



# Outlook

**The magazine of  
St Mark's Church  
Longwood**



**April 2024**

## From Fr Simon: New life

The Clocks leaping forwards on Easter Sunday morning is well-timed. It will add to our Easter celebrations because the days will seem so much brighter, even though we will lose an hour's sleep.

The growing light is just one of many signs of Easter: spring bulbs remind us of new life appearing where previously the ground looked barren and dead, candles remind us of the eternal light of Christ, Easter Eggs and Bunnies remind us of the beauty of new birth, and remind us to celebrate this season with great feasting and happiness.

It's a glorious time, so why can't it be Easter every day?

The answer is, that it can and it is!

Every day, every second, every moment, we live because Jesus lives. The tomb could not hold him, death could not defeat him, neither could the sins of the world stop him. Jesus sprang from the tomb and opened the way to new life, God's new life, which keeps on pouring from him into us, all the time.

Every day is a celebration of Easter, every day we rejoice in the new life that Jesus won for us and shares with us.

On a related note, have you ever wondered why we go to church on Sundays? The first Christians were nearly all Jewish, and for Jews, the Holy Day - called the Sabbath, is Saturday.

This changed with the resurrection. After Jesus rose again, on that very first Easter Sunday Morning, the early church began to meet and worship on Sundays. Sunday was the day of the Resurrection: the day of new life, and the day of greatest joy and transformation. Whenever you turn up at church on a Sunday, you join with the women and men disciples going to the tomb 2000 years ago, filled with fear and grief, only to find that the tomb is empty, and that Jesus has risen from the dead with glorious new life. In our Sunday services we discover again and again the eternal life of God dispelling our darkness, transforming our grief, bringing us hope, both now, and in the world to come.

Sunday is the first day of the week, and it is the first day of new life, of our new creation in God.

Every Sunday in church is a celebration of this, and so is every day, every moment of our lives.

To finish, two quotes. The first is from the gardening presenter Monty Don, speaking recently about the seasons, gardening, new birth and life in general. The second is a verse from a beautiful Easter Hymn.

The rhythm of the natural world puts our lives into perspective. The rhythm of the seasons, the rhythm of nature is a very important part of [our lives]. Because our lives, particularly modern life, but all life, human life, is a mess. We all know that. Anybody [who] says it isn't, isn't living. By and large, most of us do the best we can, most of the time. And most of us fail quite a lot of the time. So, it's a muddle and a mess. And what this rhythm of the natural world does, it puts it in perspective. We're only very small and we're very insignificant, and our problems, which can be overwhelming, are given some sort of context within the flow of the seasons and the weather and the way plants grow. By going outside and investing hope and trust to a future of a plant – it could be a seed, it could be a carrot, there's nothing dramatic about this, there's no hierarchy – believing and trusting in growth, you're believing in flowering, in seeds and in a harvest perhaps. Spring will come. Summer will come. The flowers will grow. There's this cycle of rebirth and renewal and flowering.

*Monty Don speaking on Radio 5*

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
then your touch can call us back to life again,  
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

*John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958)*

Alleluia, Christ is risen!  
He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Happy Easter, and God bless

## What's on – some important dates

### **Maundy Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March**

7.30pm Holy Communion, washing of feet and stripping of the altar

8.30pm the vigil

### **Good Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March**

10am Churches Together in the village square in Golcar

2pm Stations of the Cross and communion at St Mark's Longwood

### **Easter Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March (the clocks go forward)**

6am Dawn service – see photo on front cover

11am Family Service

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April** Confirmation preparation sessions start

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May – Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May** Deanery Prayer Walk

*[on these days we are walking between all the Church of England churches in the Huddersfield Deanery. We start each day at 9am, and finish at lunchtime]*

**Pentecost Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May**, joint Benefice service

*[for this wonderful service, we begin at St John's Golcar, and then walk down to St Mark's where we finish the service, and then have lunch. Other local churches may be joining us]*

### **Joke**

How do you make Holy Water? You boil the hell out of it!

*(sorry, no room for puzzles this month)*

## SOME REFLECTIONS FROM OUR PILGRIMAGE TO RIPON

2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2024

### In the beginning

Up early. Ironing, breakfast, shower, dress, pack lunch, set off. Fog, (weather forecast had said snow). Praying together with Church family as we set off to Ripon for a grand day out. Enjoying the luxury of being driven. Companionship and friendly conversation. Feeling a bubble of excitement anticipating what the day holds for us all. (33 in total).

Who thought of this pilgrimage? Who arranged the bus, the advertising, the programme of events, making it happen? Thank you. (Where are we going next time?)



### Arrival in Ripon

Dropped off at the door. Toilets across the road. Welcoming tea and biscuits in the Cathedral.

Meeting Canon Matthew who led us on a “Meditative Pilgrimage around the Cathedral, drawing on the heritage of the building to assist spiritual reflection”. We weren’t hurried, time went quickly by.

We would have missed things if he hadn’t pointed them out to us. (Keep showing me what I need to see Lord.) I’ve kept the guide leaflet. It has information and prayers which I want to read again.

There are wood carvings, statues, screens, metalwork of brass, copper and silver, architectural alterations which don't always match up at the corners, precise needlework, a neck aching high ceiling all above the original AD672 crypt built by Wilfred. For centuries people have been designing wonderful treasures, sourcing the materials to make them and leaving them here for our delight. Lost things are unexpectedly found centuries later and repositioned. (I think that happens with people too. "The best things in life are not things.")



I was preoccupied during the tour wondering how they manage to keep everything neat and tidy, dust free and polished. (Don't ask or they'll put you on a cleaning rota – then you'll know.)

## Midday

Holy Communion.

Lunch time. We fell easily into conversation with ladies who work in the Cathedral discovering common threads of time, places and events in our lives. Outside for a walk, breath of fresh air and discovered it was raining with water gushing from the roof through spouts and splashing our feet. Returning cold and wet we went upstairs to the library to see books, paintings and silverware

but remembering looking through the south facing window, with a

welcomingly positioned radiator, and seeing a huge bed of purple crocuses, bathed in sunshine, in the garden below. (He gives me all that I need.)

You may not have come to Ripon but I remembered you in prayer and lit a candle for us all. So, you were there.

### **Evening Prayer**

Homeward bound. An enjoyable day. Feeling content, tired and surrounded by the goodness of God.



### **The best bit of the day**

In the hush of the late afternoon a gentle thud resonated throughout the building and everything in it as the bells chimed and the clock struck the hour. There was a stillness. Tourists had left, the guides had gone home, there was peace and calm and quietness with an overwhelming sense of the presence of God. “There should be in the soul, halls of space, avenues of leisure and high porticoes of silence, where God waits.” (Quote, Jeremy Taylor).

Maggie Cuss



[To answer some of Maggie’s questions. These beneficent pilgrimages are Fr Simon’s Idea. He organised the first one to Wakefield in 2022, then York last year, and Ripon this year. He was delighted to see so many people come from St John’s and St Mark’s, and already has some ideas for next year, so watch this space! Sue Stainton and Sue Starr co-ordinated the minibus, which enabled those without their own transport to come,

and made for a lovely atmosphere; thank you to them, and to Maggie for writing this beautiful reflection.]



## **Weekly events**

**Sunday Services are at 11am**

**Tuesdays 6pm** Midweek communion, it is a shorter and simpler service than our Sunday services

**Mondays and Wednesdays 9am** morning prayer (use the side door, and dress up warm!)

**Wednesdays 2-4pm** friendly gardening group, often with a cup of tea.

**Bible studies** are usually Mondays 2pm at St John's Golcar, Thursdays 7.30pm at the vicarage. See the weekly pewsheets for more details.

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