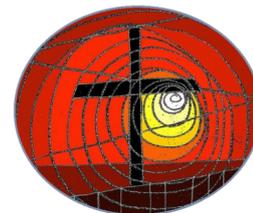




Keeping in Touch



April-May 2019

Fr Darren writes ...

I've always loved the Emmaus Road reading, but within it seems to be one of the saddest sentences in the whole of the Bible. It comes from Luke 24:21, on the walk to Emmaus where two disciples encounter a 'stranger' on the road and tell him about what had happened to Jesus. They explain how he was crucified and then say: "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel."



Imagine the way they had said that. "But we had hoped" The same way that somebody might say: "But we had hoped the medication would work." "But we had hoped the accident wasn't so bad." "But we had hoped they would lead a full life" The sense of loss is staggering. Hope and faith are kind of friends that walk hand in hand, and if you lose one, the other tends to fade away. For these disciples who had probably walked with Jesus and seen his miracles and hoped that things would change, this was an expression of the deepest despair. "We had hoped things would change. We had hoped things could be fixed. We had hoped, but now we don't."

The thing that catches me again and again about this passage is God's response to this hopelessness. He doesn't leave them because they lacked faith, but instead he gently scolds them for still seeing the world how they had always seen it when the point of Jesus was that things would be different. Their hope had been lost and their faith was dying, or perhaps their faith was in something more real to them, more easily verifiable: death. So, what was his answer? It was to walk with them. It was to reveal himself by teaching them, by being present with them and enduring their faithlessness and calling them back to belief. It was to make himself known in a new way, in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus didn't suddenly appear, and they didn't immediately recognize him. Instead, he appeared to them but they didn't get it, so Jesus stuck around, and it was only in looking back that they realized their hearts had been burning the whole time.

Cont'd....

Where has Jesus been in your hopelessness? Where might God be injecting hope in your life? The Lord is risen indeed, and he has appeared, to Simon, to the disciples on the road, to the eleven, to Mary Magdalene, and to you. He is risen, and he is with you.

Fr Darren

News from Jason!



Many of you will remember Jason Wratten who was with us for a year. We are delighted to report that, following a 3-day interview, Jason has been recommended to train for ordination as a priest sponsored by the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham. I am sure you will wish to join me in wishing him well and holding him in our prayers as he starts on the next stage of his journey.

Jason comments "God is leading me into the the next stage of my life journey and I am so grateful, excited and terrified!"

Stewardship - thank you and a request



Martin Ferdinando writes

I am always amazed as one of your Church Wardens at the generosity throughout the year in your giving of your time, talents and money which enables St Mary's to flourish. Many of you will have received your stewardship renewal letters and Gill and I hope you will continue to give in the ways that you do. If you are not already giving financially on a regular basis, you may wish to consider this as a way of supporting us in the future. By pledging your giving, we can better plan our church maintenance and mission as we then have a better understanding of our anticipated annual income. Please speak to Gill, me or Graham Nicholas, our Stewardship Chairman as it can also be a tax efficient way of supporting us too. This also applies should you wish to make one off donations. Thank you again.

The popular **Community Singing** will return on **Sunday 7th April at 3.00pm** .

Come and join us for a fun sing-a-long to favourite melodies.

All are welcome, everyone can sing.

Following what is sure to be some excellent singing everyone will be treated to tea and cake.



Holy Week and Easter Services -

14th April - Palm Sunday

9.30am Parish Eucharist with palm procession and dramatic reading of the Passion.

18th April - Maundy Thursday

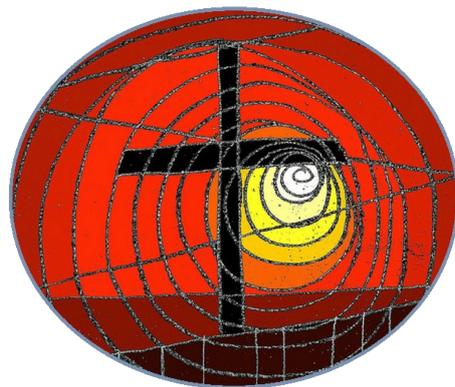
8.00pm Holy Communion and Watch Service at St Etheldreda's

19th April - Good Friday

3.00pm At the Foot of the Cross
A meditative service of readings and music

21st April - Easter Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion
9.30am Parish Eucharist



Art Workshop

The next workshops will be held on Mondays 29th April, 6th, 13th and 20th May – 2.00-4.00pm or 7.00-9.30pm. in St Michael's Room. No previous artistic experience needed. Cost is £5 per session to cover the cost of materials. If you are interested please contact Robin Elgar 01707 261810



Midsummer Concert a date for your diary



We are delighted to announce that the Chiltern West Gallery Quire will be with us on the afternoon of **Sunday 23 June**. The concert will be part of the annual Arts Festival

Full details will be announced later, but the Quire will be performing music in the style of the 18th and early 19th centuries - singing, instrumental and also dancing. The concert will be followed by tea.

