

The United Benefice of St Michael  
Lichfield and St John, Wall

**Easter Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April**

**Canticle: Easter Anthems**

**Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us:  
so let us celebrate the feast,**

**not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness:  
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

*1 Corinthians 5.7b,8*

**Christ once raised from the dead dies no more:  
death has no more dominion over him.**

**In dying he died to sin once for all:  
in living he lives to God.**

**See yourselves therefore as dead to sin:  
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*Romans 6.9-11*

**Christ has been raised from the dead:  
the first fruits of those who sleep.**

**For as by man came death:  
by man has come also the resurrection of the dead;**

**for as in Adam all die:  
even so in Christ shall all be made alive.**

*1 Corinthians 15.20-22*

**Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Collect**

Lord of all life and power,  
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son  
overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in him:  
grant that we, being dead to sin  
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,  
may reign with him in glory;  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be praise and honour, glory and might,  
now and in all eternity.**Amen**

## **New Testament Reading**

### **Acts 10.34-43**

<sup>34</sup>Peter began to speak to those assembled in the house of Cornelius. 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup>You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all. <sup>37</sup>That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: <sup>38</sup>how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. <sup>39</sup>We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; <sup>40</sup>but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, <sup>41</sup>not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup>He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup>All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

### **Psalm 118.14-24**

**<sup>14</sup> The Lord is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.**

<sup>15</sup> Joyful shouts of salvation  
sound from the tents of the righteous:

**<sup>16</sup> 'The right hand of the Lord does mighty deeds;  
the right hand of the Lord raises up;  
the right hand of the Lord does mighty deeds.'**

<sup>17</sup> I shall not die, but live  
and declare the works of the Lord.

**<sup>18</sup> The Lord has punished me sorely,  
but he has not given me over to death.**

<sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter and give thanks to the Lord.

**<sup>20</sup> This is the gate of the Lord;  
the righteous shall enter through it.**

<sup>21</sup> I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me  
and have become my salvation.

**<sup>22</sup> The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the chief cornerstone.**

<sup>23</sup> This is the Lord's doing,  
and it is marvellous in our eyes.

**<sup>24</sup> This is the day that the Lord has made;  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Gospel Reading**  
**Mark 16:1-8**

<sup>1</sup> When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>2</sup> And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup> They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' <sup>4</sup> When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. <sup>5</sup> As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' <sup>8</sup> So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

**Sermon**

*The sermon that follows was preached at Kirkby in Ashfield in 2020. It is based on John 20.1-18 rather than the gospel for this year included above, which you may care to read before reading the sermon. A video of the sermon that will be preached on Easter Day at St. Michaels, which will be based on the Mark reading, will be on the church web site early in Easter week.*

What we celebrate today was totally outside of the frame of understanding of every single disciple, and this even though Jesus had told them over and over again that it would happen, that he would be killed and that on the third day he would be raised from the dead.

Yet not one of them believed it would happen. Not one of them took Jesus at his word. On the day after the Sabbath, on Sunday morning, while it was still dark Mary Magdalene and some other woman went to the tomb of Jesus with special spices to finish the process of preparing his body for burial. Mary went first – by herself – ahead of the others. She went ahead of them not because she was expecting any kind of surprise, but because she wanted to be alone for a while in the graveyard. She went out alone because her best friend had been tortured and killed and because she wanted to grieve awhile before undergoing the ordeal of doing what was needed to be done, before she touched the wounded lifeless body of Jesus and honour him by treating his broken body with the dignity that the dead should receive.

When she got to the tomb, something was different than it had been when she had been there late on the Friday afternoon. The huge boulder in front of the tomb had been rolled aside – exposing the entrance to the place where Jesus's body had been laid.

Mary is stunned by this, she is shocked, not because she suddenly figures out that it was true after all, not because she remembers that Jesus said that he would rise from the dead. She is shocked and stunned because she believes that someone has stolen the body.

'Christ is Risen' 'He is risen indeed!'

So Mary turns and she runs and she tells Simon Peter and John the Son of Zebedee exactly that. "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" she tells them.

So they quickly returned to the tomb with her and they look in the empty tomb and then they go away in amazement back to their own homes.

And when they go back, with the exception of John, none of them grasp what they had seen, the strips of linen laying on the rock bench and the burial cloth for his head, folded neatly and set apart from the rest of the linen, much in the fashion that a carpenter in those days communicated that a work was finished by placing a folded work cloth neatly on the piece he had been working on.

They return home – still in mourning, for as John puts it in today's Gospel "as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead."

'Christ is Risen' 'He is risen indeed!'

When the disciples left, Mary is again left alone by the tomb – and she is weeping. The body of the one she loved is gone. She cannot even do the little thing that she had come to do.

She stands there weeping – and, after a while she musters up her courage and she looks into the tomb. And when she does, she sees two angels dressed in white and seated on the ledge of the tomb where the body of Jesus was supposed to be.

But does she, who has heard the promises of Jesus then believe those promises?

Does she believe that Jesus has been raised from the dead?

When they ask her why she is crying – she says to them: "because someone has taken the body of my Lord and I don't know where they have put it!" Then – still weeping – still in shock – still unbelieving – still not expecting or hoping for a single thing Mary turns around, and she sees Jesus standing there and she supposes he is the gardener.

Mary doesn't expect to see Jesus walking about – fully alive – and so she doesn't see Jesus even when he talks to her even when he says to her – as did the angels – "Woman – why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?"

Still thinking he is the gardener she asks him if he has moved the body. "Tell me," she says, "where you have laid him, and I will take him away." It is then that Jesus calls her by name, "Mary" – and it is then – suddenly – that her eyes clear, her heart clears – and she realizes that Jesus is alive and standing in front of her.

'Christ is Risen' 'He is risen indeed!'

And she goes to grab hold of him, embrace him and cling to him but Jesus tells her not to hold onto him but to go and tell the others what she has seen – to tell them that he has risen just as he said he would and that he is returning to his father.

And she does as Jesus has asked. The scriptures record that they do not believe her at first. You can only begin to imagine the shock at what Mary was telling them.

Indeed each of the first disciples has to go through a process of being convinced – of being convinced either by Jesus himself or by the overwhelming testimony of others who have seen him.

The reason I have laid so much stress upon Mary's disbelief this morning, and upon the disbelief of the other disciples is because we are like them.

We hear the message that Jesus proclaimed. We witness the miracles that he performs in other people's lives. But when it comes to the hard times, the times of trial and the times of loss and mourning, it can be oh so very hard to believe in what Jesus has said about being raised on the third day, so very hard to believe that not only was he raised – but that we too will be raised, that death does not in fact have the last word.

Why do you weep? said the angels and Jesus, and there are many ways to answer that question. Indeed there are many good reasons to weep. But today – Easter Sunday, the

empty tomb, the angels, Mary's encounter with Jesus and indeed the existence of the church itself is a reminder to us that while there are many reasons to weep, there is also a great reason to rejoice.

Jesus was crucified – he died and he was laid in the tomb but that tomb could not hold him and because of him – it cannot hold any of those whom God loves.

'Christ is Risen' 'He is risen indeed!'

Death is not the end of the story of Jesus nor is it the end of our stories for when we look around – the signs of God's love are all about us in the midst of our world's troubles and turmoil. When we look around us we need to listen for the voice of the one who called Mary by name in the garden to speak to us. For Jesus story is not over.

If it were over, if Christ was not raised, the church would never have come into existence for the disciples would never have gone on in the face of the opposition they encountered to proclaim that God raised him from the dead on the third day and that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

They would never have passed to us their testimony for they would have had nothing to testify about for on that first day for they also did not believe despite all that Jesus had said and done before he died.

Let us thank God for today. Let us thank God for Mary and for all the other disciples who did not believe. Let us thank God for them because their faith tells us that there is hope for us when we weep; hope for us when we do not believe; hope for us when we face the cross and the tomb and feel despair rising up within us.

But most of all let us thank God today for the living Christ – for Jesus of Nazareth – God's anointed one – for the one who was raised up on the third day and who for us has broken the power of sin and death.

'Christ is Risen' 'He is risen indeed!' Amen

### **Post Communion Prayer**

God of Life,

who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross,  
and by his glorious resurrection

have delivered us from the power of our enemy:

grant us so to die daily to sin,

that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### **ST MICHAEL**

#### ***Those newly in need of prayer***

Anne Watson, David Kendrick, Steve Baker, Phillip Goodwin, Sam Bassett,

#### ***Those in continuing special need of prayer:***

Mark Berry, Elizabeth Chapman, Chris Clayton, Dorothy Clayton, Jo Cobb, Dottie Collins, Alison Cox-Toplis, Martin Dewes, Chris Dickerson, Colin Eastwood, Robert Harris, Chris Kirk, Alison Knight, Robert McAllester-Jones, Matthew Martel, Marielouise Oliver Norah and Arthur Palin, Nick Rutter, Anthony Staples aged 7, John Tipper, Sheila Vaughan, Judith Watson, Renee Wellings, Felicity Woodfield, Jamie,

#### ***Those who have died***

Peter Watson, David Weedon

**FOR YOUR PRAYERS**

**ST JOHN**

***Those in continuing special need of prayer:***

Pat Crowe, Jo Hearn, Ann Kinson, Allan Law

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**CHURCH NOTICES**

**Easter Sunday**

6.00am Dawn Service in church.

The service will start in the churchyard with the lighting of the Easter candle and hymn singing and will then continue in church.

8.00am BCP in church.

10.00am Service of Holy Communion at St Michael's.

This service will be live streamed on a zoom link using the Sunday service link we have used each Sunday.

10.00am Service of Holy Communion at St John's.

**Easter 2**

8.00am Holy Communion at St Michael's

10.00am Holy Communion at St Michael's

This will be the final service conducted by Rev Preb Simon Baker. Please notify the parish office if you wish to attend so that we have a good idea of numbers. *This service will be live streamed on Zoom.*

10.00am Holy Communion at St John's.

Family Praise online

**SIMON'S FINAL SERVICE - SUNDAY 11TH APRIL** As we say our farewells to Simon at his final service we are writing to update you all that seating is limited due to COVID restrictions and that is why we have asked you in advance to let us know if you will be attending. We may have a situation due to numbers where it is not possible to admit everyone. The service will of course be live streamed on Zoom from 10am, so everyone will be able to take part. *Sue and Lyn Churchwardens*

**LIVE STREAMING FROM ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH**

After a successful trial on Passion Sunday, we intend to live stream the services on Easter Day and the Sunday after via Zoom for those who can't be in church. It would be nice to continue with this, at least for the next few weeks up to Pentecost, but to do so we need to form a team of volunteers to operate the computer and camera. No great expertise is required - just basic computer skills and the ability to point and zoom the

camera. If you would be interested in helping please contact Chris Baker on [c.j.baker@bham.ac.uk](mailto:c.j.baker@bham.ac.uk).

### **EASTER SUNDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL CHARITY COLLECTION**

We will be collecting for 'Embrace The Middle East', a charity that supports Christian partners in the Middle East. They help to provide homes, healthcare and education. If you wish to donate, please put money in a WHITE envelope, if you can gift aid please fill in the front of the envelope. Please make cheques out to 'PCC of St Michael and St Mary, Lichfield.

### **"Love – Our World"**

#### **All Age Churchyard Trail for Lent and Easter**

Suitable for all ages, in the churchyard there are five "stations" - laminated A4 sheets. They offer a simple framework for your own reflections, and offer a set prayer on each theme. They are located in the Easter Garden by the Cross, and by the empty tomb; on the compost bins; on a bench outside church; on a bench in the lower churchyard. If able, you may wish to use them as an opportunity for reflection and prayer on your daily walk. If you're not able to get there for any reason they are available on the website, and you may be able to imagine the setting! *Linda*

### **WALK FOR WATER.**

Many of you will remember Imogen, who sang with Girls' Choir from the age of nine until she went to college a couple of years ago. She has sent me this message and asked me if I can publicise it through the church. "This Lent I'm taking on the Walk for Water Challenge. I'll be walking 10,000 steps a day for 40 days to raise money for CAFOD's work around the world. Watching the amazing key workers do wonders throughout this tough pandemic, I want to make sure that I do what I can to help struggling communities. I know these are hard times but anything you can spare for this cause would be really greatly appreciated. My website is: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/imogens-walk-for-water>" Our official charity in this area is Water Aid, which we support at Harvest, but you may want to thank Imogen for her years of service by making a small donation. Many thanks. *Ted Green*

### **ST MICHAEL'S FLOWER ROTA**

I have taken over organising the flower rota from Diana. I will put the new one at the back of church for people to sign up to and would be grateful if that could be done on Easter Sunday when we can all be in church again. I will keep a copy at home so if you want to phone me I can let you know the dates available. As usual we will cover two weeks at a time.

It will be lovely to welcome you all back, and if anyone would like to join us you would be very welcome. We have some very talented flower arrangers and we also have people like me who can just put flowers in a vase, so whatever you can do will be appreciated.

Many thanks

Brenda Liptrot (tel 251863)

**THE FOODBANK** is always happy to receive gifts of but items should be **at least 3 months in date** or the Foodbank is not allowed to issue them.

**Donations of food** can be left at **51, Lime Grove, Lichfield WS13 6ER**

*Maggie and David\_01543 255308*

## **PARISH DIARY**

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April: Easter Sunday**

6:00am	Dawn Service	St Michael's
8:00am	BCP Holy Communion	St Michael's
10am	Holy Communion	St Michael's & Zoom
10am	Holy Communion	St John's

### **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April OFFICE CLOSED**

10:30am	Darwin Court Service	Zoom
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### **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April**

2.30pm	Interment of Ashes: David Weedon	St Michael's
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### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April: Easter 2**

8:00am	BCP Holy Communion	St Michael's
10am	Holy Communion	St Michael's & Zoom
10am	Holy Communion	St John's