

Parish Magazine

I am
the resurrection and
the life

John 11 v 25

April 2018

40p

holy trinity st michael's

Parish Office: Open Monday to Friday, 9.00am - 4.00pm

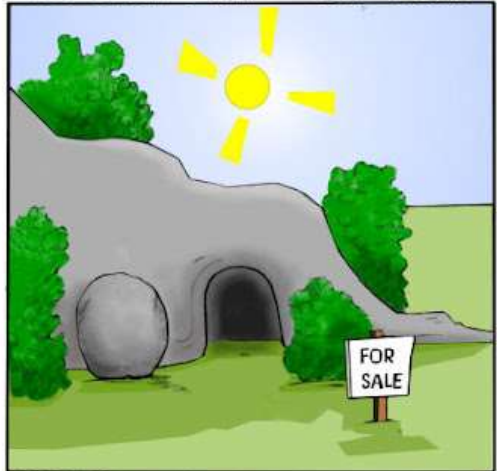
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I love the narrative of the Easter account for many many reasons, the obvious being the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as you'd expect me to say; but I love the human difference the resurrection had on the disciples. So, here we have a group of disciples who we know ran and left Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane when He was arrested, a disciple who denied Jesus three times when asked if he knew Him, and all of the disciples locked in an upper room after Jesus has been crucified, for fear of the Jews. Yet after they have seen the risen saviour on that third day, and received the promised Holy Spirit, they are in the market streets, among the same people who had Jesus arrested and crucified, and they are proudly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, without any fear.

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



FOR SALE - Single owner tomb. Only used three days, and still has that new tomb smell. Reason for sale.. resident was resurrected.

Easter is about encounter, it's about renewal and restored hope, it's about God breaking into our world and our world view being transformed. We don't worship a dead hero, but a living saviour, and because Jesus Christ has defeated sin and death then our hope is not in vain, and our confidence is not in ourselves alone. May our thinking and our being be different because we have a revelation of Christ and how He views us, so that we gain a greater understanding of our identity through God's eyes. It's when we start to grasp how God see's us that we start to have a vision for what Christ might be calling each of us into for His Kingdom and Glory.

Rev'd David

Rayleigh Branch Meetings



This month we have invited the 'new' Rector to come and meet us. David joined us in January and, for those of you who have not had a chance to chat to him, this is your opportunity.

Wednesday 18th April, 10.45am in the Parish Centre.

All this year we are focusing on the MU theme:

In Mary Sumner's footsteps

If you want to know more about Mary Sumner look at the MU website: www.themothersunion.org. We are a worldwide organisation, and anyone can join us. Come and find out more about MU.



RAYLEIGH PARISH "CAMEO" GROUP

- April 5th** Bell ringing demonstration H.T. Church Bell Ringers
- April 12th** Fish and Chip Supper
- April 19th** Talk- A Walk Down Cable Street with Ian Kirby
- April 26th** Informal

As you can see from the list above we have a busy programme in April starting with a demonstration by our church Bell Ringers, which should be great fun. The 19th will be a Fish and Chip Supper, so the early start of 7pm for 7.30 will be as we usually do. I'm not sure at this stage what the price will be, but I will let members know as soon as possible and start taking orders for either fish or chicken.

Ian Kirby will be visiting us on the 19th and will present a talk on Cable Street which is sure to be interesting.

Our last meeting on the 26th is an Informal.

We hope as the nights pull out and the weather improves that you will feel like coming and joining us for a pleasant evening.

NOTE ALL THESE MEETINGS ARE FROM 7.30 TO 9.30 PM IN THE PARISH CENTRE.

Why not come and join us, visitors and new members are most welcome.

For more information contact the Parish Office

Parish Registers


Funerals

Mar	6	Joan Doris Anderson	81
	14	Bryan Chinnery	78
	19	Judy Needham	
	23	Frank Henry Franks	95

Regular Prayer Groups

Daily	09.00-09.30	Morning Prayer	Yew Tree Room
2 nd Weds.	10.45-11.45	MU Prayer Group	Parish Centre

Church Open



quiet@trinity

enjoy the peace & quiet, spend a moment in prayer, light a candle, browse the book & card stalls

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
& Friday:
10.00 am - 12.30 pm

Thursday:
10.00 am - 2.00 pm (term time)
10.00 am - 12.30 pm (other)

Saturday: 10.00 am - 12 noon

parishofrayleigh

History Corner.....

RAYLEIGH SUPPORT FOR QUEEN CAROLINE

In 1795 Caroline, daughter of Charles, Duke of Brunswick, married her first cousin George, Prince of Wales. Their marriage was a failure and they separated in 1796. This was after the birth of their daughter, Charlotte. George had a reputation for immorality and drunkenness and his life was surrounded by scandal. Nationally he was a figure of fun. Caroline was also accused of immoral behaviour with an Italian courtier when she went on a grand tour of Europe at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. There followed a long public enquiry in an attempt to discredit Caroline; this was through a Bill of Pains and Penalties, which George had introduced. He had become Prince Regent late in George III's reign and became king in 1820. He was keen to free himself of Caroline before his coronation in 1821, but the enquiry dragged on for months, during which time Caroline gained a great deal of popular support, including that from the residents of Rayleigh. A current newspaper report stated that "The rejection of the infamous Bill of Pains and Penalties against our gracious Queen was hailed with rapture by the inhabitants of this ancient and respectable town".¹

The failure of the bill was accompanied by enthusiastic celebrations in many towns and villages "at the Escape of their Gracious Queen Caroline from the late foul Conspiracy". This statement appeared on the posters displayed in Rayleigh and printed by local High Street printer C. C. Noone. They promoted Rayleigh's celebration of "The Glorious Triumph of Queen Caroline", stating that "A Bonfire will be made, the band will parade the street and fireworks will be displayed". Accordingly, at 6.30 p.m. on the 16th November a cannon was fired to announce the start of the festivities and "the windows of all the inhabitants....were instantly lighted; the bells commenced ringing a merry peal; a large bonfire was made; the effect was truly grand". About an hour was allowed for the ladies to promenade the street, for the purpose of viewing the illumination, & c; and then at the firing of another cannon, the display of fireworks took place and continued till a late hour. During the evening a band paraded the street. "God save the Queen was repeatedly sung in full chorus..... fifty-four gallons of strong beer were distributed among the poor inhabitants, and the people in the poor-house were regaled with plenty of meat, bread and beer". The bonfire was used to burn an effigy of a Signor Majocchi, who was one of the witnesses who brought dubious evidence against Queen Caroline.

When George was crowned king in 1821, the doors of Westminster Abbey were locked to exclude Caroline, who went around the building trying to get in. She died a few weeks later. However, as in Rayleigh, she had been shown the loyal support of many people around the country.

1. See: Beer, N. A Rayleigh Miscellany. HTR Publications.



Interactive, informal family worship for all ages

Bible story, songs, prayer and a meal

Also, includes:

Activities for children of all ages

Monthly on the third Tuesday

4:00–5:30 Holy Trinity Church

Incorporating

Messy+ a discussion group for young people in school years 5–8

Monthly on the fourth Saturday

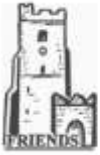
11:00–12:30 St Michael's Church

 **parish of rayleigh**

THERE IS NO MESSY CHURCH IN APRIL

Tuesday 15th May: Holy Trinity

Saturday 26th May; St Michael's



The friends of holy trinity rayleigh

The Friends of Holy Trinity, Rayleigh, Registered Charity Number 1069853

Hopefully, Spring is in the air when you read this but as I write the article it happens to be snowing quite heavily!

The Friends put on a very successful **Games Evening** on the 17th February. About 40 people came along and we had an enjoyable evening playing all sorts of games and doing a 1000-piece jigsaw which attracted a lot of attention. There was a pleasant buzz around the hall as people were engaged with each other and in various activities. We enjoyed cake and coffee/tea and we raised just over £200 for the Friends' funds.

The **Annual General Meeting** held on the 25th March saw the Friends welcoming our new Rector, the Revd. David Oxtoby. The Treasurer handed over £48,000 to the PCC making an actual total since our foundation of £559,000 which is a fantastic achievement. Following the business meeting we heard about the proposed refurbishment project from the chairman of that committee. The Thanksgiving Shield was awarded for the second time, but you will have to wait until next month to read who won it for their outstanding work for The Friends!

The **Friends' Full Day Coach Outing** this year is on Friday, the 29th June and is taking us to Ipswich. We will be sailing out of Ipswich for a 4-hour barge cruise up the River Orwell and along the coastline. The barge is named 'Hydrogen' and she is an adapted 19th century barge which should make for a delightful cruise, but the owners point out that we need to take care due to a slight reduction in headroom and steep stairs. In consequence there is sadly no access for wheelchairs. We are asked to wear sensible shoes!

Following the cruise, we shall return to Ipswich and pick up the coach for the journey home stopping on the way at Wilkins Tea Rooms at Tiptree for a cuppa or cream tea according to you fancy.

The price for Members of The Friends is £34 and non-members £36 and includes the coach and barge journeys. Refreshments are not included but the booking form will give you details of lunch prices or you can take a packed lunch.

Organised by Liz Simmonds 01268 745825 who has booking forms and all the details, this promises to be an exciting day out, so we look forward to you all signing up early and getting a seat on the coach.

Now is the time of year when we all start working in our gardens and getting them looking lovely for the summer. The Friends are holding their yearly **Garden Trail 2018** over the August Bank Holiday weekend opening on the afternoon of Sunday 26th and all day on Monday, the 27th August. We are hoping to get some new gardens for the "trailers" to visit this year and we look forward to hearing from the regular gardeners and some new ones too. It is a very exciting event and attracts a lot of attention from people from all over the area. Just get in touch with our Chairman, Jane Brown on 01268 742215 for further information. We take this opportunity to thank Joanne Baker who has been our link with the garden owners for many years, for all her hard work. Joanne has now retired from the committee and we thank her for her many years of service.

Doris Norwood

Annual Church Meetings.

First an apology! Because Church rules and titles are full of 'long words and phrases', I have succumbed to using acronyms, so that this article doesn't incur the wrath of the Magazine Editor, by being so long, it extends into next month's edition! However, I hope this article explains a little of what goes on.

The Annual Church Meetings this year will take place on **Monday April 16th 8.00pm** in Holy Trinity. The first of these is the **Annual Meeting of Parishioners (AMP)** whose prime function is to elect the two **Church Wardens** for the coming year. All persons whose names are entered on our **Church Electoral Roll (CER)** and all residents in the parish whose names are entered on **Rochford Council's register of electors** are entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.

The **AMP** is immediately followed by the **Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)**. This is an opportunity to hear what has gone on in our church during the past year and its plans, with a report from our **Parochial Church Council (PCC)**. The **Electoral Roll Officer** will tell us of the changes that have taken place on the **CER** and our **Treasurer** will report on the finances. Three new members of the **PCC** will be elected; we have a system where three **PCC** members are elected for a three-year period. This process is staggered so that at any **APCM**, there will be three members up for election, three still with 1 year to run and three with 2 years to run. People can vote at this meeting, provided they are over 16 years old, have been on our **CER** for 6 months or more and they are an actual communicant which means that they have received Communion in the Church of England or of a Church in communion with the Church of England at least three times during the twelve months preceding the date of the election. (Well, those are the rules and I have copied them from the appropriate book!!!)

Last year we elected five people to the **Deanery Synod**, for a three-year term. Re-election for these positions will occur in 2020. **Deanery Synod** is a meeting of representatives from each church in the Rochford Deanery, covering issues of the Deanery. There will be a report on the Deanery at the **APCM**.

Would you consider becoming a **Warden or PCC Member**? Speak to one of the Wardens (David Bradshaw or Wayne Prankard) or Clergy for more information. Nomination forms for these positions are held in the Parish Office (weekdays) or by the Wardens on Sundays.

David Medcraft

Dear Friends,

As some of you may recall I accompanied Wayne and Deborah Prankard on a mission trip to India in 2016. I have recently returned from my second trip. I can report that this visit was even more amazing than the last. In fact, last time I visited although I witnessed such amazing works of God I found the cultural differences extremely challenging so much so I returned physically, emotionally and spiritually drained. Even so I had said to Calister and Jaya (our mission partners) that I would return and so I did... A couple of weeks before leaving several people asked the question "are you excited?" I replied honestly saying "not really as I know how challenging it is." I would continue to tell them that although I know it's a good thing and I would see God at work in amazing ways I wasn't excited. I can tell you today though I am so excited to go back, whenever that might be. Another reason I wasn't excited was that I had heard the reports of the increasing persecution of the Indian Christians. The organisation Open Doors who support the persecuted church across the world recently reported that Indian Christians who were the fifteenth most persecuted church in the world are now the eleventh. In March 2017 the Christian organisation Compassion had to leave India as the government made it so difficult for them to operate there. The New York Times reported the following —"India's crackdown on foreign aid will claim its most prominent casualty this month, a Christian charity that is one of India's biggest donors closes its operations here after 48 years, informing tens of thousands of children that they will no longer receive meals, medical care or tuition payments. The shutdown of the charity, Compassion International, on suspicion of engaging in religious conversion, comes as India, a rising economic power with a swelling spirit of nationalism, curtails the flow of foreign money to activities it deems "detrimental to the national interest."

This makes our support in Rayleigh of the ministry there even more crucial. Let me tell you a bit about the ministry we support.

The Vision School. The School has been in operation for 8 years, built with the money from the good people of Rayleigh. The school

started in 2011 by renting the upper floor of a two storey building, in a district of Hyderabad called Devender Nagar. This district is one of many slum districts dotted around the city, notable for lack of services such as drainage, mains water, or a reliable supply of electricity. Most of the local residents work as casual labourers, earning typically less than £2-£3 per day. With continually rising food prices, and a largely ineffective social security system, many of the people there are unable to provide sufficient food for their families. It is from these poor families that the Vision School draws its students, and provides them with a free education (accredited to the Indian government's curriculum requirements). The school also provides uniforms, books, and shoes for the children. Since 2011 the school building was purchased from the landlord, and more recently was extended from 2 to 4 floors, funded entirely by generous gifts from supporters in the UK. The school currently has 75 students from three to fourteen years, who are taught by 8 teachers and 2 teaching assistants. A set of laptop computers donated by Glebe School are now in use for IT lessons. A deep bore-well was installed on the school site a couple of years ago, which now provides a reliable water supply - prior to that all water had to be purchased at exorbitant prices from private water tanker operators. The skills that the children are learning will serve them well as they grow up - literally freeing them from the imprisonment of illiteracy and lack of education. This is a truly long-term investment in these children's future.

Watch this space for more on vision to serve ministry

If you would like to support the vision to serve ministry please contact me, Revd Tracy Marlow or Wayne Prankard via the Parish Office

Dear Brothers and sisters in Rayleigh,

Thank you so much for your generous support both financially and in Prayer. We are so very grateful. Your support enables us to continue Gods work in educating and supporting The children, teaching women to sew so they can support there families and spreading God's word in the village Churches. May God bless you richly,

Love Calister and Jaya.



We need to raise the money to buy the playground. Without it the government says school will not be able to operate. Currently it is being rented but the owner of the piece of land wants to sell and there are other parties interested. The price is approx £37,000 we have a pledge of £20,000 so we have another 17,000 to raise, can you help?

We used some of the money to purchase art and craft material, they don't usually engage in this as the school cannot afford the materials



Come and see....come and join us....

Each month a small group of us go into several of the residential homes in the parish. We enjoy putting together a "fun" service for the residents and the staff. Often our visits have involved dressing up...we have been Laurel and Hardy, Morcambe and Wise, we have danced, we have sung and we have generally had a lot of fun. We usually sing one or two old songs, where the residents will know the tunes and the words, which introduce our service, where we share experiences, theirs and ours, sing hymns, have readings, pray, The residents love our visits. Think if you might like to come and join us. Generally we visit Rosedale on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, at 2.30pm, and Great Wheatleys on the 4th Wednesday, at 2pm, and Sweyne Court, also on the 4th Wednesday, at 3pm.

If you are interested in coming, please contact Maree Gaskin or Tracy Nutter. We would love to have you join us.



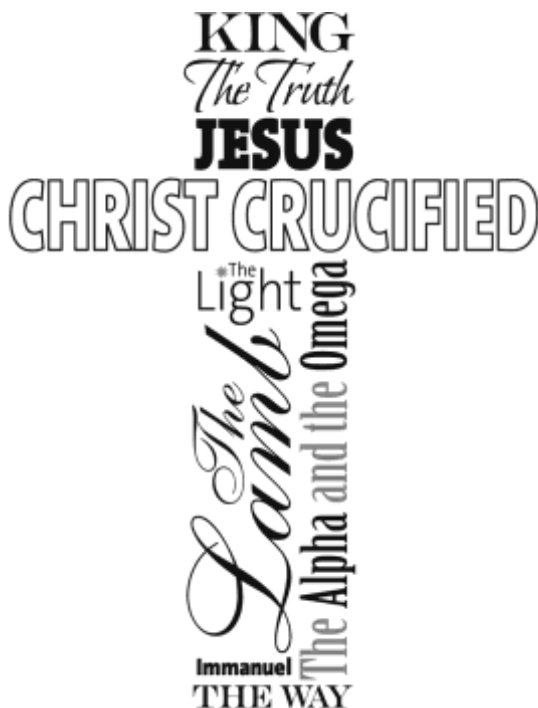
Prayer Space

Easter Prayer

-- The veil of darkness
Transformed to the brightest light.
The most dreadful end
Became the most beautiful beginning.
The depths of despair
Fade to reveal hope everlasting.
The curse of death
Defeated by eternal life.

Thank you Lord, for the wonder of Easter.

(a contemporary prayer for Easter day from.lords-prayer-words.com)



1st April this year is Easter Day, but also April Fool's Day. This seems so fitting after all most people at the time would have thought the disciples fools when they heard the news of the resurrection.

Can you think of some of the brilliant 'fools' that have been in the press over the years? Perhaps you remember the Panorama film about the Swiss farmers who grew spaghetti on trees, the polar bear living on a Hebridean island after it was stranded on a melting sheet of ice that floated south, or the new rules allowing horses in the Grand National to wear headphones so they could listen to music.

Let's imagine what the news article for Easter Day might have said:

"1 April 0030

Back to life!

Man beaten, mocked and crucified by the Romans is buried in a guarded tomb. Three days later the stone rolls itself away and the tomb is found to be empty except for two angels. The guards cannot explain how it happened. The man has been seen walking around the garden, talking with friends and even allowing people to put their fingers in the nail holes!"

When the story written like that, it seems impossible. But of course, it was! It was a miracle, something that only God could do.

For Mary Magdalene and the others who saw the empty tomb that day it was so unexpected. It is no wonder that they struggled to believe what the angel told them:

He is not here; he has risen! (Luke 24:6)

But, they did believe and different groups of his followers went on to meet with the risen Jesus five times over the next five and a half weeks. They talked with him, heard him explain why his death was necessary and fitted with scripture, eat with him, touched and hugged him. The time they spent with him following his resurrection proved to them that Jesus was God's Son and that his death and resurrection meant they were forgiven and adopted into God's family. The most amazing and life changing news for all of humanity.

This April Fool's Day as you read the press looking for 'fools' and as your family, friends or colleagues pull pranks on you I hope it will remind you that what could have been the biggest 'fool' ever that actually turned out to be true!

Happy Easter



P.S. My favourite April Fool is definitely the spaghetti trees!

Hymn Festival at Holy Trinity Church on 4th February 2018

This month we had a wonderful hymn festival at Holy Trinity. A few weeks before we had been asked to submit our favourite hymns, and say whether we would be happy to get up and say why it was our favourite, what special memories it had for us....There are so many wonderful hymns in the books...and so many of them are favourites....mostly those with rousing hymn tunes...Of course, the tune can make a hymn...and we all have our favourite tunes to which we want to sing the words....With requests for two different versions of "Oh Jesus I have promised"...we were able to enjoy singing both...with the first verses to one tune, and after a special interlude in the middle...the final verses to another! It was a great afternoon, with members of the congregation sharing what made their particular choice special for them. The choir offered the anthem "Be Still for the Presence of the Lord". Thank you to Nick for organizing and leading the service, and to our wonderful organists Warren and Joe, and our guest organist Gerald Usher, thank you for playing for us.

Good News

Recently, Diane and I visited our niece and her grown up family near Gatwick airport. One of her daughters teaches primary school children so I gave her a copy of the book, "Heaven is for real," by Todd Burpo. The story is about a little boy who had an experience of heaven whilst being operated on in his local hospital. I also gave a book to her son who had spent some time with Christians on a sailing boat. He started reading It straightaway! The book I gave him is called, "A Glimpse of Eternity" by Ian McCormack. It relates how Ian was stung five times by the highly venomous box jellyfish. Ian was subsequently declared dead in the hospital but came back to life. He also had an experience of heaven as well as hell!

Now I am committed to praying for them because only the Holy Spirit can convince, convict and convert them.

Is there someone you can give an evangelistic testimony story to?

Peter Nicholson



Saturday Film Afternoons



Join us to enjoy a film, and if you have never been to one of the film afternoons, do come. You would be very welcome. We start at 2pm. There is no charge.

Next showing: Saturday 28th April

Help is needed: Now in its 10th year these events are so popular we need help putting out the chairs. If you can help please get in touch with the team.

There are flyers available in the churches / Parish Centre, advertising the afternoon, in the weeks leading up to the show.

Luncheon Club at St Michael's:

The luncheon club at St Michael's will run on the following dates:

Thursday 12th April & 26th April



DEADLINE FOR PARISH MAGAZINE:

Please email articles for inclusion in the next issue to

alison.ball@parishofrayleigh.org.uk

Hand written articles can be left in the pigeon hole in the Parish Office by **SAT 7th April**. If you are sending a poster, please send it in pdf format as well as Word if possible.



Services in April

Holy Trinity

Apr 1st Easter Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.00am	Holy Communion (CW)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (CW)
8 th Easter 2	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.00am	Morning Worship
	10.30am	All Age & Parade
	1.00pm	Baptism
15 th Easter 3	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.00am	Holy Communion (CW)
	10.30am	Morning Worship
	12.30pm	Thanksgiving Service
	1.00pm	Baptism
22 nd Easter 4	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.00am	Morning Worship
	10.30am	Morning Worship
29 th Easter 5	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.00am	Holy Communion (CW)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (CW)

Please check the weekly notice sheet for updates on services and Parish wide information.

Coffee at Holy Trinity after the 9.00 and 10.30am services

Choir and Music Group provide our service music at Holy Trinity. To join the Choir please contact the choir director.

A supervised Crèche is available every week during the 10.30am service at Holy Trinity (except for school holidays) and it is located in the Cloister Hall. Toys are available the Yew Tree Room, if parents prefer, where there is a speaker to relay the service.

BCP Book of Common Prayer **CW** Common Worship

Rayleigh Parish Churches

St Michael's



Apr 1st	Easter Sunday	11.00am	Lord's Supper
8 th	Easter 2	11.00am	Lord's Supper
15 th	Easter 3	11.00am	All Age & Parade
22 nd	Easter 4	11.00am	Lord's Supper
29 th	Easter 5	11.00am	Holy Communion

Please check the weekly notice sheet for updates on services and Parish wide information.

DAILY SERVICES

Morning Prayer daily at 9.00am until 9.30am in The Yew Tree Room. All are welcome – join us when you can. Enter through the Parish Centre.
Holy Communion at Holy Trinity.
1st & last Wednesdays are CW, others are BCP.

WEDNESDAYS 10am

VISITING SERVICES:

ROSEDALE COURT:

3.00pm - 3rd Tuesday

GT WHEATLEY:

2.00pm - 4th Wednesday

SWEYNE COURT:

3.00pm - 4th Wednesday

Flower Rota:

Please note that there are no flowers during Lent.

1st April	Easter Day	Easter lilies from Joan Crick, Yolanda Grainger
8 th April	In loving memory of PC John Butler 529KD from his family	
15th April	Frances Medcraft	Sylvia Kersey in memory of Emily and Charles Reed The Beer Family in memory of sister Doris
22nd April	Robert and Julia Swan and family in memory of Nanna (Phyllis Dean)	
29th April	Robert and Julia Swan and family in memory of Mum (Sue Dean)	Sue Robinson

As you read this article hopefully you will have seen the beautiful lilies that decorate the church over the Easter weekend. In one of the most well-known New Testament references to flowers, Matthew 6:28-29 compares the care God shows in providing for the lilies with the care God shows in providing for his people. The language is beautiful, saying that the lilies are even more beautiful than King Solomon himself, and if God cares that much for a flower that will perish in a day, imagine how much more he will care for his people. This text is in the midst of multiple parables that attempt to help the listener learn the lesson, using concrete images. In this specific text, the method is the same. Flowers are used as a concrete example to show the listeners that they do not need to worry about having enough clothing or food. So gaze on the Easter lilies and remember that God continues to provide for us and relax in the knowledge that we matter so much to him.

TLM Report

Laws from the British Raj in India to be repealed to protect the rights of people affected by Leprosy.



During the British Raj in India, numerous laws were introduced that isolated and discriminated against people affected by leprosy. In December, a Private Members' Bill on the issue of leprosy was introduced in India's Parliament by Mr K.T.S. Tulsi MP to repeal discriminatory legislation and enshrine in law the human rights of people affected by this ancient disease.

This momentous Bill addresses the crucial issue of discrimination and exclusion of persons affected by leprosy and of their family members on the grounds of leprosy. Although, a cure was discovered in the early 1980's and it is an easily treatable condition, the discrimination against persons affected by it continues both in law and practice. India has over half of the world's leprosy cases and



there are 119 known laws in India, including civil and criminal, that have discriminatory provisions against persons affected by leprosy on sole grounds of the disease. These include leprosy as a ground for divorce; denial of maintenance, rights of movement, rights to political participation, right to work; and provision for segregation.

The Rights of Persons Affected by Leprosy and Members of Their Family Bill, 2017 introduced in December aims to address deep-rooted stigma and discrimination and its negative impact on the social, economic and cultural lives of persons affected by leprosy and members of their families. The Bill also provides for welfare measures for achieving their holistic development and inclusion.

Mr K.T.S. Tulsi's office worked in close coordination with The Leprosy Mission (TLM) in drafting the present Bill. TLM is the largest leprosy-focused, Non-Governmental Organisation in India, operational in nine states. It addresses healthcare, education, sustainable livelihoods, community development, advocacy, research and training of those affected by this ancient disease.

It's not until seeing and reading a report such as this that we realise the existence of injustices elsewhere in the world. Our country may not be perfect, but in comparison with places that 'turn a blind eye' to situations such as that being experienced in India, we don't realise just how fortunate we are. We have a wonderful group of people in our parish who donate regularly to the work of TLM. Our money helps TLM to provide the medical provision, education and family support, but when it becomes apparent that legislation as well as local 'hostility' is rife to such a disease, just what can we do? Well, the answer is PRAYER. We can all pray so can I suggest and ask that we all include in our personal prayer time this month, that we pray for this situation; that those with political power and the local people who ignore the laws and ostracise those affected, that they will 'feel' God's will to bring about an end to such intolerances.

David Medcraft

Having asked for your support in Prayer (in the above article), I saw in the Diocesan 'Cycle of Prayer' sheet the following....

*"O God, let me not interrupt you with my chatter.
Let me listen, rather, to your still, small, voice."*

I joked at a few recent Sunday services that "it's ok to be nosey!", and I do genuinely mean it, it's ok to be thinking "where is such and such, I've not seen them for a while?" or "who's this new person sitting near me?" You have my blessing to ring up the person you may be concerned about, and ask "are you ok?", or if there's someone you've never seen in Church before say to them "hi, are you new here, great to see you, welcome!"

What a great thing, to be concerned about our neighbour, both where we live, but also each Sunday where we sit. I know there will be times when I'll not notice when someone hasn't been here for a few weeks, and I need your help, you'll notice far quicker than I will, and please either let someone in the Pastoral team know, or more importantly be the one who asks after them with a quick call or dropping round. I'm fairly sure the person who receives half a dozen calls asking after them, will be more thrilled than someone who feels forgotten.



Every Blessing, Rev'd David.

Fully Human

Such wonder and mystery!
We call it the Incarnation.
Men have marvelled
at the Majestic throne relinquished
but I am awestruck by the thought
that we find within the Godly Trinity
the full reality of being human.

Beyond imagination,
that the Lord of Creation experienced:
the frailty of a new born child,
the pain of a scraped a knee,
the joy of learning a trade,
the love of a mother,
the grief of losing a father.
God created us in his own image.
But more than this is his personal knowledge:
of sibling misunderstanding,
friends who failed to comprehend his destiny,
betrayal and rejection,
beatings and ridicule, excruciating torture,
blunging over the abyss we call death,
and the joy of triumphant completion.

With us in our joys and our pains;
as the Father, waiting and welcoming,
As the Comforter, imbuing us with strength.
But so much more than that,
as the Son of Man, who lived fully human
and is fully the Divine Lord,
who promised to be with us always.

Words cannot encompass the Mystery.
But hearts may wonder and praise.
Alleluia!

Pat Greensmith, February 2018





Leprosy Mission Notes

We are coming to the 6-month collection point for Leprosy Mission donations. If you have your collection box or phial ready, **I plan to be at the Holy Trinity 9am service each Sunday during April** – and of course the coffee time immediately before and after. I will then be at St Michael's for the 11am service. The

Leprosy Mission are extremely grateful to all our donors in Rayleigh.

During recent months, there has been an emphasis on donation of used stamps. We have received a part collection as well as several British Presentation Packs. We don't yet have last year's TLM accounts but **in 2016, £160,000 was raised in used stamps**. Our contribution may be a very small part of this, but every little helps. Keep those stamps coming. Boxes for depositing stamps are at St Michael's and at the Welcome desk in the Parish Centre.

My apologies – I failed to mention in my recent articles the 2017 £300 donation by our PCC to TLM. TLM have expressed their grateful thanks for this.

Some of you have asked about cheques for donations. Of course, these are very acceptable. It is better to make your **cheque payable to "The PCC of Rayleigh"**, as I pay monies regularly into the TLM sub-account of the PCC. At the end of the 6-month period, the PCC raises a single cheque that is sent to TLM. This way you know quite quickly that your cheque has been paid in. Cheques directly payable to **"The Leprosy Mission"** are just as acceptable, but the time taken for them to reach TLM is longer and therefore your bank account does not reflect the payment for a little while.

If you are a donor and a tax payer, you could increase the value of your contribution by a quarter, with the Government paying that extra 25% to TLM. I have Gift Aid forms available – just ask me for one.

We are always on the look-out for new donors. Could you consider being one? I have some more collecting boxes just arrived from TLM. Ask me for more information – a little loose change goes a long way with a lot of donors!

My thanks to all our donors – from Holy Trinity and St Michael's.

David Medcraft.

Why Read The Bible?

"Christians believe that the Bible is God's Word. As we read the Bible the Holy Spirit within us brings this word alive so that it speaks to us, feeds us and encourages us. Most Christians find it helpful to read the Bible regularly on their own. It can help us to develop our relationship with God and increase our understanding of our faith."

...so begins a leaflet available in both churches, entitled *Reading The Bible*.

It outlines ideas to help us understand what we read in the Bible, apply it in our daily lives, and so grow in relationship with our Heavenly Father. These suggestions include:

- Printed Bible reading notes
- Websites
- Apps for phone, tablet, laptop...
- Audio Bible
- Commentaries etc.



- ✓ Maybe you already have a tried and trusted method to help you get more out of Bible reading. If so, please share it.
- ✓ Perhaps you would find it refreshing to try something different.
- ✓ Possibly you have been meaning to 'get stuck in' but don't know where to start.
- ✓ Reading the whole Bible in a year may be your aim – or at least the whole of the New Testament (we have a few printed 'NT in a year' plans, also available in both churches).

Our lives are constantly so busy that it is easy for us to regard Bible reading as a duty or a chore. In doing so, we forget what a huge privilege it is to have the Word of God so readily available to us, in so many different versions and formats.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV UK)

We are all in training together – happy reading!



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Being Set Free

My walk with Jesus started when I was 10 years old. My school was walked into church where the minister told us that we had to make a decision. We were either for Jesus or against Him. That day I decided that I was for Him. It was the first of many times that I would say yes to Jesus. My faith grew, and I discovered the power of prayer in my life and in others. I remember one Christmas my father's family meeting together in a seance to try to make contact with the spirit world. I sat outside the room and prayed - the seance was unsuccessful, and so in that moment I knew the power of the name of Jesus. Much has happened since then, and life has not always been easy.

In my 30s I was admitted to a mental hospital where I started to relive the fear and hurt of sexual abuse that had happened to me when I was young. More admissions followed, and all the while I knew God was with me. I could not feel him, but I had been given the words of Psalm 42 before all of this happened, and during this time many people came to me quoting parts of that same Psalm. I was even strengthened by an angel on the night when I took an overdose.

Things got worse but now I had the God-given strength to carry on. I met a Christian lady who prayed with me. She took me back in my mind into the room of the original abuse, but this time I was not going there alone, Jesus was coming with me. I visualised his entrance, a blinding light came into the room removing completely the dirt, the hurt and the shame. In an instant, the pain of that memory had no hold on me.

This was the start of God's healing plan for my life. I forgave the past and the present and I started to see myself as God sees me. A precious daughter of God, dearly loved and special to him. I have been set free, and if our loving all-powerful God can do this for me, he can do this for you too. For we should all know that we have a good, good Father.



18th April and 2nd & 16th May

For more information please check out our Facebook page or contact the Parish Office on 01268 74215



The Leprosy Mission

An article written for TLM's Lent Devotional

'Now that we have been put right with God through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Romans 5:1 (GNB)

"I hate hospitals! I'm squeamish at the best of times, but being in Danja hospital in Niger, with an operation going on across the ward was really testing me. But I was there to meet leprosy patients and to take case studies, so I took a deep breath and went to meet the man in the first bed.s Boukary had the warmest smile, and eyes that lit up when I talked with him. Even as he told me his story, there was no hint of self-pity, he just wanted supporters to know they've saved his life. Boukary developed skin patches all over his body at age nine. In his early twenties his fingers had to be amputated because of the severe effects of leprosy. He had a wound on his leg for thirty years and finally, the day before I met him, he had to have it amputated. The Mission paid for all his care at the hospital and will fit an artificial limb at the workshop in Nigeria, so he can walk again.



In talking to him, my fears of the hospital setting paled into insignificance; I was so honoured to be working for this

organisation that was helping restore life and humbled by this man who exuded peace.

Life can be tough and unfair, but through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross we have been restored to a relationship with God."

Father God, thank you that through your grace we can be lifted beyond our fears and worries. Grant us the peace that transcends all understanding like Boukary and help all leprosy affected people experience peace in all circumstances.

Jenny Foster
– TLM Regional Manager

Come
And
Meet
Each
Other

Thursday Evenings
in the Parish Centre

7.30 - 9.30

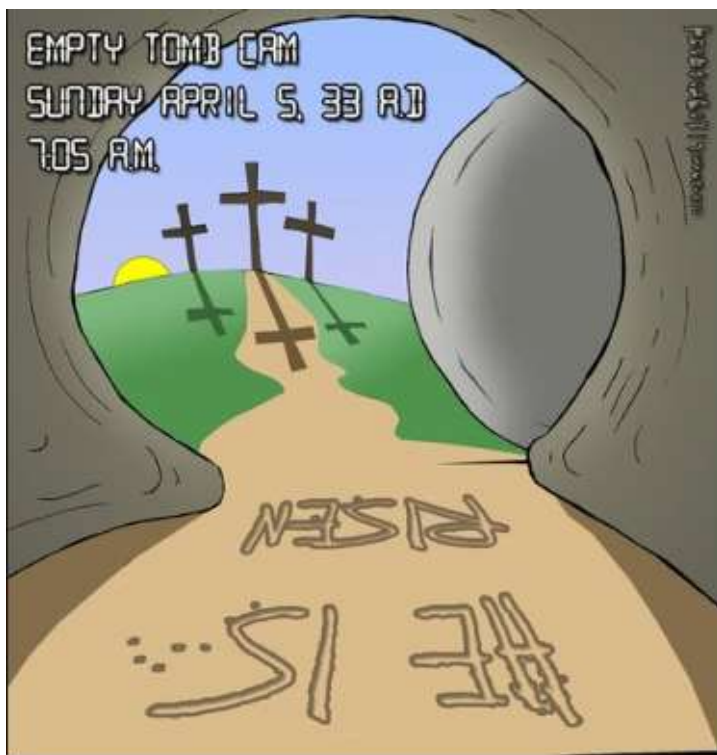
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Last update Feb 18

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