

HOLY TRINITY CUCKFIELD

Joyfully serving Jesus



Weekly devotions, prayers and news **Fifth Sunday of Lent** 26 March 2023

We are living with much uncertainty at the moment. How and when will the war in Ukraine end? How much more damage can our planet tolerate? Will we get an ambulance if we need one? When will we have a new vicar? Who can we trust...our politicians, our police...?

Although uncertainties surround us on so many fronts, it is often during such times that our faith can be most fruitful. While we may not comprehend God's plan and purpose in current events, we can be confident that he is in control. Rather than dwelling on things that we can do little about, we can seek to appreciate all the good things around us and encourage each other as we continue to journey through Lent towards Palm Sunday and all the dramatic events of Holy Week, trusting in the one who remains constant and who leads us to resurrection life.

Jane & Brian

Church website: www.holytrinitycuckfield.org

Fifth Sunday of Lent (26th March 2023)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

Reader: Roger Edmonston

9.45 Parish Eucharist *(in church & online)*

Reader: Brian Cutler; Intercessor: Tony Lawrence

Hymns: 682, 127, 114, 717, 135

12.00 Holy Baptism Noah Joseph Hewes, Evelyn Grace Hedley, Eilidh Alexandra Howieson

Services during the week:

Wednesday: 10.30 Holy Communion (C. Worship) *(in church & online)*

Readings: Daniel 3: 14-20, 24-25, 28; John 8: 31-42

Thursday: 9.00 Holy Communion (Iona/Celtic) *(in church)*

Readings: Genesis 17: 3-9; John 8: 51-end

Friday: 9.30 Holy Trinity School KS1 Easter Service

11.00 Holy Trinity School KS2 Easter Service

Next Sunday: Palm Sunday (2 April 2023)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

9.45 Parish Eucharist *(in church & online)*

11.15 Family Praise *(in church)*

6.00 The Cross of Christ *(in church & online)*

For services live on Zoom: Click the blue link on the front page of the church website

The Collect Fifth Sunday of Lent

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord who is alive and reigns with
you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
for ever. **Amen.**

The Post Communion Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us that what we do for the least of
our brothers and sisters we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.' So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

Romans 8: 6-11

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

John 11: 1-45

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

A thought: (5th Sunday of Lent) John. 11. 1-45

The story wants to focus on the central 'sign' which only confirms what Jesus had said of himself: "I Am the resurrection and the life". It is the fulfilment of the prophecy from Ezekiel in the First Reading. This reading is part of the famous parable of the valley full of dead bones which are brought to life, a parable about Israel, dead in sin and idolatry, being brought back to life in God.

In today's gospel, Lazarus represents all those who are being brought back to life, life in God. He represents especially all those who are brought into new life by baptism, sharing the very life of God.

Like the Samaritan Woman, this reading is directed at those preparing for Baptism at Easter. Baptism, as Paul tells us, is both a dying to one's past and an entry into new life. The newly baptised person is "a new person" with a new life.

For us already baptised, we can do well to reflect on how much we have continued to see that life growing in us. That is the theme of Paul in the Second Reading. Those whose lives are embedded in the "flesh", that is, those whose lives are given over to their instincts of greed and self-indulgence, can never be close to God he says.

Those who are in the Spirit will want to give their whole selves to the higher instincts of truth, love, compassion, sharing and justice. When we are full of that Spirit then we have truly risen with Christ for his life is truly active in us. We are both alive and life-giving. Paul says, "I live, no, it is not I, but Christ who lives in me." Living in fellowship with Jesus is life giving as it guides us through death to resurrection.

A prayer for this time of Vacancy:

Send us your Holy Spirit at this time of change and uncertainty, to fill us with vision, energy and faithfulness in prayer that we may be true to our calling to bring new life to our community; and guide with your heavenly wisdom those who are to choose a new priest for this Benefice, so that the one whom we receive may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people, ready to serve us with joy, to build us up in faith, and to lead us by example, in loving obedience to your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen

Please remember those for whom we pray:

Immediate need: Paul Simpson, Martin Packham, Becky Parker, Eileen Caple, Karen Leese, Jim Knight, Peter Graydon, Val Thompson, Nick Rowe

Long Term Need: Young Georgia, Joshua and Reggie, Wendy, Ann Went, Julie Sadler, Wendy Hibling, Yvonne Godsmark, Carla Spear, Pam Sagar, Eileen Knight, Maureen Griffiths, Liz Graydon,, Eileen Macdougall, George Snashall

Those in Care Homes: Mary Watts, Ruth Baker,, Rosemary Pardey, Janet Card

Please remember the recently departed and their families:

In our Book of Remembrance this week we remember: 26th Russell Murphy, Joseph Heyman, Joan Wampach, David Davidson, 28th Peggy Small, Ethel Riddle, Anne Atkinson, Stephanie Gilpin, 30th Kathleen Turner, Ken Sutton, Stanley Hallett, Mary Williams, Vera Platt, David Bedding, 31st Iris Buttery, Jack Coomber, Joshua Morgan, Peter Burgess, 1st Kit Beattie, Veronica Mayo, Carol Brown, Molly Lawrence