

The Parish of Christchurch

The Priory Church of the Holy Trinity, Christchurch
St George, Jumpers • St John at Purewell



For 21 March, 2021

Dear Friends,

“Passiontide begins” – so says the lectionary entry for this Sunday. And with “Passiontide begins”, the direction of our Lenten journey changes.

The character of the coming days is different from what has gone before. Now the intensity of the Gospel narrative picks up, as Jesus draws closer to Jerusalem. Between now and Good Friday we shall see him entering Jerusalem, overturning the tables of the money changers in the temple, answering pointed, malevolent questions in debate with the temple leaders, giving the parable of the vineyard, talking about the end times, breaking bread with his disciples, teaching them about God’s kingdom and washing their feet. We shall hear again the story of his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, his betrayal by Judas, Peter’s denial that he ever knew him, the trial before Caiaphas, the hand-washing of Pilate – and then the walk to Golgotha.

Have you ever asked yourself why Jesus went through with it? After all, he knew what was coming. He had tried to prepare his disciples more than once for what was to happen to him. One answer to our question comes from Romano Guardini, a theologian mentioned appreciatively by Pope Francis in “Let us dream”, on which this year’s Lent Course has been based. According to Guardini:

“Christ does not behave like a person about whose head storm-clouds are gathering. Such a person would change course, or flee, or with a desperate act of the will prepare to go down with all flags flying. [There is] Nothing of the kind in Jesus’ conduct. He could flee easily, but does not dream of doing so. There is not a word that suggests a change in tactics in order to win over the populace; also not a trace of desperation. Imperturbably he proceeds along the road he has taken, He sees his mission through to the end without a single diminution, consenting to his fate and thus to transmitting to it the immeasurable, God-willed purpose of his coming: the fulfilment of the act of salvation.” (from “*The Lord*”, © Regnery Publishing, 1954)

There is it: Jesus’s mission is “the fulfilment of the act of salvation”, no more, no less. The essence of that saving work is well expressed by Peter: “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.” (1 Peter 3.18) This is the heart of the Gospel. This is the Passion narrative which we are about to enter once again.

We are not the same people as this time last year, when we entered into the first lockdown. Much has changed and, consciously or not, we have changed also. I know from many ‘phone calls, conversations and Zoom meetings that many of us have begun to see things in new ways – the unforeseen, yet hopefully not unwelcome positive fruit of living through the pandemic.

Precisely because so much has changed, I believe we need to enter Passiontide 2021 with our eyes and ears more open than ever before to the truth and wonder of the Easter story. “Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13.8) – yes, indeed; but each morning brings a new ‘today’ in which the changeless Christ can be present by the Holy Spirit, whatever the challenges and opportunities that we may face.

May God bless us, every one, as we walk intentionally with Christ on his way to the Cross, and beyond to the joy of resurrection.

Charles Stewart

Holy Week and other services:

Monday 29 Mar			Material for 'Stations of the Cross' will be available on the parish website, for your private devotions during Holy Week
Tuesday 30 Mar		7.30pm	Taizé Service, <i>recorded, online</i>
Thursday 1 Apr	Maundy Thursday	7.30pm	Eucharist of the Last Supper, <i>recorded, online</i>
Friday 2 Apr	Good Friday	2.00-3.00	A Meditation for Good Friday, <i>streamed live</i>
Sunday 4 Apr	Easter Day	9.30 (streamed live) & 11.30am	Eucharist (Priory) both ticketed 9.30pm Eucharist (St George's) 6.30pm Said BCP Evensong (Priory)
Sunday 11 Apr	Easter 2	10.00am	Eucharist in the Priory <i>ticketed and streamed live</i> 9.30pm Eucharist (St George's) 6.30pm Said BCP Evensong (Priory)
Sunday 18 Apr	Easter 3	10.00am	Eucharist in the Priory <i>ticketed and streamed live</i> 9.30pm Eucharist (St George's) 6.30pm Said BCP Evensong (Priory)
Sunday 25 Apr	Easter 4	8.00am	BCP Eucharist 10.00am Eucharist in the Priory <i>ticketed and streamed live</i> 9.30pm Eucharist (St George's) 6.30pm Said BCP Evensong (Priory)

As before, no one should feel obliged to return to 'live' services until you are ready to do so. CS

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Bibles for Priory School Leavers

Around this time of year we generally aim to raise funds to present each of the year 6 leavers from the Priory CofE School with a Bible. These cost around £10 each. If you would like to give a Bible:

- **by bank transfer**, please use: Account Name - P.C.C. of Christchurch No.2 Account; Sort Code 52-21-34; Account Number 52428001. Please use "Priory School Bible" as the reference and email Ian Penny on prioryhouse@christchurchpriory.org,
- **by cheque**: please make cheques payable to P.C.C of Christchurch No.2. Account and mark for Ian's attention. If posted, to Priory House, Quay Road, BH23 1BU. Whether by post or by hand, please clearly mark "Priory School Bible" on or in the envelope.
- **by cash**: please put in an envelope for Ian and bring to the Priory, clearly marked as above.

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Electoral Roll Robert Phillipson, Parish of Christchurch Electoral Roll Officer, writes

Notice is hereby given that the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christchurch Electoral Roll is being REVISED.

Any person whose name is NOT ALREADY on the Electoral Roll needs to fill out a form,

- or if you have changed your address since this time last year,
- or if you know of anybody whose name is on the Roll but who has either died,
- or have moved during the year.

When filled out, please return the form to me either by email electoralroll@christchurchpriory.org, via the Priory Vestry, or directly **by the 18th April 2021** (NB new deadline). Failure to have your name on our Electoral Roll will mean you will be unable to vote at the Parish AGM, stand for a member of the PCC, Deanery Synod or Churchwarden. In line with the Diocese, you are being asked to provide telephone numbers and an email address (if you have one). This extra information will make it much easier for the clergy to make contact should the need arise, as they use the Electoral Roll as a means of identifying and communicating with members of their congregation. It is, therefore, essential that the Roll is kept up to date.