

APRIL NEWSLETTER

this month's church family thanks and prayers



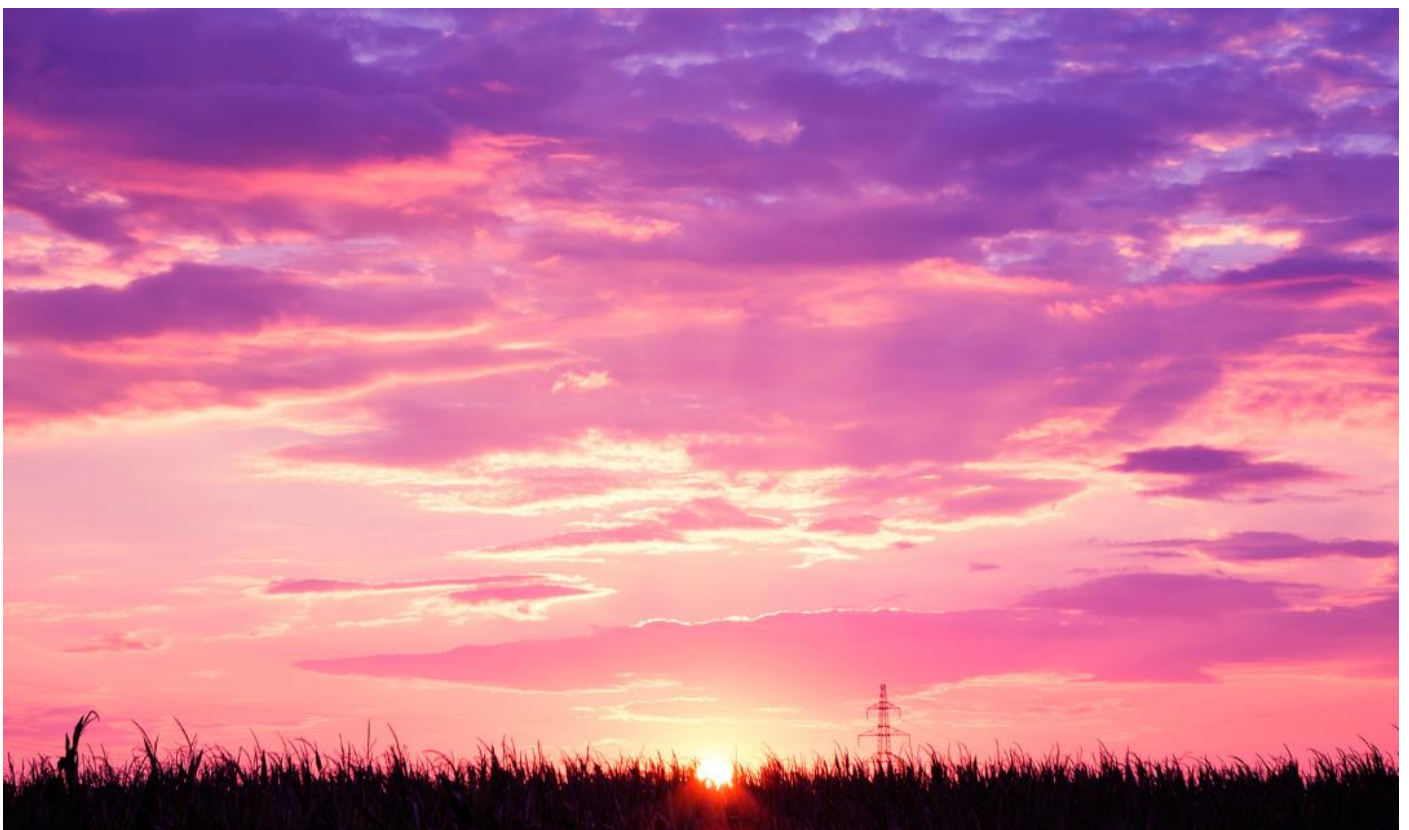
Jesus is Alive!

April 2024

The text of Cathy's Easter Morning Sermon

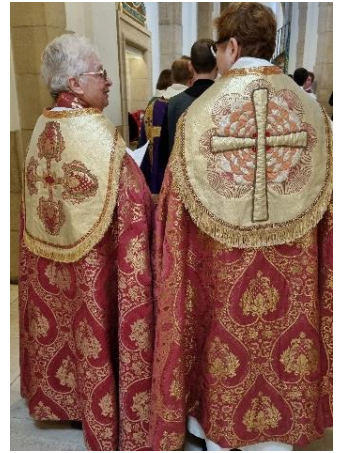
Holy Saturday is such a nothing day! Can you imagine what it was like for those first disciples – Jesus had gone to his death without an explanation and they are lost, bewildered, devastated. It's not so hard for us, because we know what comes next: that Jesus will rise, but for them – emptiness. We have to hold together the sadness of Good Friday with the joy of Easter Sunday.

I was at Guildford Cathedral recently for the installation of Archdeacon Catharine Mabuza. She and several of the Cathedral priest vicars wore beautifully embroidered cloaks. Now I was struck by the colours. The cloaks are red and gold. I always like colours and in church these are often meaningful. We have different liturgical colours for different seasons. Red is for passion, death, blood and gold is for celebration and, at Easter, resurrection. Here, there is **red and gold together**. Death and life. We have to hold together Jesus' death on Good Friday with Jesus' new life on Easter Sunday morning: Suffering and glory; sadness and celebration; conflict and peace; disappointment and joy; darkness and light; sin and forgiveness; passion and resurrection; death and new life.



This year there have been highs and lows; this Lent there have been highs and lows; even in this last two weeks there have been highs and lows. For us, there's probably no deeper sadness than losing a family member or close friend. And this can bring back other bereavements to us as well.

Two weeks ago, we lost our friend Amy. And we pray for her husband and children that God is comforting them in their loss and assuring them of his immeasurable love for them. The wonderful flip side of our grief is that Amy, with her firm faith in Jesus, is alive with him in glory now. And that is the difference Easter makes. We can be sure that the life after is secured for each of us and we can live in that light now. The resurrection of Jesus makes ALL the difference.



This last two weeks for me has had highs and lows: there has been the joy of a family wedding, the stress of an Ofsted at Ashley school, another family gathering, as well as this deep sadness and a fabulous conversation with a man called Tony. His story reminds us that, most wonderfully, God is changing the lives of people around us.

I spoke to Tony at Encounter Easter on Good Friday and the story of Jesus conquering death is coming alive to him as never before. He used to drop his partner off to church at St John's and return and pick her up. Then people at The Four started to chat to him and someone invited him to the Alpha course. Tony has come to faith in Jesus over the last couple of months, his life has been transformed by meeting Jesus. Now he doesn't want to miss a service!!

Highs and lows. Deep sadness and joy. Have you noticed that often in life, really good things and really hard things come at exactly the same time. It's as if when God is at work making beautiful things happen, the devil digs his oar in and brings trouble. Like Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, like the cloak – red and gold: suffering and glory, passion and resurrection, death and new life.

I don't know if you've ever been on a roller coaster. I don't do roller coasters. We used to take our children to Thorpe Park when they were teenagers and just younger, but tall enough to reach the critical height bar! But I would always be the one standing there with the coats watching. I watched them go up high and down low again and again. It is moving and dynamic and this is really what life is like – we move through highs and lows, and God's Holy Spirit is with us in them all. In fact, God's spirit transforms our sadness to joy and our fear to hope and our loss to gain.

What was dead is alive, what was lost is found, what was darkness turns to light.

We can enjoy the celebrations and joys while they are there, we mustn't let the disappointments swamp us. Because we know what the **resurrection** means - Jesus has beaten death, he is the winner, he has conquered death and we have been set free. As Andrew Ollerton says on the Bible Course, "We know the end of the story and *we are on the winning side.*"

As we contemplate death and life this Easter, sharpened by the loss of a friend, I think it's time to think about our own lives. Maybe it is a **nudge** to make you get on and do something God has been telling you to do. In one of the first conversations I had with

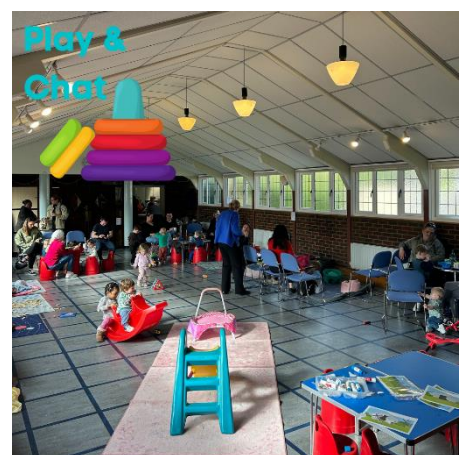
Amy when we arrived in Walton, she said “I know God wants me to do something and I think it is to do with children and young people”. Since then she has consistently taken the next step in serving God in many different ways. She has stepped out of her comfort zone many times for God and she really made the most of each day. I love our Vision statement which says “we take our next steps...”

We all have one life to live. Is it time to step up in our service of God? Jesus is looking for people to be his hands and his feet – some people here are really good at pastoral care - what’s the next step? Helping in the community café or toddler group? Maybe – a lay leader course, maybe Ordained ministry. There are loads of ways we can serve God and his people in line with the person God has made us to be. Or maybe it’s trying to put a relationship right or breaking a bad habit and making a good choice. Here’s a **nudge**. Don’t wait. Do it now. Speak to Jonny or Cathy or Dave or send an email to one of us right now!

What was dead is alive, what was lost is found, what was darkness turns to light.

The word for Easter Sunday is Alleluia!

We can be sure that the life after is secured for each of us and we can live in that light now.



APCM – Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024



St Mary’s & St John’s annual Church meeting will be on Monday, 29th April 2024 at St John's Church. Join at 7.30 pm for refreshments, 8.00 pm start.

You’re invited to join us as we celebrate what God has been doing here in the last year, it’s also a chance to listen, as we lay out the vision for the year to come.

The APCM is open to all. Please do join us for this opportunity to enjoy one another’s company, share together, pray together and commit ourselves afresh to what the Lord is calling us to do in Walton-on-Thames and beyond.





Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Amy Maddocks

There will be a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of our dear friend and colleague Amy Maddocks on **Saturday, 27th April 2024 at 2.00 pm in St Mary's Church.**

All are welcome. If you would like, please do wear something purple.

As well as being the lovely person she was and a wife and young mum, Amy served the Lord and His Church of St. Mary's and St. John's with creative energy and ideas, with passion and planning and led us so well in reaching out to the Community. Her creative ideas for August's Holiday Club are legendary!! Amy led us in setting up Play and Chat and the Community Café and had further plans and different initiatives in the pipeline, that, sadly, she was not able to implement. She was well known to many at the local school and across the community. She is a huge loss not only to family and friends, but to the Church, the school and the local community.

We miss you Amy but are grateful you are in a place of wholeness and healing with Jesus, where you can freely worship your Lord Jesus and you no longer have the pain and suffering of cancer. May we remember her and reconsider our relationship with Jesus, as she would want to encourage us and challenge us to do.



Vicar News – EMDL June, July, August 2024

Jonny and Cathy have been granted a period of Extended Ministerial Development Leave (EMDL). This is a three-month period away from the parish, which combines space for self and God, refreshment, personal and professional development and reflection. The churchwardens and PCC know the Parish will be in the capable hands of Rev Dave Bixby whilst Jonny and Cathy are away.

As part of their EMDL, Jonny and Cathy will be returning to South Africa. They first arrived in South Africa in January 1994 - 30 years ago, just before the first multi-racial, democratic elections at the end of April that year. They arrived with two young children, a 3 year old and an 11 month old and returned 5 years later with their third child, who was born in South Africa. Whilst in South Africa they worked closely with the first Bishop of the Diocese of St. Mark the Evangelist in the northern part of South Africa, north of Pretoria, towards Zimbabwe. Jonny worked as Diocesan Secretary, the right-hand man to the Bishop, running the administration and finances of the Diocese. The Diocese still follows the vision that both Jonny and Cathy were instrumental in developing. They will be staying with the Bishop and have been asked to preach at a large festival for a modern-day Saint Manche Masemola, whose statue is above Westminster Abbey's great west door; hers is one of ten statues to modern martyrs; Christians who gave up their lives for their beliefs. They will also meet some of the people they worked with and assess the impact of the vision on the life and ministry of the Church over the years across the geographically huge Diocese.

Key Information

Vicars:

Rev Jonny Blair | jonny@waltonparish.org.uk | 07466 401 614 (off duty Friday)

Rev Cathy Blair | cathy@waltonparish.org.uk | 01932 917 736 (available Tuesdays)

Assistant Minister: Rev Caroline Merrick (currently unavailable)

Curate: Rev Dave Bixby dave@waltonparish.org.uk | 07471 090 254 (off duty Fri)

Church Warden: David Henderson and Janet Todd (St John's)

Pastoral Matters: For pastoral enquiries contact vicar@waltonparish.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Katharine Scott | safeguarding@waltonparish.org.uk
Wendy Fitch and Louise Turner (Vulnerable adults)

Safeguarding Administrator: Julia Gorrie (part time flexi hours) |
safeguardingadmin@waltonparish.org.uk

Treasurer: Anne Redshaw | treasurer@waltonparish.org.uk

Assistant Treasurer: Julia Gorrie | assistant-treasurer@waltonparish.org.uk

A full list of Parish Officers can be found on our website.

Information about weddings, funerals and baptisms can also be found on our website | www.waltonparish.org.uk

Church Office

Administrator: Sam Harrison

St Mary's Church Hall, Church Street, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 2QS

Telephone | 01932 224 238 Email | office@waltonparish.org.uk

The office contact hours are:

Closed Monday | Open Tuesday to Friday 10.00 am – 12 noon

St Mary's Church, Church Street, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 2QS

St John's Church, 1 The Furrows, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 3JQ

In Memorium – April

10th Mary Thom

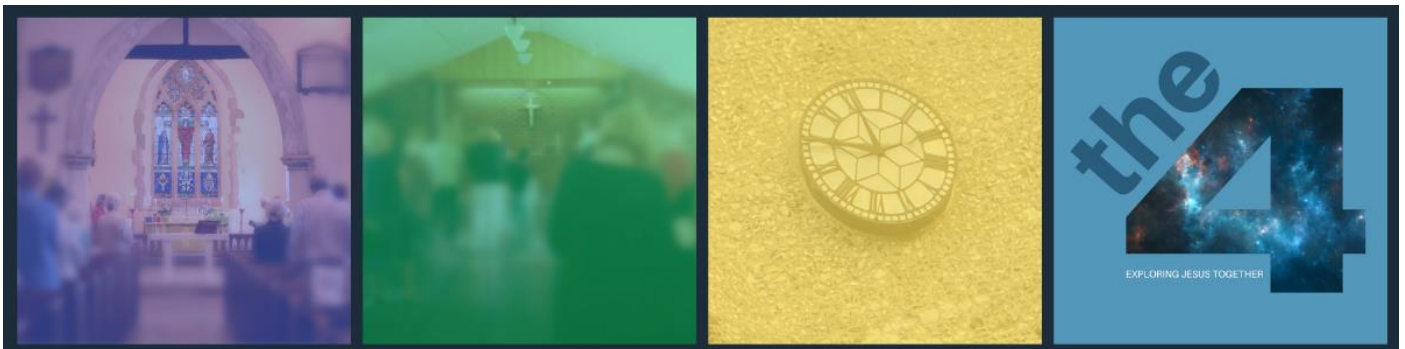
26th David Marsh

19th Stuart Hawkins

27th Charles Frise

23rd Branko Grisogono

APRIL 2024	St Mary's & St John's Services	Living in the Light	
For details of all services, events and youth groups visit www.waltonparish.org.uk			
Thurs 4 th April	10.30 am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sun 7th April <i>Easter 2</i>	8.30 am Holy Communion	St John's	Living in the light of fellowship & forgiveness 1 John 1: 1-2:2 John 20: 19-31
	10.00 am Service for all with Communion	St Mary's	
	4.00 pm The Four No 4.00 pm service	St John's	
Thurs 11 th April	10.30 am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sun 14th April <i>Easter 3</i>	8.30 am Holy Communion	St Mary's	Living in the light as God's children in purity 1 John 3: 1-7 Luke 24: 36b-48
	10.00 am Service for all	St Mary's	
	11.00 am Holy Communion	St John's	
	4.00 pm The Four	St John's	
Thurs 18 th April	10.30 am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sun 21st April <i>Easter 4</i>	8.30 am Holy Communion	St John's	Living in the light as God's children in truth and action 1 John 3: 16-24 John 10: 11-18
	10.00 am Service for all with Communion	St Mary's	
	4.00 pm The Four	St John's	
Thurs 25 th April	10.30 am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sun 28th April <i>Easter 5</i>	8.30 am Holy Communion	St Mary's	Living in the light of God's love 1 John 4: 7 – 21 John 15: 1-8
	10.00 am Service for all	St Mary's	
	4.00 pm The Four	St John's	
	6.30 pm ANZAC service	St Mary's	
Thurs 2 nd May	10.30am Holy Communion	St Mary's	
Sun 5th May <i>Easter 6</i>	8.30 am Holy Communion	St John's	Living in the light of and joy of obedience 1 John 5: 1-6 John 15: 9-17
	10.00 am Service for all with Communion	St Mary's	
	4.00 pm The Four No 4.00 pm service	St John's	



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