

Dear All,

I hope that as you continue to journey through Lent, you have time to reflect and ponder the wonder of God's love revealed in Jesus. This month we also celebrate Christ's victory over death and the wonderful power of God's love.

Happy Easter, when it comes. But as one colleague once said, it is travelling through Holy Week, that brings out the joy of Easter Sunday, more than any other Sunday of the year. [Though Pentecost comes close!!]

Every blessing,

Janet

*All material taken from Roots on the Web 2025.*

### **6 - 12 April 2025 What's your passion?**

Lent 5 Year C Isaiah 43.16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3.4b-14;

#### **John 12.1-8**

Jesus visits the home of his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany, having recently raised Lazarus from the dead. Mary pours costly perfume over Jesus' feet and washes them with her hair. Judas objects to what he sees as a waste of money, but Jesus defends Mary, knowing that her extravagant gesture is a sign of her deep gratitude and that he will soon be leaving them to go to his death.

The readings this week prompt us to question what really matters to us and to think about the important priorities in our lives – what are our true passions? On the last Sunday in Lent, we begin to look ahead to Palm Sunday and on the intense last days of Jesus' life.

### **13 - 19 April 2025 Not the obvious choice**

Palm Sunday Year C Isaiah 50.4-9a; Psalm 118.1-2,19-29; Philippians 2.5-11; Luke 19.28-40;

#### **Luke 22.14-23.56**

In preparation for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus sends his disciples to find a colt that has never been ridden – not the obvious choice for the Messiah. As he enters the city, Jesus is acclaimed by the crowds as the one who comes in the name of the Lord. The Pharisees object, but Jesus refuses to silence his followers, telling them that if they were to be silent even the stones would cry out.

The image of a servant king riding on a donkey leads us on this Palm Sunday to explore the nature of servanthood, and how God calls us to serve – even when we feel like the most unlikely choice.

### **20 - 26 April 2025 Do you see what I see?**

Easter Day Year C Acts 10.34-43; Psalm 118.1-2,14-24; 1 Corinthians 15.19-26; John 20.1-18;

## **Luke 24.1-12**

Mary Magdalene is the first to see the stone rolled away from Jesus' tomb. She is the first to tell the other disciples that Jesus' body is no longer there. Simon Peter and John also come to see for themselves. Mary remains weeping by the tomb, where she sees angels in the place where Jesus body was laid. Still believing his body to have been stolen, Mary turns away and encounters a figure she at first supposes to be the gardener. But, when he says her name, she immediately recognises him as the risen Lord.

The witnesses to the astounding events of Easter saw them from different perspectives. We are invited to explore what the good news of the resurrection means to us today.

## **27 April – 3 May 2025 Locking and unlocking**

Easter 2 Year C Acts 5.27-32; Psalm 150; Revelation 1.4-8;

## **John 20.19-31**

The disciples, frightened by the discovery of the empty tomb and Mary's report that she has seen the Lord, are hiding in a house with locked doors. Jesus enters and shows them his wounds. Thomas does not see this and declares that he will not believe it is true unless he sees Jesus' wounds for himself. Despite the doors once again being locked, Jesus enters the house – this time, Thomas believes that he is the risen Lord.

The Gospel accounts of Jesus breaking through locked doors prompts us to ask what holds us back and what doors do we need to open? The disciples are witnesses commissioned to bring God's forgiveness; can we help to unlock doors for others?

## **PRAYERS & THOUGHT FOR WEEK TAKEN FROM EASTER DAY**

### **A prayer of adoration**

We exalt you, risen Lord.

### **We worship and adore you.**

From cross to cave, beaten but not broken;  
from thorns to throne; from grave to glory,  
we exalt you, risen Lord.

**We worship and adore you. Amen.**

### **A prayer of confession**

Father God, forgive our lapses of faith,  
when we fail to read, meditate on and understand the Scriptures.

We're sorry for the days when we neglect to look beyond the cross and wallow in the darkness of despair.

Lord of life, we're sorry for not always living in the light and hope of your resurrection,  
for not noticing you in all aspects of life.

Lord, many people turned against you,  
hence your path to the cross.

Forgive us when we turn our backs on people in need.

Your Holy Spirit helps us live the resurrection life.

Forgive us when we fail to live in the power  
of your cross and empty tomb.  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit living in unity,  
may we live in unity with you.  
May we live the resurrection life and help others shine on the path of faith.  
**Amen.**

### **Assurance of forgiveness**

Holy Lord and Saviour, your blood shed on the cross cleanses us from all sin.  
We live in the light of your forgiveness now and forever. **Amen.**

### **Prayers of intercession From Roots 2019**

Let us pray for those for whom today is just another day:  
those who have to work;  
those who have not yet encountered the risen Christ;  
those who do not celebrate his love.  
For God gave his Son,  
**to show his love and bring life.**

We pray for all who flee their homes in desperation,  
and travel into an uncertain future.  
Strengthen them on their journeys,  
and keep alive their vision of finding a secure and welcoming home.  
For God gave his Son,  
**to show his love and bring life.**

Let us pray for those who grieve today:  
those recently bereaved;  
those for whom this is a time of anniversary;  
those who wait beside a loved one who is dying.  
For God gave his Son,  
**to show his love and bring life.**

Let us pray for all in need throughout the world:  
those without access to clean water;  
those with insufficient food;  
those who cannot access the health care that they need.  
For God gave his Son,  
**to show his love and bring life.**

Let us pray for each other and for ourselves,  
that we may have wholeness, peace and hope

through the presence in our lives of the risen Lord.

For God gave his Son,

**to show his love and bring life. Amen.**

### **Thought for the week**

One of the reasons Easter is associated with lambs and chicks is because we celebrate it at the time of year when lambs are born – and what better symbol is there of new life? It helps us to understand that the good news of Easter is not just that Jesus came back from the dead, but that God invites us all to share in that new life. The association with lambs and chicks can make Easter feel safe, cute and fluffy, but really these are dramatic and disruptive events: the disciples are in disarray – their leader has been killed and there hasn't even been time to bury him properly. Then it looks like his grave has been robbed – his body has gone – what can it all mean? Suddenly, angels appear and there is Jesus himself, looking like a gardener. Can it be that he is alive and going to be with God the Father? It can be hard to comprehend and make sense of it all.

Shepherds will tell you that lambing time is one of hard work and emotion; sometimes lambs are lost, most often in the first 48 hours of life. The Easter lamb is an image of vulnerability and suffering, as well as the joy and promise of new life. This speaks into our daily struggles with hope, and an insistence that things can change. War, injustice, poverty, disaster, climate change – we face many challenges in our world that don't have simple, straightforward solutions. We need voices of hope and transformation, which disturb and disrupt the status quo and bring us closer to the new life of love, peace and justice that God longs for us all to experience.

So, the Easter story is one of disturbing and disruptive energy. We have moved from the suffering of Good Friday, through the silence and emptiness of Saturday to new life bursting in and disrupting everything, even death itself. As shepherds do, Mary kept watch, and so became the first to notice the amazing events. And the news she brought disrupts everything. As Peter explains to Cornelius, Jesus overcame death, fulfilling the prophecies about the Messiah and brings forgiveness to all who follow him.

Where does this story lead us next? Where do we find God, this disruptive spirit, in the world today? Mary's example shows us the importance of watching and waiting, so we recognise the signs. And we can look to Jesus' teachings and ministry for some clues. Do you see what I see? Today is a day to celebrate new life and then to go and look for signs of it and that disruptive spirit of God in our daily lives.