

1.00 pm Interment of t/l Norman Rowley at St Nicholas
led by Lyn Hayes

N.B. ROADWORKS: The Bodiam Road will be closed (between The Street and the County boundary) from Sunday 28th April 7am - 7pm for 4 days for road works.

Readings: Sunday 21st April – Easter Sunday

Acts 10.34-43 Gentiles Hear the Good News

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how 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. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not 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. ⁴²He 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. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

John 20.1-18 The Resurrection of Jesus

^{20.1} Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' ¹⁶Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Home Groups: The Tuesday Home Group meets at 8pm, usually at David and Julia Collard's. The Wednesday Home Group meets at 7.30pm at Sandhurst Mission Church. All are welcome to both Home Groups.

The Drop-in Café & Toddler Group
meets at the Mission Church on Back Road
every Wednesday in term time
from 9 to 11 am
Back again on Wednesday 24th April - All welcome!

An Easter message from the Bishop of Dover

Hard-won hope.

The true story of Easter – for it is no fairy tale – is a story of hope. *The* story of hope from which all others take their meaning. Hope can often be considered to be something of a wishy-washy phenomenon – a positive state of mind, an optimistic glass half-full perspective, which may bear no resemblance to reality – but at least it makes us feel better.

Such hope is a pale resemblance of what we encounter in the risen Christ on Easter morning. Christ does not give us cause for optimism, but rather the concrete assurance of a victory already won. It is this truth, this hope grounded in reality that every one of us and our increasingly divided society so desperately needs right now. Vain optimism will not solve the divisions of our age. Neither will the temptation to give in to despair – though, for many, the challenges of life seem so overwhelming.

Signs of inequality, injustice and exclusion obscure the possibility of hope for many. Many in our own communities who feel increasingly excluded from a sense of common purpose, politically, economically and socially. Hope can feel like a pipe dream, an impossible and pointless exercise.

As St Paul says in his letter to the Hebrews, “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is the gift of God to his people and the Church is called to live in and embody the kind of hope made real by faith – life-changing, concrete hope. The call to be a beacon of hope in our parishes and communities is not a call to ignore the signs of suffering and discontent around us. We must pay attention to these signs, lest they cause greater division and despair. Hope is hard. It is always costly for those who seek a different way; the way of reconciliation, justice and truth. For we cannot arrive at the joy and triumph of Easter morning without first travelling the path that leads to the cross, the way of Christ.

To walk this path we must intentionally place the poor, the marginalised, the disenfranchised and the voiceless at the heart of our work together. And in many, many different ways, we are already doing this. Every week I meet and hear the stories of those engaged in church-run food banks, night shelters, debt advice centres. I hear of people coming to faith through simple and honest human contact and compassion. Though we may be small in number and financially challenged, we will not give in to despair. We are a people of hope – hope for ourselves and for those we have yet to meet. Christ has declared hope for all of humanity and we are called to enact that hope in the hardest and most hopeless corners of our county. We will not walk away from being a living and serving presence on urban estates, in our seaside towns, in rural communities.

Transforming God, You bring hope to broken dreams and show us new possibilities.
 Renew us with open hearts, open minds and open wills, ready to follow wherever you lead.
 Amen.

David and Helen wish you all an Easter fully of God's love, his blessings and hope through all that Christ has done for us on the cross.

Alleluia, He is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

The Friends of St George's Church and The Hospice in the Weald
 present
The Choristers of Canterbury Cathedral
Saturday 18 May 2019 at 7pm
 St George's Church, Benenden
 Tickets: £15 (£5 for under 18s)
 available from:
 Committee members; Benenden's Shop
 or at the door
 For further details, please contact:
 Clive Turner 01580 240649 Marion Stevenson-Rouse 01580 291695

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