

# The Parish of Christchurch



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

*for Sundays 4 & 11 April, 2021*

Dear Friends,

Into this second Spring of the pandemic, Easter breaks in once more. This time last year, we were only just beginning to acclimatise ourselves to lockdown, with all its early constraints. Twelve months on, we have all been marked, to a greater or lesser degree, by what we have experienced.

We have been touched, many of us personally, by the ways Covid-19 has affected our families, friends and colleagues. So many thousands of our fellow-citizens have died; so many are suffering still from the impact of 'long Covid'; our hospitals, intensive care units, and care homes have been under immense pressure; and so many of our health professionals and those involved in caring for others have found themselves pushed beyond the limits of human endurance.

What can resurrection have to say to us, this year? How can we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus with heart, mind and spirit, and do justice both to the reality of our Easter celebration and to its context? How can we say "Christ is risen – He is risen indeed. Alleluia!", without sounding glib?

The beginnings of an answer come in a book by Sister Maria Boulding OSB, a nun of Stanbrook Abbey in Yorkshire. (Those of you who are part of the online Morning Prayer community will have encountered her spiritual wisdom through her contribution to our "third readings".)

In the last months of her life, Maria Boulding wrote "Gateway to Resurrection" (Burns & Oates, 2010), in which she writes of her experience of the risen Christ, amid the pain of terminal illness. One passage, in particular, seems to resonate with our Easter experience this year:

"I had met and walked with people who had inspired me and many another, and I came to see that some of those whose stories had meant much to me had themselves been drawn by God into long and often painful journeys. The more I thought about this, the more I came to see that their journeys bore the marks of Easter, the signs of cross and resurrection, of achievements that owed nothing to human cleverness or self-sufficiency. On the contrary, they were stories of weakness, failure, the humbling of human pride, reliance on the power of the risen Christ and the outpouring of his Spirit on all believers through his Easter victory. Moreover, the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12.2) is Jesus himself, he who had made the dark journey through death to glory."

There is nothing glib in that; rather, there is an honesty and insight in what she writes, that manages to hold together two realities that all of us will one day face: our own mortality (and the frailty that may precede it), and the truth at the core of Christian faith – the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Holding these together why the Paschal Candle, lit first at Easter, is lit again for every funeral in the following year as a sign that here the light of Christ is present, "a flame divided but undimmed ... Let it mingle with lights of heaven and continue bravely burning to dispel the darkness of this night" (from the *Exsultet*). Whatever darkness we encounter, there the light of the risen Christ is most visible. This is the light that shines in darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it.

Notwithstanding this, the resurrection could come across as a bit abstract and impersonal – fine in theory, but what does it have to do with you and me? The answer is 'everything'. As Maria Boulding wrote:

"The resurrection is not simply an event for Jesus personally. It is God's mighty act of salvation and re-creation for the whole cosmos. Christ is the *first-born* from the dead ... However we interpret it, Christ's Passion and death took him to the lowest point of human existence, and from there, from that lowest place, the power of God raised him up, but not alone."

“But not alone!” Resurrection is our story, too, as St Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 15: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (v.22 – my underlining). For everyone who loves and wants to follow Christ, resurrection life has already begun. Though the full experience of resurrection is for the future, nevertheless we live in the present reality of the resurrection. To put it another way, for Christians, resurrection is a fact of ordinary life.

This connectedness between Jesus’ death and resurrection and the life we live today, and tomorrow and the next day, lies behind some famous words written by Martin Luther: “I live as though Jesus was crucified yesterday, rose this morning and is coming back tomorrow”. In that spirit, may I wish you all a blessed and life-renewing Easter. Christ is indeed risen – He is risen indeed. Alleluia!



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### Midweek Eucharists

For a number of you, one of the midweek Eucharists has become your main act of worship in the week. I am pleased to be able to tell you that our midweek services will resume this week;

Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	11.00am at the Priory
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am at St George’s
	11.00am BCP Communion at the Priory

Over the following Sundays, our services are:

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)

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### Bibles for Priory School Leavers

We have yet to reach the target for the Bibles we normally present to each of the year 6 leavers from the Priory CofE School. These cost around £10 each.: why not consider giving one as an Easter gift to our school? (Details on how to give are on previous letters)

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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](mailto:electoralroll@christchurchpriory.org) , via the Priory Vestry, or directly **by the 18th April 2021** Please provide your telephone number and email address (if you have one). This extra information makes it easier for the clergy to carry out our pastoral ministry. Thank you.

**NB This pastoral letter covers the next two weeks.**