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The Benefice of Faversham

Volume 2, Issue 3

Revd. Simon writes

Palm Sunday is a point of human euphoria in the sense that those looking upon Jesus entering Jerusalem see from a human perspective what they think is an example of worldly leadership. Here is the King who they expect will overthrow the authorities of the day and bring in a new religious Government in keeping with their faith. Instead, we see the way to the cross, what initially seems the crushing of God's plan by a military governor of supreme (worldly) authority. Pontius Pilate has by his very word the matter of life and death. Jesus is

condemned and a murder is set free. Where is the justice in this? How many people in our world today and in past times have cried out to God, "this is not fair, why?"

Yet God's plan only becomes apparent in the early hours of

Easter Morning, following the brokenness of watching a loved one being executed, all the hopes and prayers coming seemingly to nothing. Mary bursts into the disciple's presence with the news "I have seen the Lord". The way of the cross is the way of hope, joy, and new life but in God's terms not those dictated by worldly authorities. It is a reminder to each of us that we are called to follow Jesus in the way of the cross and not in the way of worldly values.

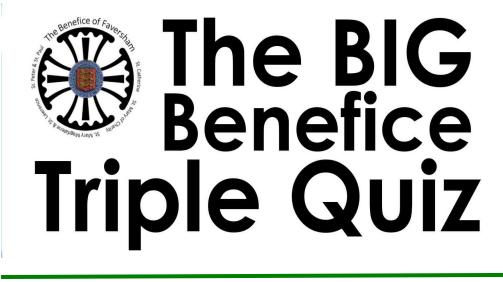
On Easter morning John 1.5 finds true meaning.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome] it.

Happy Easter

Revd. Simon.

See inside for all the details, sign up soon!



April 2021

Services in the Benefice

Date	St Mary Magdalene	St Peter & St Paul	St Catherine	St Mary of Charity
Palm Sunday 28 March	Eucharist 10am	Eucharist 10am	Eucharist 10am	Eucharist 10am
Easter Sunday 4 April	Eucharist 10am	Eucharist 10am	Eucharist 10am	Eucharist 10am
11 April	Morning Prayer	Subject to confirmation	Eucharist 10am	Eucharist 10am
18 April	Morning Prayer	Eucharist 10am	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer
25 April	Eucharist 10am	Subject to confirmation	Morning Prayer	Morning Prayer

Do remember that you still need to register to attend any service. Check the website or contact your warden.

Social distancing must also be observed.

When the guidance changes we expect to modify our practice.



SINGALONG SOUNDS on ZOOM is live each Thursday at 5.30pm.

See you on ZOOM, invite anyone you think would like to join in feel-good parody songs of faith and hope! ZOOM Meeting ID: 688 460 8849

Passcode: Singalong

Church Services across the Benefice.

Churches may have different booking arrangements!

Churches Together in Faversham

Easter 2021

Join the Joy!



Look out for our Churches Together in Faversham Easter card which will be delivered with your March edition of The Net.

Good Friday we need an alternative Walk of Witness, please Prayer Walk and see hopefaversham.org.uk for ideas and details. There will also be an online service at 11am.

We are also encouraging all our congregations to decorate their front doors on Easter Day with three balloons with 'Jesus is risen'

written on them. Please provide your own balloons. Do join the joy and make a splash together! Here are some ideas of what you can do.

Churches Together in Faversham

Churches Together in Faversham

Gem is not just a type of lettuce!

hospitality and welcome with the

in and around Faversham.

The 72 Bus is named after the

seventy-two Disciples (seventy in

sent out by Jesus to towns and

how the Kingdom of God is

villages to be good news about

nearby. The GEM Trailer is named

Extra Miles" in Matthew 5. Both of

inherent love, hope, meaning and

after Jesus' concept of "Going

these themes speak of God's

purpose for the world, without

donations, the 72 Bus is ready to

wonderfully imaginative concepts

from Faversham's Queen Elizabeth

outdoor games, TVs, a sofa area, a

kitchen area with an URN and a

sound-proofed recording studio.

The GEM Trailer is also ready to

make life sparkle in the smaller

carrying on board indoor and

outdoor games and

hospitality and it can

double as a stage and

are powered by solar

our carbon footprint.

Preston field, the Town

Centre and the

activities, TVs and

communities with narrower streets,

and Abbey Schools. The 72 Bus

carries on board indoor and

which most of the world's

With the help of generous

be sent into action with an

attractive design inspired by

problems arise.

some Bible translations) in Luke 10

72 Bus and GEM Trailer at locations

Much publicised and about to appear, real, live and in person.

The Gem trailer and 72 Bus

It has been 18 months in the making and although interrupted for obvious reasons, as restrictions continue to ease,

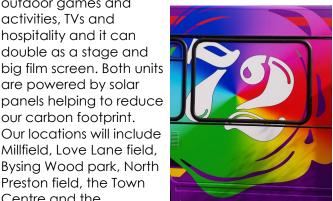


Recreation Ground as well as deanerywide locations in partnership with our friends in neighbouring benefices serving the communities and villages around

Faversham.

From before Covid - and making the most of opportunities when restrictions have been eased through the year - we have already delivered about 10 successful sessions with both mobile vehicles which have involved games and activities, many conversations and plenty of hot chocolate and marshmallows and chocolate rolls. During lockdown we have been faithfully providing Fridaynight detached provision across Faversham purely based on conversation.

We have been delivering sessions in partnership with Brogdale CIC and Faversham Town Council and we really need to grow teams for these extra sessions in Faversham's neighbourhoods. If you would like to be part of this, please do contact me. We need volunteers to engage with children and young people in conversation, games and activities in each location, to provide hospitality and we also need volunteers who can drive the bus and tow the trailer. Volunteers will need DBS



clearance for this activity. This is an exciting initiative which is sure to make a positive difference in Faversham as we go extra miles and as we are sent to be Good News in our local neighborhoods'

Dan Corcoran



Some participants feed back on their experience of the Week of Accompanied Prayer

Contact Rev Sharran if you would like more details.

Week of Accompanied Prayer—some reflections

For the last 30 years or so, I've been involved in bringing weeks of accompanied prayer into parishes or deaneries providing a retreat in the midst of daily life for participants. Each is given a prayer companion with whom they meet for ½ hour each day in church, after they have spent ½ hr on their own praying through scripture in ways suggested.

During the two lockdowns we introduced the weeks on Zoom, WhatsApp, facetime or telephone and have been involved as a prayer companion on a number of them, most recently at the end of February. Around 28 retreatants joined 9 prayer companions on the team. to look at the bible in imaginative ways, which were, at least to me, new and very rewarding and were shown finger labyrinths, suitable fo use anywhere. The week was not what I had expected, it was more like a retreat.

I have been asked to provide some comments from the participants (see below), both male and female, some first timers, others with previous experience but each anonymously because of confidentiality.

If you would like to take part in a week in the future or have any questions, please do get in touch with me.

Reverend Sharran

I started the week not knowing what to expect and a little fearful of what I would be asked to do. I need not have worried. Each day we have been given new tools and ideas to deepen our prayer life. With the help of my gentle and supportive Prayer Companion I have been able to reflect on what I have learned. Listening, being aware and paying attention, walking and talking, and using my imagination; all these have helped me to explore my relationship with God and Importantly, experiences in every-

day life can also become a meeting place with God.

The week is a wonderful way to find out and experience new ways of praying, some of which go back hundreds of years and well tested by others. We were encouraged to be outdoors as well as indoors, particularly looking at and seeing God in His creation. We were asked to look at the bible in imaginative ways, which were, at least to me, new and very rewarding and were shown finger labyrinths, suitable for use anywhere. The week was not what I had expected, it was more like a retreat.

I just wanted to thank you very much for such a great week. I loved it all, and particularly perhaps because it was something I had never done before and felt it would be very out of my comfort zone. In fact I found it so well organised and everyone so friendly and easy. I am very pleased I was able to join in. I feel the week has been a blessing and just what I needed to become closer to God, I will treasure it forever.

I signed up for the week firstly out of curiosity and then with a sense that I needed a distinct break from my work routine! It has been an excitingly-scary week, leaving me physically and mentally renewed, spiritually refreshed, comforted and challenged. God has encouraged me to 'let go' through wise words, loving care and to discover new beginnings''

My experience of WAP was very special. I learnt and was blessed in this precious time. I did wonder how

Week of Accompanied Prayer—some reflections—continued

WAP could happen in Lockdown, well it certainly did! We were privileged to hear inspiring ways to pray, consider scriptures and then talk with our prayer companion. It was just what I needed. I felt so recharged and ready to hear God's word refreshed in my heart as I continue my ALM ministry. I pray others may consider this opportunity, when it is advertised in their church in the future.

This was the first WAP I have joined on line and I found the wonderful organisation and the daily contributions both thought provoking and inspiring. My time with my prayer

companion revealed the invitation I receive from Jesus in all I do. It doesn't matter where I am Jesus is always by my side. Through prayer and spending time in God's presence we are able to understand what God has in store for each one of us. It was good to see how many other people took part in the week and it was possible to see the Holy Spirit working as we shared our symbols and thoughts about the week at the closing service. I felt that the light of Christ had come back into my life during this week of prayer and I don't want it to go out.

Keeping Contact— time for a change?

Not much to celebrate, but we do seem to be seeing some light at the end of the tunnel. Though developments on "the Continent" are worrying.

Hopefully I will be editing the next magazine from a campsite or carpark somewhere. But we await developments.

I've been doing this for a year now and it might be time for a change or some other form of curatorship.

Do you fancy a go? I

t is all done on Publisher and if you can 'cut & paste' then you are competent for the job. There is a stalwart team that makes it all happen—I just take the credit.

Email the Vicar—he appoints..

Closing date for copy for the May edition is 0900 Monday April 26th.

- Articles are welcome. 450 words work very well on a page.
- Send copy as a word document to the email below. Please, pdf or jpg files. They make editing very difficult.
- We would like reaction and engagement with our reader. Drop the editor an email, he does get lonely.
- Do tell your Church Warden if there is anyone who might appreciate the paper or electronic copy.

Articles to: BeneficeofFaversham+Contact@gmail.com

Greetings

from the 'back office'

Getting to know you

Each month a member of a different Church will answer 5 questions

A way of getting to know people across the Benefice.

Getting to know you

Hello, my name is Yolanda Jeffery and I am a member of St Peter & St Paul, Ospringe in the Benefice of Faversham.

How long have you lived in Faversham, have you ever lived anywhere else?

Brian, my husband and I moved to Faversham in 2003. Before that we lived in Thamesmead, after spending 16 years in Australia.

I was born in Colombia and came to London in 1976. Met my husband, Brian, and the rest is history.

How did you come to your faith?

As a baby I was baptised into the Catholic Church. My mother was a Presbyterian and that was the Church we went to.

Whilst in Australia I went to Church.

Brian and I liked Faversham and attended church a few times with neighbours.

When my new neighbour [Sarah] invited me to church it was pleasant and an atmosphere that suited me.

What do you like most about your home church?

The feeling of belonging is special to me. The setting of the church and the atmosphere of the worship suits me.



Also, Brian's ashes are there and this gives me great comfort.

I enjoy the flower arranging and seeing the church looking beautiful.

What's your favourite hymn or chorus?

There are so many beautiful ones. Its hard to choose. We are lucky at St Peter & St Pauls to have a musical range that I enjoy.

10,000 Reasons is amongst my real favourites.

What is your favourite bit of the Bible and why?

I enjoy reading Matthew. Especially Matthew 16 v 13 – 16

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

It makes it clear to me who Jesus is and why he is important to me.

Yolanda Jeffery

Heads Up! Churches Together in Faversham PRAYER EVENT Ascension to Pentecost May 13th - 23rd

We plan that all the churches could be involved praying together. Each church could take a day and arrange a prayer walk, and online Zoom at different times. Members of all churches are invited to join in any of the events.

We will use **Thy Kingdom Come** materials, Praying the Psalms, which we can pre-ordered. There are materials for children too.

"the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it". (John 1.5)

Engage your art and soul! - still time to enter!

"the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it". (John 1.5)

How would you present this hope -filled verse in art?

Have a look at the Images of Light and Hope poster [on page 9] and have a go representing this encouraging verse in art using any medium and materials of your choice. A Hobbycraft voucher and Bible (kindly donated by Bible Society) will be awarded to each age category winner chosen from a shortlist by The Mayor of Faversham, and we hope to display an online Exhibition of Light and Hope soon after Easter. Please spread the word and happy creating!

We have heard how this verse in John's Gospel has given people hope over the past months. When we encounter a verse or story in the Bible that particularly speaks to us in our circumstances, it is good to stay with it, chew it over, live it, chat about it, sleep on it and find out everything about it asking why God wants us to be able to read it today.

God's Word was creatively made flesh in Jesus. Being careful that we don't just turn Jesus back into words we can draw on our Godgiven creativity which enables us to connect profoundly with God and his Word. There are numerous health benefits that come from being creative increasing wellbeing and reducing stress. Even more so when we engage with the bigger picture of how God redeems, as he creates endless hoping despite all the hopeless endings we experience around us.

John 1.5 is a powerful verse to reflect upon. It is packed with meaning as John begins his account of the world-changing and life-changing Gospel of Jesus, and how his death and resurrection enables us to live "in the light direction". You can catch a glimpse of this depth when we see how the verse is translated differently in other versions of the Bible. For instance, the Greek word for "overcome" can also be translated as "seize", "overtake" or even "understand". Try replacing "overcome" with these words and picture the verse in your mind's eye. John's choice of words shows emphatically that the darkness is in absolutely no position whatsoever to overcome or understand the light. You might also notice how the tense is slightly different too. You may even like to compare translations on biblegateway.com or stepbible.org or in any Bibles we may have? Which translation speaks most profoundly to you in your present circumstances?

So what emotions, experiences, Bible stories and thoughts are called to mind as we think about "all things light and beautiful" asking God to engage our art and soul?

The Benefice of Faversham

The Images of Light and Hope Competition



Engage your art and soul...

How would you represent this Bible verse (John 1.5) In art? "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." (You'liftind this verse translated slightly differently in other versions of the Bible.)

Draw on your God-given creativity...

It's simple to enter!

1: Have a think about John 1.5 2: Base your artwork, using any medium or materials, on this verse: 3: Submit your art work by sending a photograph or scan of it to: imagesoflightandhope@gmail.com. Please include your name, school/college/year group (if applicable), address (if over 18) and a short description of your artwork.

Closing date: 23.59 on Sunday 28th March 2021

Every one of every age most welcome to enter!

There will be a first prize awarded to each age-category winner (£25 Hobbycraft voucher). There will be a Bible - kindly donated by *Bible Society* - awarded to each school/community winner. We aim to feature entries in an *Exhibition of Light & Hope* and on items to help remember this verse. Please contact imagesoflightandhope@gmail.com with any questions you may have.



Happy creating!

The Benefice of Faversham: Faversham's four Church of England Churches Facebook; @4favchurches



The Little Bird

The little bird came fluttering down Sat upon the Easter cross, Began to sing his song of love Then suddenly he stopped. He saw a man in agony Came close up to his head, Whispered very gently, This is what he said: "I shall beat my wings for you to feel the cooling air. I shall pick the stinging thorns entangled in your hair. I shall sing my sweetest song to dull your deepest pain. And I shall cleanse your blooded hands with soft refreshing rain".

> A Roman soldier standing by Picked a stone up from the ground And with a throw of mighty force the little bird was downed. It lay upon the saddened earth So still and silent he; No more to sing his song of love Or fly the sky so free.

Lord Jesus watching from the cross Whispered a healing breath. And uttered words of tender love, This is what He said: "You shall beat your wings again to feel the cooling air. The stinging thorns upon the bush shall keep you in their care. And angels sing their sweetest songs To dull your deepest pain. I shall cleanse your feathered flesh With soft refreshing rain."

The little bird came fluttering down Sat upon the Easter cross, Amongst the thorns of perfect love He sang from dawn till dusk. There beats a heart of gentleness Beneath a bright red breast And if you listen carefully, This is what he says: "I shall beat my wings for you to feel the cooling air I shall pick the stinging thorns entangled in your hair I shall sing my sweetest song to dull your deepest pain And I shall cleanse your blooded hands with soft refreshing rain."

David Ireland

The Gilead Series — Marilynne Robinson

"Jack" is Marilynne Robinson's fourth Gilead book – surely one of the most deeply religious and beautifully crafted stories in recent decades. The souls of the Gilead folk lay bare questions of guilt, forgiveness, predestination, grace, and whether love can save us in a world where the godly are trapped in their own righteousness.

Briefly, this is the Gilead quadrilogy:

Gilead (2006): Reverend Ames, husband of Lila, friend of Reverend Boughton and godfather to his errant son Jack, writes a letter to his infant son.

Home (2009): Jack comes home, as told by Glory, Jack's sister and Boughton's unmarried daughter.

Lila (2015): Lila reflects on how she and Ames, in spite of barely knowing each other and wide differences in age and life experiences, created a marriage.

Jack (2020): Jack and Della fall in love.

The first three books take place in a small southern USA town in the 1960s. "Jack" occurs several years earlier; our eponymous prodigal is living in a St Louis boarding house, prone to drunkenness and petty thievery, an ex -con, dependent on envelopes of cash from his brother, burdened with guilt for having fathered an illegitimate child, now dead. His sole ambition is to be "less harmful," which he achieves by staying away from people who love him. He meets Della; she is black, a dedicated teacher and beloved daughter of a prominent AME bishop. Della is exasperated by Jack, but she sees into his soul and, inexplicably but certainly, loves him.

For Della, association with a white man could cost her job and reputation. For Jack, both his desire to be less harmful and the miscegeny laws of the 1960's mean that the most loving thing he can do is to stay out of Della's life; he knows this; he resolves repeatedly to do it. He considers the possibility of simply living with the knowledge that she exists: "it would not be altogether different if the presence were Jesus." He longs for, but cannot accept, grace and forgiveness: "Forgiveness...seems like a kind of antidote to regret, and there are things I haven't regretted sufficiently. And never will."

Robinson is not for readers who want action and plot; this is dissection of the soul, and not only the soul of the wayward; Jack, like all sinner-saints, is here to remind those who thought they knew righteousness that they must think again. It is heart-breaking to realise that the story (so far!) ends in 1965, signalled by news of the Selma march. "Loving vs Virginia", which ended the miscegeny laws, is a scant two years away; of course, Jack and Della cannot know this. Had I been there at the time, how would I have advised them? What Jacks and Della's walk among us now, and how do we respond?

Patti Whaley

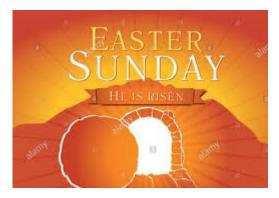


A suggestion for

an addition to

your reading list.

Mary Magdalene in the Easter Garden



I slipped outside early on that first Easter Day, Crossing rough tracks, sunrise marking the way; In haste, with foreboding, heart heavy with gloom I ran with some spices to lay at the tomb.

I was shocked on arrival, the stone laid aside, A hole dark and empty, with no-one inside. I ran to the others, to Peter and John, "Come quickly" I cried "His body is gone".

Retracing my steps and following on, The two went ahead, first Peter then John, After careful inspection, they saw and believed; Was there nobody else to see how I grieved?

They left me alone in that garden of rest, Then two angels appeared and enquired of my quest; "Where have they laid him?" I said through my tears, Then a voice soft and gentle tried to settle my fears.

He was standing behind me, the gardener I thought, And so I enquired of the person I sought; His eyes fixed on mine and then called me by name "Mary" he said understanding my pain.

In full recognition, I knew it was he, This Jesus of Nazareth as alive as could be; He was going to the Father, his work finished on earth, Though His Spirit was promised to give us new birth.

A great weight was lifted, as joy replaced grief, Now my intent was to share my belief; I returned to my friends, to tell what I saw, That Jesus now lives, and his death is no more.

(John 20:1-18)

Struan H Dunn

Easter Egg Hunt— St Mary of Charity



Easter flowers at St Peter & St Paul's

If you would like to contribute to the Easter Lilies please send donations to Janet Payne and if you would like to have remembered names on a list displayed at Easter, please let me know **revsarahwilliams@gmail.com**

To celebrate Jesus resurrection we will be flower arranging to decorate the church on Saturday 3rd April from 10 am.

Please do join us, keeping socially distanced.

I will be providing lilies, please bring greenery and other flowers (generally white and yellow).

Sarah Williams

The BIG Benefice Triple Quiz

A Quiz!

l need a sit down The Benefice of Faversham presents

The BIG Benefice Triple Quiz

Three kinds of questions on all kinds of themes...

Building on the informal, fun quizzes he made for Zoomed Rotary Club meetings, Michael Hoey has put together this special one for Faversham Benefice.

Free entry but donations encouraged: to donate, visit: www.bit.ly/4FavC Proceeds will go towards to the mission and ministry of the four churches.

There will be no prizes as the answers will be self-administered. However, the top scorer will receive the "know it all" winner's certificate. The lowest scorer will receive the "Not at all" winner's certificate.

7.30pm | Friday 9 April

Email 4favershamchurches@gmail.com for the Zoom link

> Faversham Benefice: The Church of England Churches of Davington, Faversham, Ospringe and Preston

Hope Faversham Youth

Hope Faversham Youth

An update.





As we come to the end of this term please continue to pray for our young people and leaders and how we plan to continue as restrictions lift in the coming weeks.

Wednesday evenings in term time on Zoom 7-8pm.

For information please contact hopefavershamyouth@gmail.com

Sarah Williams



hope.faversham_youth

Email: hopefavershamyouth@gmail.com

Contemplating Easter during Holy Week



We will journey with Jesus and his disciples through the week leading up to Easter Day

Our journey will include some of the events of that week

In three contemplations each day from Monday 29th March to Saturday 3rd April.

With opportunities for prayer and for your own reflection.

This web address, **bit.ly/ContEaster21**, will take you to the Playlist on YouTube to find each day's reflection. The recordings will also be on your DVD if you receive one from The Benefice, or on the link from your church website. A CD can be made available.

Reverend Sharran Ireland

A chance for some reflection during Holy Week.

Keeping Contact





Four Churches - One Town					
Contact details for Benefice Clergy					
Vicar	Revd. Simon Rowlands	0179 553 2592			
		happyvicar@gmail.com			
		BeneficeofFaversham+Vicar@gmail.com			
Community	Revd. Dan	0796 333 2221			
&	Corcoran	danchadc@gmail.com			
Mission Priest		BeneficeofFaversham+Missioner@gmail.com			

Please contact the Administrator at the Benefice Office for information on Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals or other services at any of the Benefice Churches.

- * FavershamChurches@gmail.com
- 0179 553 0553
- * During the Covid 19 epidemic the office is not manned, but your emails and calls will be responded to as quickly as possible.

St. Catherine, Preston next Faversham		fb.me/4favstc	
Wardens	Hilary Tulett Rodney Foord	BeneficeofFaversham+wardenscp@gmail.com	
St. Mary Magdalene w St. Lawrence, Davington		fb.me/4favstmml	
Warden	Maureen Gregory	BeneficeofFaversham+wardensmm@gmail.com	
St. Mary of Charity, Faversham		fb.me/4favstmoc	
Warden	Miranda Ford	BeneficeofFaversham+wardensmoc@gmail.com	
St. Peter & St. Paul, Ospringe		fb.me/4favstpp	
Wardens	Phil Larter Jason O'Hagan	BeneficeofFaversham+wardenspsp@gmail.co	

Keeping Contact — the news sheet

Keeping Contact is the news sheet of the Benefice of Faversham. It shares details of services, news and activities of the member churches in the Benefice and around the town of Faversham.

It is available free from your Church or downloaded from various sites.

Paper copies are available on request to your Church Warden.

Suitable items for inclusion in the magazine or the diary may be submitted to

BeneficeofFaversham+Contact@Gmail.com

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