Gospel accounts of Easter will show that as the disciples witnessed these incredible events, they had no idea what was going to happen. Indeed, there is much in the Gospels that reflects trauma, disarray, panic, grief, and unbelief.

It is this level of honesty when recording the Easter events that convinces me of its authenticity. Peter, so enthusiastic, always committed to the cause, loses his nerve after Jesus is arrested and disowns him three times. On that first Easter morning, Mary Magalene and some of the other women, visit the tomb where Jesus had been buried. Seeing the stone at the entrance had been rolled away, their first reaction was not that Jesus had risen from the dead but that his body had been stolen. In St. John's account you can sense the grief Mary must have been experiencing. On seeing Jesus, she does not recognise him and mistakes the risen Jesus for the gardener. It was only when Jesus calls out her name that she realises it is Jesus.

Thomas is always someone I can readily identify with. He is not present when the risen Jesus appears to the disciples for the first time. He would not believe the other disciples when they told him what had happened, and why would he? After all, what they claim to have seen is beyond human experience. "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" was Thomas' response. When Jesus does appear a second time, he invites Thomas to place his finger in his hands in the holes where the nails had been that had nailed him to the cross and to place his hand where Jesus' body had been pierced. It was only then with such evidence presented to him that Thomas believes.



Then there were the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Cleopas and the other disciple, possibly his wife, are walking away from Jerusalem. In the telling of the story, found in St. Luke's Gospel,

you almost sense the disappointment, the confusion and that sense of being defeated. Again, the disciples don't recognise that it is



Jesus who walks alongside them. It is only when they break bread together later in the evening that they recognise Jesus. Again, it suggests the disciples had no prior understanding of the resurrection.

We certainly benefit from hindsight in helping understand our belief that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and rose again. We can be confident in the knowledge that our sins are forgiven, that death is defeated and that in Christ we have the promise of eternal life.

We can also be forgiven for thinking that Easter, and God's activity lies in the past. Yet there are many Christians who would testify to God being very much at work in their lives today. During Lent we are running a series of special services on Sunday evenings at 5.30pm where members of the church and those associated with St. Mary's are sharing how God has been at work in their lives. I commend these to you; we have already heard some remarkable accounts of how God has transformed lives and helped people through difficult times.

There is also a future dimension. It is the firm belief and hope of the Christian that one day Jesus will return, and we will see the completion of His redeeming work. We live with a tension of knowing that Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection triumphs over sin and death once and for all, but the day is yet to come where this will be known in its completeness. In St. John's Gospel as Jesus

prepares his disciples for the events of Holy Week, he speaks of his Father's house having many rooms or dwelling places. He speaks of going to prepare a place for them and indeed for us. He then says if he goes and prepares a place he will come back and take them (and us) to the place where he is going. This in essence is our future. Jesus' reply was to say, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

So let us celebrate Easter and all that Jesus has done for us in the past, who is with us now, and promises a wonderful future where we will see him in his heavenly glory. Let us rejoice knowing the best is yet to come.

The Revd Tony Rindl



	<p>GOOD <i>Friday</i></p> <p>Eat a hot cross bun and use these ideas to help you think and talk to God.</p> <p>Bread: Think of those things and people that give us what we need to get through each day. Thank God for them</p> <p>Cross: Think of the hard things and problems you are facing right now. Ask God to help you.</p> <p>Dried fruit and sweet glaze: Think about the good things you are hoping for and the new things that might be possible.</p>
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Parochial Church Council

The following report summarises some of the matters considered at the Council's meeting of 26 February:

Finance: It was expected that the financial situation would improve somewhat after 2023 with, for example, the General Fund benefitting from a full year's interest on the capital obtained from the recent sale of the Brightwell Road property. There is no room for complacency, however. Among other factors, the appeal to the congregation in January has not yet resulted in any obvious increase in giving. The Finance Committee is continuing to consider options to reduce the deficit, including increasing income from the hire of church. The Council agreed to gradually reduce the discounted rates given to some of the charitable bodies hiring rooms. A small legacy has also been received.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting: This will take place on Sunday 26th May.

Health & Safety: The review of Health & Safety (H&S) has continued with the drawing up of a Fire Risk Assessment and a H&S Policy. Martin Whittick and our Churchwardens, Peter Dean and Eileen Roby, are responsible for the Policy's day-to-day implementation.

Bellringing: Richard Hunt is retiring. He has been our Tower Captain for many years and his responsibilities have included making sure the correct flag is flown from the Tower at the appropriate time and looking after the clock. The Council are very grateful for all he has done and will be marking his retirement. Luke Boreham is taking over Richard's role and we are looking forward to getting to know him.

The bellringers' ropes need replacing at a cost expected to be around £1,900.

Vicar's Report: The Vicar reported he had attended an Away Day with Watford Deanery Chapter to explore future developments for mission in the Deanery. Some external funding is available for a project that will assist in the challenge of 'growing younger and more diverse'. Nothing concrete was agreed but one possibility is a social hub at Christ Church St. Albans Road, a project similar to Watford Schools Trust but for secondary schools. Another possibility is that there might be something similar to the Presence shop and café in the town centre.

Once approved, full minutes are normally available on the St Mary's website: <https://www.stmaryswatford.org/pcc>

If you wish to send correspondence to the PCC please send it to the PCC Secretary, Marcus Jones (email: ttekcoss@aol.com).

Marcus Jones
PCC Secretary



7 th March	12.30pm	Oksana Hermanchuk	<i>pianist</i>
14 th March	12.30pm	Nina Cook	<i>soprano</i>
21 st March	12.30pm	Neil Crossland	<i>pianist</i>

The concerts take a break during April and resume on 2nd May.

What is that **Bunch of St Mary's Greenies** up to?

If you've been asking this question, then read on. And if, after reading this, you want to know even more - please chat to Andy Roby (andyroby2001@yahoo.com, 07414 832983) or one of the other 26 members of the group.

OK, call to action over!



Now to what we've been doing since the amazing Creationtide Day on 24th September last year when we received Bronze and Silver Ecochurch Awards from Rachel Johnstone, St Albans Environment Officer and Aga Dychton, Deputy Mayor of Watford.

How can you tell what we've been doing, apart from the two plaques proudly displayed by the North door?

Well, we now regularly include climate in our worship, prayers and teaching; we regularly publish advice, info and tips on climate action; we lobby and engage with local politicians and government; we are starting a programme to assess and reduce individual climate footprints; we are saving energy where we can; we have reduced paper use and sourced recycled photocopying paper and installed bike racks. A very good start!

And since September we have:

1. Started going for Gold and drafted plans for the next phase that will get St Mary's to Ecochurch Gold.

2. Formed a Green Heart of Watford group with four other local organisations to restore nature around St Mary's and engaged with the Council.
3. Joined the Watford Green Network and published what our group does.
4. Set up a Watford Green Christian group reaching 12 churches with emails, meetings and advice.
5. Attended two of the council's quarterly Sustainability Forums.
6. Visited Woodoaks, the Soil Association farm, cafe and brewery in Maple Cross.
7. Started exploring how to reduce the CO2 emissions from the church and church centre (getting a professional energy audit, getting quotes for renewable energy supplies, research sources of finance, etc).
8. Set up a Climate page on St Mary's website - thanks Pam - including photos of the Creationtide Day last September.

So, there is a lot going on, much to celebrate and even more to get involved in if you feel called to do so. We've got gaps in the Ecochurch team that need filling for instance, plus some practical projects to get involved with or coordinate. We are always very open to other ideas and suggestions.

So please do think and pray about this and do not hesitate to get in touch if you are interested!



Andy Roby
Climate Group Coordinator

Services

The Church is usually open each week
Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 3.00pm
and on Saturday between 9.30am and 2.00pm

Sunday

10.30am Morning Service in church and via Zoom
every Sunday

5.30pm Communion in church
every Sunday during Lent and on Easter Day
(preceded at 5.00pm with refreshments)

Wednesday

12.30pm Holy Communion in church

(for Zoom links please contact the Church Office)

Thought for the Week

on our website - based on a bible verse or passage,
it is a short reflection by one of the leadership team
for you to think about during the week.

It can be downloaded and listened to whenever and wherever.

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

Who's Who at St Mary's

Vicar

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

Churchwardens

Peter Dean
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Eileen Roby
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eileen.robby@stmaryswatford.org

Facilities Manager

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Church Office

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01923 225189

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Lesley Gray
stmaryssafeguarding10@gmail.com

www.stmaryswatford.org



St Mary's, Watford

Holy Week and Easter Services



24th March - **Palm Sunday**

10.30am **Service of the Word**

5.30pm **Communion** with Stations of the Cross



27th March

12.30pm **Midweek Communion**



28th March - **Maundy Thursday**

7.30pm **Holy Communion**

29th March - **Good Friday**

2.00pm **Good Friday Liturgy**



31st March - **Easter Day**

10.30am **Holy Communion**

5.30pm **Easter Praise**

1st April - **Easter Monday**

**Walk, Run, Cycle to St Albans Cathedral
to join thousands of others on Pilgrimage**

details from the Church Office - 01923 225189

