

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



It's Easter, so let's tuck in to those chocolate eggs?

Dear Friends,

It's interesting how quickly we can change from abstemious Lent to piling on those calories at Easter.

For the Church the Easter season begins at sunset on the eve of Easter on Holy Saturday and extends for fifty days through the Day of Pentecost. We are encouraged during this period to rejoice in, and live out, the "paschal mystery."

What is the "paschal mystery"? It's the ancient Christian shorthand for the story of Christ our Passover sacrificed and raised for us and our incorporation into these great acts of salvation through baptism. St Paul says in Romans, this lies at the heart of the faith, teaching, and worship life of the church.

Liturgically and technically speaking, the service held on Easter Day is the second service of Easter and the Easter Vigil is the first (why not try to join us as this is a wonderful, moving service to start off the celebration of our salvation!)

Unfortunately, our culture tends to observe Easter much like it does Christmas. We celebrate for a day or perhaps a weekend, then we put it all away. (Watch for those clearance sales of "Easter" items beginning the Monday after Easter Day; or in some places, even on Easter Sunday!) And just as Christmas is often overtaken or surrounded by images of the winter solstice, both in the culture and even in some of our hymnody, Easter is can be overtaken and surrounded by images drawn from the spring equinox (birds hatching, grass greening, rabbits and daffodils).

But Easter is for Christians all around the world and is not the equivalent of a spring equinox festival. For one thing, for most of the world's Christians living in the Southern hemisphere now, Easter happens in their autumn and not spring!

It is good to be reminded by the Church's liturgical pattern that Easter for Christians is not a day, but a season. We have just spent the days of Lent preparing and living the way of Jesus in the desert and following the cross and now during Eastertide, we reaffirm together what it means to serve the risen Christ in the power of the Spirit, and we prepare to use the gifts of the Spirit in ministry in the world.

Let's continue to celebrate the joys of Easter, (no, really, not by eating indulgently for fifty days) but by responding during that time to the joy, assurance and peace of God's love in salvation through Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Love, Jo

View from the Pew

Spring really does seem to be on its way. Daffodils and primroses are springing up everywhere, trees are in blossom and the birds are singing. I always think that this contrasts sharply with our observance of the season of Lent, which is a time when we reflect on the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus and try to look more deeply into our own Christian faith. However of course Spring is all about rebirth and new growth and this does indeed reflect our own rebirth which is made possible by the Resurrection of Jesus and our new and stronger growth in our love for our risen Lord.

According to the poet Tennyson *"in the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love"* however here at All Saints, our thoughts are turning to Spring Cleaning. In particular we have decided to invite as many people as possible to help with a grand scale clean and tidy of the annexe on Saturday 21st April at 9am. If enough people express an interest I will be very pleased to provide a hot lunch so that we can join together in fellowship to celebrate a job well done. Anybody who has been into the Annexe lately will know that it is full of a myriad of different items. Much of this belongs to various groups within the church but much is probably worthy of disposal, either to be recycled via the local charity shops or simply disposed of.

I would therefore like to put out a plea to everybody who knows that they have something stored in the Annexe either to come along on the day to ensure that their items can be identified or, better still, take them out of the Annexe whilst it is tidied and tell us how much space they will need for storage in future. The Annexe is an important resource if we can keep it tidy it will be far easier to ensure that it doesn't just become a place where people park things that have outlived their useful life.

Please let Andrew or I know if you are able to join us and also let me know if you will join us for lunch.

I would like to say a big thank you to everybody who helped organise and those who attended the February Frolic 60's evening on 25th February, which not only provided an evening of outstanding entertainment from our own "Mamas and Papas" and other star attractions but raised a total of £413 for church funds. Thank you also everybody who supported the March coffee morning, which despite being organised in somewhat of a hurry still raised £270. Well done to everybody involved.

Our next coffee morning will be held on 19th May, in and around the church and will include our annual plant sale in aid of the Junior Church project. A further date to put in your diaries is Sunday 24th June when we

are planning to participate in Open Church Sunday and will be pleased to receive offers of help to organise some stalls and to provide refreshments for visitors to the church. This is part of our Ministry of Welcome and it would be good to see as many church members as possible coming along during the afternoon, telling visitors about all that is happening at All Saints.

April is a busy month for All Saints with special services for Easter providing a wonderful opportunity for us all to welcome both newcomers and occasional visitors into our church family and also become involved in outreach through the United Service of Witness in Bircherley Green on Good Friday. Later in the month our APCM on 22nd followed by a bring and share lunch provides the opportunity for you to hear more about the many groups which make up the family of All Saints as well as providing the opportunity for you to become more involved by allowing yourself to be put forward to serve on the PCC.

Please feel free to talk to Andrew or myself if you want further information about anything we have planned and may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Easter.

Love, Janet

