



THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST LEONARD, LEXDEN

ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD.



PARISH MAGAZINE

APRIL 2019

50p

LET'S WALK TOGETHER TO THE CROSS AND BEYOND



How dare Christians make the ridiculous claim that ‘love is strong as death’ (Song of Solomon 8:6)? How can we speak of hope amid great sadness and tragedy? Why talk of eternal life and salvation when the seeming darkness of the contemporary world surrounds us?

If there was some quick mathematical proof, an overwhelmingly eloquent argument, or an irrefutably logical philosophical proposition to verify the claim that love is stronger than death, then Christian faith, human life and the universe would be very different!

But Christian faith is *not* centred on a textbook. Nor is it based on being forced into a relationship with God through intellectual bullying. God desires our free embrace of the free gift of his love – he wants us to be loved and to love him. And so Christian faith is based on the real presence of God in the world: on the historical reality of a real human life lived – and died – by the Son of God. And on God’s overcoming death with love by raising Jesus from the dead.

This story of Good News raced across the world when it happened, but there were no photographs, film footage, nor scientific papers, and each generation of Christian has known that resurrection is not how the world usually works. Yet the Good News continues to be lived, told, shared – and experienced.

One of the ways in which we can both share in, and reassure ourselves of this Good News, is to join in his-story: Jesus’s story. We can spend Holy Week walking alongside Jesus: from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, through his final meal with his friends, via his betrayal and trial, to the very foot of the cross – that symbol of failure, injustice, torture and

death. And then journey on with him...to the empty tomb... to the glorious confusion and overwhelming joy of that first Easter morning...

So, I warmly encourage you to take the opportunity to participate in as much of Holy Week as you can this year: to join in the story of love's strength in the face of death. You can find details of all our services on pages 6 and 7 of this magazine. These many services include the grand procession of Palm Sunday, beautifully simple and contemplative Taizé worship (details on page 11), a series of simple talks I will be sharing before candlelit compline, and the great "Triduum" of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

Of course, when we truly enter into God's story, we find that it is not yet over. When we come to realise that we are part of this ongoing story, then our lives can be filled with hope and purpose according to the Good News that love really is as strong as death.

This Holy Week and Easter, may you be given renewed joy and confidence in the precious truth that 'love is strong as death'.

Matt

THANK YOU

I'd like to extend my warmest thanks to everyone who sent cards and messages, spoke kind words, said prayers, or came to the funeral service for my mother last month, and to Matt for kindness, support and a beautiful and sensitive service. Thank you all; I am so blessed to be surrounded by such a loving church family.

Viv

COVER PHOTO

Feeding the ducks in Lexden Park

APRIL DIARY



Because there will have been an All Age service for Mothering Sunday on 31st March, the service on Sunday, 7th April will be a Parish Eucharist with Junior Church.

Tuesday 2nd

10.00am Holy Communion at Wren House
2.30pm Lexden Ladies in the Nicholls Room
7.30pm 'Medley' house group (Rosemary 515245)

Wednesday 3rd

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11.00am Lent Course in the Nicholls Room
10.45am Holy Communion at Woodlands
11.30am Holy Communion at Cheviot
7.30pm Lent Course in the Nicholls Room

Thursday 4th

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 6th

8.30 Men's Breakfast in the Nicholls Room

SUNDAY 7th Lent 5, PASSION SUNDAY

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church followed by APCM
6.30pm Evensong and Sermon

Tuesday 9th

2.30pm Mothers' Union in the Nicholls Room

Wednesday 10th

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee
11.00am Lent Course in the Nicholls Room
7.30pm Lent Course in the Nicholls Room

Thursday 11th

8.00am Eucharist
2.30pm 'Constable' House Group (Hugh 564577)

Saturday 13th April

10.30-12.00 Coffee Morning at 15 Glen Avenue

SUNDAY 14th PALM SUNDAY

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

**9.45am Procession with palms,
Parish Eucharist with Junior Church**

6.30pm Taizé Worship



Monday 15th

9.00am Eucharist

11.00 Holy Communion at Hill House

7.30pm Reflection and Compline

Tuesday 16th

9.00am Eucharist

7.30pm Reflection and Compline

Wednesday 17th

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

7.30pm Reflection and Compline

Thursday 18th MAUNDY THURSDAY

8.00am Eucharist

**7.30pm Eucharist of the Last Supper, with foot washing,
followed by the Watch till midnight**

Friday 19th GOOD FRIDAY

8.45am Liturgy of the Sacrament

9.00am Morning Prayer

10.00am All Age Worship *followed by Hot Cross Buns*

12.00-2.00pm Good Friday Meditation

**2.00-3.00pm The Liturgy of Good Friday & Veneration of the Cross,
with the Liturgy of the Sacrament**

Saturday 20th Holy Saturday

7.30pm Easter Vigil and blessing of the New Fire

SUNDAY 21st EASTER DAY

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

**9.45am EASTER EUCHARIST with Junior Church
*followed by Egg rolling and Easter Bonnets***

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon



Wednesday 24th

10.00 Holy Communion followed by coffee

11.30am Holy Communion for Easter at Cheviot

Thursday 25th

8.00am Morning Prayer

SUNDAY 28th Easter 2

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church

3.00pm Messy Church

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon



Wednesday 1st May

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

10.45am Holy Communion at Woodlands

Thursday 2nd

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 4th

8.30 Men's Breakfast in the Nicholls Room

SUNDAY 5th May Easter 3

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am ALL AGE EUCHARIST

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon



Show off your Easter Bonnet after the 9.45am service on Easter Day!



April

7th April	<p>A moment of extravagance - In an act of great passion, Mary anoints Jesus's feet with perfumed oil. While Judas criticises this as a lavish waste of money, Jesus defends it as a prophetic sign of his imminent burial.</p> <p><i>John 12:1-8</i></p>
14th April	<p>Palm Sunday – Jesus finally reaches Jerusalem and arranges to enter the city on a donkey. A donkey??</p> <p><i>Luke 19:28-40</i></p>
21st April	<p>He is risen!!! – The women who followed Jesus to the cross are the first to discover that he has risen from the dead!!</p> <p><i>Luke 24:1-12</i></p>
28th April	<p>Overcoming hostility - The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, first without, then with Thomas present.</p> <p><i>John 20:19-31</i></p>



Messy Emmaus: 28th April, 3-5pm

BE STILL WITH GOD

Taizé Worship

on Palm Sunday at 6.30pm



On the evening of Palm Sunday, we invite you to a contemplative service at the start of Holy Week. Simply come and be still with God.

If you've not come across Taizé worship before, it is characterised by stillness, simple chants sung by the congregation, and by the contemplative use of language.

It is based upon the practices of the Taizé community, an ecumenical monastic order with a strong devotion to peace and justice through prayer and meditation. The 100-strong community of Roman Catholic and Protestant monks is drawn from 30 countries across the world.

It was founded in 1940 by Roger Louis Schutz-Marsauche (known as 'Brother Roger'). The 90-year-old monk died in August 2005 after being stabbed during a prayer service. Today Taizé is one of the world's most important sites of Christian pilgrimage. Each year tens of thousands of pilgrims flock to the small village of Taizé in central France to share in the community's way of life.

Prayer, silence and reflection are at the heart of the Taizé experience. People from every corner of the globe are encouraged to live out the Christian gospel in a spirit of joy, simplicity and reconciliation.

Maggie Whiteman

ST LEONARD'S, LEXDEN

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 7th April at 11.30am.

A reminder that we are holding the meeting in church immediately after Sunday morning coffee .

If you are on the electoral roll, the APCM is your opportunity to hear about all that's been happening St Leonard's during the past year, to ask questions, and to vote for our Church Officers, Parochial Church Council members and Deanery Synod Representatives.

Do come along; St Leonard's is your church.

A colorful poster for the Messy Emmaus event. The background features a light blue sky and green rolling hills with a winding path. Text elements include: 'FUN!' in blue, 'activities & songs' in black, 'Kids crafts' in pink, 'FREE meal' in yellow, and 'Messy CHURCH' in a red splatter graphic. The main title 'MESSY EMMAUS' is in large black letters. The date and time 'Sunday, 28th April, 3-5pm' and location 'St. Leonard's Church, Lexden' are at the bottom. Small text at the very bottom states: 'Children must be accompanied by an adult. Messy Church is free and there's no need to book, but if you're able to let us know you're coming please email 'youthworker@stleonardslexden.org.uk'.'

It's getting closer!

PARISH AWAY DAY

Saturday 18th May

This will be a day for reflection, fun and sharing together in the beautiful surroundings of St Mary's, Stoke-by-Nayland, Suffolk. We'll take some time to contemplate St Leonard's, the parish and our communities, and to consider our hopes for the future.

The Church has toilet facilities and a kitchen, and we'll have a simple bring and share lunch.

A day out that's too good to miss! Make sure it's in your diary and look out for more information coming soon.





Haydn

Creation

Conductor: John Chillingworth

Kingfisher Sinfonietta led by Beth Spendlove

St Botolph's Church, Colchester

Saturday 27th April 2019, 7.30pm

Tickets £14.00 (£9.00 students/under 18)

From Mann's Music, Box Office 01206 543280,

lexdenchoral.org, or at the door

PASTORAL MINISTRY IN THE PARISH

I thought it would be helpful to write a little note to explain how pastoral work is currently undertaken in the parish. Much pastoral care within our congregation is informal and mutual, of course. So, what I'm writing about below is our pastoral *ministry* – things such as regular visiting or responding to emergencies.

Pastoral ministry is a great passion of mine, and I have been delighted to find so many people participating in this at St Leonard's. This is very important; indeed, I hope more people might become involved in this ministry as time goes on!

In particular, we are very blessed to have Margaret Smith, an authorised Lay Pastoral Assistant, as our Pastoral Co-ordinator here. I thought it would be useful to briefly explain her role and mine and how they relate.

In short, the first point of contact for emergency pastoral issues is me, and the first point of contact for regular pastoral visiting is Margaret.

Margaret co-ordinates our regular pastoral visiting, which is generally undertaken by a talented and dedicated team of lay pastoral visitors. Perhaps greatest among my responsibilities as Priest in Charge is to ensure that pastoral ministry is undertaken sensitively and appropriately in the parish. This means that I manage our response to pastoral emergencies or complex issues, have oversight of pastoral visiting undertaken on behalf of St Leonard's, that I support and supervise Margaret as she co-ordinates regular visiting, and act as a pastor to the pastoral team.

So, if you have a non-emergency pastoral query, please bring this to Margaret's attention. However, if an emergency pastoral issue arises, do please ensure you let me know: examples of this type of pastoral issue might be a hospital admission or a bereavement. Of course, if in doubt, let me know and I will pass on as appropriate.

Matt

MOUSE TAILS



The St. Leonard's mouse community was going about its normal daily business: they were all still preparing for their big Easter celebration, one of their three favourite events in their calendar (the other two being Christmas and Harvest Festival). All of the young Church mice had greatly enjoyed the Messy Church Jonah activities. Of course they were well hidden from human eyes but they heard and saw much to interest them, and they were also able to collect lots of bits and pieces of craft materials which they would use to make little Easter cards and gifts. Grandpa had told them the story of Jonah and the whale and they were spellbound. To tiny creatures such as they are, humans seem giant-like and the thought of a creature big enough to swallow a whole man was very hard for them to imagine, or that Jonah lived inside the belly of the fish for three whole days. Some of the youngest mice had bad dreams about this and had asked Grandpa if such a fish could swim up to the pond in the Woods! Once reassured the nightmares ceased.

Something that the adult mice were very concerned about was the terrible weather with not only heavy rain to contend with, but the terrifying gale force winds. Mum worried about her relatives living in the woods, although Dad told her how carefully they had built their nests and they had a cave to shelter inside. Unfortunately, a new family that had arrived in the Churchyard were not so lucky. Having been forced to leave their nest by rain and gales they had hurriedly taken the first shelter that they could find and this in turn was also destroyed. In their haste to find better shelter they rushed towards the Church, the youngest mouse, Joey tripped and cut his paw quite badly, so half carrying him, the family scurried into the nearest gap they could. They were lucky enough to find their way into the Under Stairs family nest where Grandpa also lived. Poor little things, they were wet, hungry, bedraggled (and in the case of Joey, injured).



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They looked around at what seemed like heaven to them. Grandpa welcomed them, they were given scraps of cloth to dry themselves with and shown to the warmest straw nest where Grandpa gently examined Joey's paw, declaring that there were no broken bones; so he washed the wound carefully and bandaged it with clean cloth.

Once this had been done the family were given food and water and told that they could stay as long as they wished, whereupon the Mum began to weep, partly due to shock but mainly out of gratitude to these kind mice whilst the Dad thanked Grandpa and his family profusely and said they would try not to be a burden and he would go scavenging for food as soon as possible.

Grandpa told them that all of his Church family were Christian mice and would do the same for anyone who needed help. He suggested that they all snuggled down to have a good sleep and recover from their ordeal and when they were ready they would talk and exchange news. **CT**



COFFEE MORNING



Sarah Orr has again kindly offered to hold a Coffee Morning at her home, 15 Glen Avenue, on Saturday 13th April from 10.30 am - 12.00 noon.

There will be a Bring and Buy stall of cakes etc., produce, plants, books and jigsaws and a Raffle

All are welcome so do come and support and meet your friends.

Jean Hallett

UPDATE ON METHODS FOR STEWARDSHIP FINANCIAL GIVING FOR THE WORK OF ST LEONARD'S

For many years St Leonard's congregation has been most supportive of the work of the Church with regular stewardship giving and most contributors give either monthly by Standing Order or weekly using anonymous numbered envelopes and where possible gift aiding their donations, adding a most welcome additional source of income from HMRC. Over the past couple of years Direct Debit payments have also become available and some parishioners regularly use the blue gift aid envelopes which can be found in the pews.

However along with churches across the Church of England we have become increasingly aware that there has been a fall in cash collections each Sunday possibly due to regular worshippers and occasional visitors being less likely to have cash in their pockets or purses when attending worship.

In view of the reduced availability of cash, the PCC has resolved to offer, initially as an experiment, the facility for worshippers to make donations by debit or credit cards using a secure Wi-Fi linked card reader. We now have two of these card readers which we used successfully for charity donations following the Christmas Eve services in December.

As it would be impractical for card donations to be made during the Offertory collection in the service we are planning to have the card readers available in a quiet corner at the back of church following the main 9.45 am Eucharist on several Sundays in April and we hope that this option will assist those who may wish to donate to the work of St Leonard's whilst attending services but do not have cash with them to put into the collection either directly or inside a gift aid envelope.

The Sundays when the card donation option is to be available will be advised in the weekly newsletter.

If anyone wishes to enquire about stewardship giving to St Leonard's by any of the methods mentioned above, please either speak to me in church or give me a call on 01206 574797 or 07767 392423.

Tom Scrimgeour – Stewardship Recorder

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

BISHOP STEPHEN'S EASTER MESSAGE



I will begin my celebration of Easter crouched around a fire in the gardens outside Chelmsford Cathedral trying to light a large candle from its flames. When the candle is lit I will hold it aloft, process into the darkened church, and proclaim the ancient Easter proclamation that Christ is the light in the darkness.

In the New Testament all the really important things seem to happen in the dark.

Jesus is born in the night. When Judas betrays him and he is arrested, night has fallen. When he dies on the cross there is darkness over the land. And when Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb on Easter morning we are told it is still dark.

This is no coincidence. The death and resurrection of Jesus is best understood as a cosmic victory over the powers of evil, death and darkness. Speaking of the coming of Christ, Isaiah says that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. When Jesus is born, Simeon says he is the light for all people.

That's why Christians all over the world celebrate Easter in the night by kindling a fire and lighting a candle and proclaiming Jesus as the light of the world. This is also why Christian people today find hope – light in their own personal darkness – through Jesus Christ. We do not find God absent or indifferent to our sufferings. We find he is there with us. Christ is, therefore, not the light at the end of a dark tunnel, but the light to see by, “a lamp to our feet and a light to our path,” a candle to hold in the darkness. —→

The Risen Christ is also light for the world. As I write this I don't know what is going to happen with our Brexit negotiations. By Easter we are supposed to know; the end of March deadline will have passed. However, there is every possibility we might still be in the dark. The way of Christ can shed light on this as well, showing us the values and principles we must hold onto even if the path ahead is not clear.

+ Stephen

Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2018 - SOME FEEDBACK

All those at St Leonard's who so generously prepared shoe boxes will be pleased to know that the boxes we all packed last November were despatched to the Middle East but due to the sensitivities in that region we cannot be told exactly which country's children received them. Overall 511,200 shoeboxes were transported to children in need in Eastern Europe, Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East.



A recent email from the central organisers of Operation Christmas Child contained a most touching story from Liberia which we felt compelled to share with you all –

*“When we met with **Faith** again months after she received her shoebox, we noticed that she had kept the box in perfect condition under her bed. Asking her why she explained with a timid smile that this was the first thing she had truly owned for herself. To her it was such a precious gift that the actual shoebox meant as much to her as its contents!”*

We already have a good stock of the decorated boxes ready for distribution in the Autumn of this year.

Tom and Kathleen Scrimgeour

FAIR TRADE COMMUNION WINE

AT ST LEONARD'S



As we receive the wine from the communion chalice at the Eucharist week by week I don't imagine that we give a thought to its provenance.

The wine we purchase for use at St Leonard's is called Poterion Fair Trade Red Communion Wine and comes from The Stellar Organic Winery in the Northern Cape of South Africa. 'Poterion' is the New Testament Greek word for Cup. The wine is produced from the Ruby Cabernet grape and in keeping with the vineyard's organic status Indian Runner Ducks are used as a natural way to keep snails and other pests that destroy grapes at bay. The ducks are hand-reared until they are released amongst the vines to do what ducks do best – eat snails!

The importers who supply us are based in Stone, Staffordshire and over the past 10 years have handled 400,000 bottles of this communion wine creating a substantial benefit to the 350 workers at Stellar Organics. The workforce benefits directly from the sales of fairly-traded wine and The Stellar Empowerment Trust manages the income derived from Fair Trade sales and if you would like to learn more about this programme please look at their website – www.stellarorganics.co.za/community



The ducks off to work in the vineyard

Tom Scrimgeour

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

It was during December that I felt rather blest, because God seemed to touch me on more than one occasion, or to put it another way it was almost as though he was popping these little gems into my 'In Tray.'

The first instance was when Jenny and I went to an André Rieu concert at Wembley Arena. We arrived roughly an hour and a half before the show was due to start. Jenny and I were seated on the right hand side of the stage and I was watching people streaming in from all directions, when suddenly I saw something I wasn't expecting to see. Across the other side of the theatre, through a large opening, where the top of a flight of stairs provided access for people to enter the seating area on that side, I could see, in very large, bold letters about 6-8 feet high, the word 'Lord.' I thought, that's strange, I don't remember noticing that on our way in; what does it mean?

A few minutes later I realised that it wasn't 'Lord' at all, but the beginning of the word 'London', the end of which was, from where I was sitting, completely obscured from my view. How come the 'on' part I could see looked like 'or'? Well, the 'n', I realised, had been partly covered from my view by somebody just the correct height and standing in exactly the perfect position to mask my view of the right hand downward stroke of the 'n' and making it look like a perfect 'r.' I have wondered since, who was that someone?

Later that week I was reading something that reminded me of what I had seen that evening. The reading I was pointed toward was Numbers 6:24-26. In the NIV translation it is headed 'The Priestly Blessing.' Probably regarded as one of the most wonderful blessings of all.

And just before Christmas, on the 23rd, I read the story of two blind men, in Matthew 20:30-34: 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!' they said. Jesus had compassion on them and immediately they received their sight.

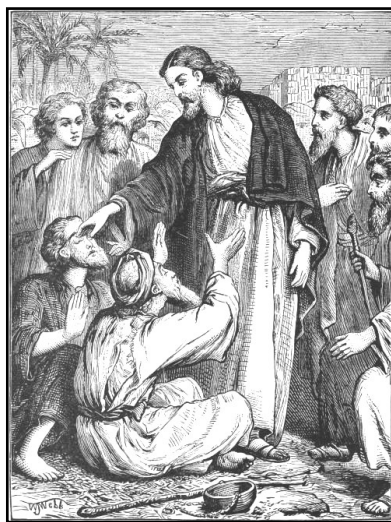
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In a footnote to this incident it pointed out that these blind chaps could see who Jesus really was, the long-awaited Messiah, while the religious leaders of the day were blind to his divinity.

Seeing with your eyes doesn't always guarantee seeing with your heart. That evening, in Wembley Arena, I felt I had seen something that truly touched my heart.

Tony Cross



LEXDEN BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Lexden Bereavement Support Group is planned as a pastoral service of care and love for the people out there in the local community.

Losing a loved one can leave people feeling adrift; talking and meeting with others in a similar situation even years later may help. Our Support group offers the opportunity to chat over a cup of tea in an informal and relaxed atmosphere.

The group, which will run as a pilot to start with, will be led by particular members of the congregation who, although not qualified counsellors, have had professional training and experience of working with loss and grief.

People who wish to attend will be invited to book a place in the group.

Margaret Smith