



WELCOME TO ST PETER'S ASH



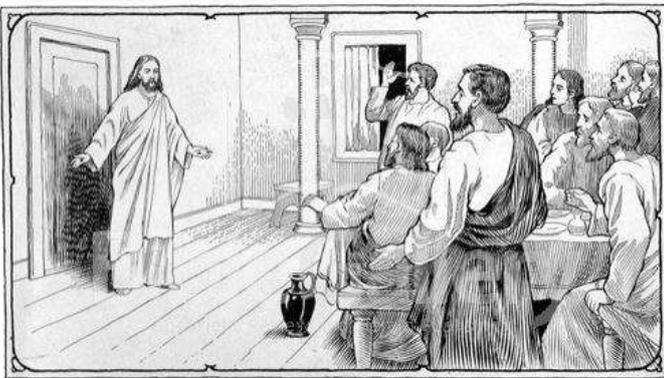
THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT ST PETER'S IS CALLED TO CELEBRATE, LIVE AND REFLECT THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

18TH APRIL 2021

EASTER 3

<u>READINGS FOR TODAY</u>	PARISH OFFICE: Please phone or use e-mail to make contact TEL:01252 331161; e- mail: office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk BOOKINGS OF WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS – phone for an appointment on 01252 321517 or 331161 WEBSITE: www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk
Acts 3 v 12 - 19	
1 John 3 v 1 - 7	
Luke 24 v 36b - 48	

ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN!



Jesus said 'Peace be with you'

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

SUNDAY 16TH MAY at 10 – 45 am

IN CHURCH

(Immediately after the 10 am Parish Communion)

Nomination forms are available for churchwardens and 4 places on the PCC. If you are not on the Electoral Roll there are application forms available, once completed please hand them to Fr Keith or Pauline Baxter. Only those on the electoral roll can vote at the meeting.

PCC MEETING - Tuesday 20th April 7 – 30 pm on Zoom

SHOEBOXES FOR CHRISTMAS - I would love it if we could be more 'green' this year. Wooden pencils, wooden handled skipping ropes, wooden yoyo or truck. Cotton facecloth, sisal soap bag, bamboo toothbrush and metal pencil sharpeners are all good. See if you can think of some more. Barbara Rose.

CARE AND SHARE - tins, packets, UHT milk, tea, coffee etc. for the shelves outside church, please leave items on the shelves or on the doorstep of the Rectory. *****

Quiet Day, led by The Revd. Haydon Wilcox, at St. Columba's House, Woking.

The Quiet Day will support people to get back into the world from lockdown and will offer the opportunity to share, reflect, to be spiritually fed and to gain encouragement.

The event will be from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Numbers will be limited to 16. All Covid protocols will be practised to ensure a safe environment. The cost will be £30 and includes a packed lunch and refreshments.

We anticipate high demand, so two dates have been set aside: Monday 7th June and Monday 12th July 2021. To make a reservation please contact St. Columba's House on Tel. 01483 766 498 or email: admin@stcolumbushouse.org.uk .

SERVICE MARKING THE DEATH OF HRH PRINCE PHILIP

THIS AFTERNOON 4 – 00 PM IN CHURCH

A service of prayer and thanksgiving for the life of Prince Philip, in recognition of his devoted service to this country and the Commonwealth, and his support for HM the Queen during 73 years of marriage.

(Social distancing rules will apply. There will be music but no singing permitted)

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK – EASTER 4

Acts 4 v 5 - 12; 1 John 3 v 16 - end; John 10 v 11 - 18

ST PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN - If you would like prayer for yourself or somebody else please phone: 01252 322292 or 01252 323037 This is a confidential service. *****

If you would like to talk to us at any time please phone us: Carol – 01252 313239. Keith – 01252 321517

Please pray for the souls of all the recently Departed, among them: PRINCE PHILIP: STEVE EVANS; RITA WHERRELL; DOROTHY MILLARD; LIONEL COUSINS

SOME THOUGHTS FROM REVD. CAROL
ON TODAY'S READINGS

Because we film the Morning Prayer services in advance - this week somewhat earlier than usual - I am preparing this talk/reflection way in advance of when I would perhaps like to, as I am conscious that things can change so quickly and unexpectedly and something may not be mentioned that perhaps should be. Last week was a case in point in that we recorded the service Friday morning and it was Friday lunch time when we heard about the death of our Queen's husband, HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. However later today, Sunday, at 4pm we shall be holding a memorial service here at St. Peter's to give thanks for his life, his loyalty and service and for the person he was.

For the Queen and her family, like so many others who are affected by the loss of a loved one, it will be a time of sadness, mixed, no doubt with thankfulness that Prince Philip is no longer having to endure the discomforts of what 99 years of aging brings. The family will also be coming to terms with the fact that person who is now missing will not be there anymore. It does not matter what age they are when someone dies, whether they have been ill for a long time or their death has come unexpectedly through accident of sudden illness, the fact that they are no longer there will leave a hole in the lives of those around them. Indeed, it is something that I can fully empathise with, having recently gone through the pain of losing my sister, quite suddenly and unexpectedly through Covid.

The impact of Prince Philip's death is of course felt beyond those close to him. Both in this country and around the world, people who have been impacted by the various charities he has supported, in particular the many, many thousands of young people who have engaged with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, whose lives have been changed through it, will feel some thanks for the opportunities it has given them. The one thing we can be sure of through this very public persons death, is that many people, including the Queen, will have turned towards their faith.

As Christians, at this time in the church year we celebrate the joy of and hope of the resurrection. This is something we have in common with Christians all over the world and of course the disciples who lived with and spent time with Jesus. However, before they reached that joy there was fear and trepidation and when Jesus died the disciples were, quite understandably, at a loss. They were frightened and uncertain of what the future would hold for them now that their friend had gone. Despite all that they had been told by Jesus, that He would return, they couldn't quite believe it. One could say that at that point in time they did not have a real faith – they may have wanted to believe, but until they actually saw Jesus, ate with Him and even touched Him, they still had doubts.

In the Gospel account this morning, we hear again that Jesus appeared amongst them, He spent time with His disciples, talking with them about His ministry, referring to the Old Testament prophecies. Emphasising the importance of the Scriptures. What Jesus was doing here was preparing the disciples so that they would continue His work after He returned to the Father. He spelt out exactly what their message should be about once He finally left them. It was because of those post resurrection encounters that the disciples found the courage to step out of hiding and to speak publicly about Jesus and to announce a new Way through Him. And of course, later they would do so with the

power of the Holy Spirit – the helper that Jesus promised to them.

Luke reminds His readers in verse 44 that Jesus came to satisfy all the prophecies made about Him in the Old Testament. It has been said that Jesus was concealed in the Old Testament and revealed in the New Testament. One thing we can be sure of, is that to date, everything that was written about Jesus in the Bible was fulfilled. That was why Jesus taught the disciples in the Scriptures while He was with them during His life and His resurrection. They needed to understand the significance of the past. Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament, not to push it aside and write it off as insignificant. And that is why it is so important for us too to continue to read and learn both the Old and New Testament Scriptures. So, that we will know our inheritance as Christians today.

We, like the disciples, cannot be expected to understand life post resurrection, but we know that resurrection is what will happen to all of us who believe in the Christ who died and rose again for us. In verse 39, Jesus offered the disciples proof that He was indeed alive, that it wasn't a ghost standing in front of them. As His disciples today, we do not have the privilege of being able to touch Jesus, but our experience of Him is no less real, indeed you could go as far as to say it is somewhat stronger in some respects, because our belief in Him is truly based on faith. Remember the words Jesus spoke to Thomas when he acknowledges that Jesus is indeed resurrected and is alive in John 20:29: Jesus told Thomas 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed.'

It is by faith that we can endure the trials and tribulations of this world. When life throws us a curveball and things are tough, we know that by trusting in God, that He is there walking alongside us and that we will get through it. We can experience the joy of the resurrection, not merely knowing that there is more beyond this world, but that even in the depths of our sadness or despair, something far stronger will win over. Like the disciples we can find courage to step out and to talk about our faith to others, to share the good news of Jesus and what He has done for us personally. This is something each and every one of us should be doing. It is what God expects of us. We don't all have to be like Peter who we heard about in the Acts reading. He was most definitely speaking out in a very public way. But when opportunities come our way to talk about our faith or show strength of faith through our personal suffering perhaps, we can help others to know what salvation through Jesus is. We can show what our Christian faith is.

I am in no doubt at this time that our Queen Elizabeth, is broken hearted at the loss of her husband of 73 years. However, as in many other times of trial, I have no doubt that she will turn to her faith in Jesus for strength and courage to help her through. Let us take her example and those of the early disciples, be open and honest about our faith, so that others will see and know that Jesus lives and through Him we live too when we leave this mortal world. For this is the celebration of the resurrection. Allelulia He is Risen! He is risen indeed. Allelulia.

Eastertide quote of the week

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time. Martin Luther

Morning Prayer at 10 am on Sunday

(A recording of this service is available to view now on the St Peter's website.)

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

If there is more than one person present, someone may wish to read the parts marked (L), everyone says the rest together. You can say alternate verses in the Psalm and in the Canticles. Please have a Bible to hand.

(L) Alleluia, Christ is risen!
All: He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

(L) O Lord, open our lips
All: and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

(L) In your resurrection, O Christ,
All: let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia.

A candle may be lit

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As once you ransomed your people from Egypt
and led them to freedom in the promised land,
so now you have delivered us
from the dominion of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your risen Son.
May we, the first fruits of your new creation,
rejoice in this new day you have made,
and praise you for your mighty acts.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

This hymn is said or sung:

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid Him, Love by hatred slain,
Thinking that He'd never wake to life again,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

Up He sprang at Easter, like the risen grain,
He that for three days in the grave had lain;
Up from the dead my risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

When our hearts are saddened, grieving or in pain,
By Your touch You call us back to life again;
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

(L) The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind:

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. Amen.

(L) Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

Pause to call to mind our sins and then we confess them:

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.
We have lived by our own strength,
and not by the power of your resurrection.
We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.
We have lived for this world alone,
and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

(L) God of love and power we ask you to
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by your Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. Amen.

The collect for Easter 3:

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained
by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Read Acts 3 v 12 - 19 then Psalm 4 concluding with:

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as
it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Read 1 John 3 v 1 - 7

(L) Alleluia, alleluia. I am the first and the last, says the
Lord, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am
alive for evermore.

All: Alleluia.

Now read Luke 24 v 36b - 48

*Revd. Carol has written some thoughts for today – see
above, before the start of this service.*

Now pause for your own reflections.

(L) Let us affirm our faith:

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and
unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of
God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God,
Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not
made, of one Being with the Father; through him all
things were made. For us and for our salvation he came
down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he
was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and
was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance
with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is
seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again
in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his
kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the

Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

All Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Alleluia.
He has defeated the powers of death. Alleluia.
Jesus turns our sorrow into dancing. Alleluia.
He has the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

We now say 'The Benedictus' together:

All: The Lord is risen from the tomb
who for our sakes hung upon the tree. Alleluia.

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear, ♦
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the
Most High, ♦
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the
shadow of death, ♦
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

All: Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

All: The Lord is risen from the tomb
who for our sakes hung upon the tree. Alleluia.

Prayers of intercession now follow

Response: Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father we pray for the whole of the church of Christ, especially those who respond to your call, and we particularly think of our Queen Elizabeth at this time and give thanks for her faithfulness to you. We pray for our Bishops here in Guildford Diocese. For Bishop Andrew on study leave and for Bishop Jo. Being ever mindful that we are part of the body of Christ, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are tortured, wounded and cut off because of their faith in you.

Response: Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

Father God we bring before you a world full of conflict, disease and pain. We pray for peace and reconciliation, where there is division and hatred, especially we pray for a quietening of the unrest in Northern Ireland in recent weeks. We pray for those areas of the world where sickness and hunger are the norm and in particular, we give thanks for the aid workers, missionaries and medical teams helping to bring relief to the suffering, especially in this time of the pandemic. We pray for our own community, for those that work for the wider good: for those who help people to feel safe and secure, for health workers and police. We pray for faith groups and politicians and for the many volunteer organizations, especially those who enable young people to become confident and enabled in what they do.

Response: Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

We continue to pray for the politicians, scientists and medical teams who continue to guide, lead and learn of ways through the pandemic. We give thanks for the vaccine rollout and pray for its continued successes. Help us to be patient and understanding of those who are struggling with fear and apprehension at this time. And help us to know where we can offer support, especially for those who feel lonely and isolated.

Response: Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

During this Easter season Lord, we pray for the many people who do not yet know the richness of your grace and love. May we, as a community of faith, reach out and share our knowledge and experience of You with those around us.

Response: Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

We bring before you those known to us in our community who are unwell, we pray especially for those known to ourselves. Father God touch each one of them at their point of need, relieve their pain and suffering, whether in mind, body or spirit. Give them the gift of peace in their troubles.

Response: Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father we give thanks for the joy of the resurrection and the assurance that one day we shall all take our place in heaven with you, because of your Son our saviour Jesus Christ. Along with all the Saints who have gone before us we think of those who have died recently:

PRINCE PHILIP, STEVE EVANS; RITA WHERRELL;
DOROTHY MILLARD; LIONEL COUSINS

Be with their families and friends and all who mourn, give them comfort in their time of sorrow and loss.

All: Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As Jesus taught us, so we pray: Our Father in heaven....

The following hymn may be said or sung:

Come, ye faithful, raise the anthem,
cleave the skies with shouts of praise;
sing to him who found the ransom,
Ancient of eternal days,
God of God, the Word incarnate,
whom the heaven of heaven obeys.

Ere he raised the lofty mountains,
formed of the seas, or built the sky,
love eternal, free and boundless,
moved the Lord of life to die,
foreordained the Prince of princes
for the throne of Calvary.

There, for us and our redemption,
see him for all his lifeblood pour,
there he wins our full salvation,
dies that we may die no more;
then, arising, lives for ever,
reigning where he was before.

High on yon celestial mountains
stands his sapphire throne, all bright,
midst unending alleluias
bursting from the sons of light;
Sion's people tell his praises,
Victor after hard-won fight.

Bring your harps, and bring your incense,
sweep the string and pour the lay;
let the earth proclaim his wonders,
King of that celestial day;
he the lamb once slain is worthy,
who was dead, and lives for ay.

Laud and honour to the Father,
laud and honour to the Son,
laud and honour to the Spirit,
ever Three and ever One,
consubstantial, co-eternal,
while unending ages run.

Let us pray:

(L) Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

(L) God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(L) May the God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the eternal covenant,
make us perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight;
and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all today
and always. Amen.

(L) May the risen Christ grant us the joys of eternal life.
All Amen.

(L) Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.
All Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

All May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God rest in peace, and rise with Christ in glory.
Amen.

EVENING PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

In your resurrection, O Christ,
let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia.

All Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;
you are exalted as head over all.

- 1 Blessed are you, God of Israel, for ever and ever, ♦
for yours is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour and the majesty.
- 2 Everything in heaven and on earth is yours; ♦
yours is the kingdom, O Lord,
and you are exalted as head over all.
- 3 Riches and honour come from you ♦
and you rule over all.
- 4 In your hand are power and might; ♦
yours it is to give power and strength to all.
- 5 And now we give you thanks, our God, ♦
and praise your glorious name.
- 6 For all things come from you, ♦
and of your own have we given you.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

All Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;
you are exalted as head over all.

This hymn may be said or sung

He is Lord; He is Lord
He is Risen from the dead
And He is Lord,
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord.

He is King; He is King
He is Risen from the dead
And He is King,
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is King.

He is love; He is love
He is Risen from the dead
And He is love,
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is love.

That this evening may be holy, good and peaceful,
let us pray with one heart and mind:

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,
so may your mercy come down upon us
to cleanse our hearts
and set us free to sing your praise
now and for ever. Amen.

*A Psalm is said: Mon 61; Tue 71; Wed 72; Thurs 73;
Fri (St George) 3; Sat 27 ending with:*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.

*Two Scripture Readings now follow (see below). Between
the two readings we say:*

All God raised Christ from the dead,
the Lamb without spot or stain. Alleluia.

- 1 Blessed be the God and Father ♦
of our Lord Jesus Christ!
- 2 By his great mercy we have been born anew
to a living hope ♦
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the
dead,
- 3 Into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and
unfading, ♦
kept in heaven for you,
- 4 Who are being protected by the power of God
through faith, ♦
for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- 5 You were ransomed from the futile ways of your
ancestors ♦
not with perishable things like silver or gold
- 6 But with the precious blood of Christ ♦
like that of a lamb without spot or stain.
- 7 Through him you have confidence in God, who raised
him from the dead and gave him glory, ♦
so that your faith and hope are set on God.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

All God raised Christ from the dead,
the Lamb without spot or stain. Alleluia.

Readings:

Monday Exodus 19; Luke 1 v 1 - 25
Tuesday Exodus 20 v 1 - 21; Luke 1 v 26 - 38
Wednesday Exodus 24; Luke 1 v 39 - 56
Thursday: Exodus 25 v 1 - 22; Luke 1 v 57 - end
Friday (St George) Isaiah 43 v 1 - 7; John 15 v 1 - 8
Saturday: Exodus 29 v 1 - 9; Luke 2 v 21 - 40

After the second reading we say:

The Lord is my strength and my song:
he has become my salvation.

I shall not die, but live,
and declare the works of the Lord.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
The Lord is my strength and my song:
he has become my salvation.

Gospel Cantic: The Magnificat (The Song of Mary)

All The stone which the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone. Alleluia.

1) My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit
rejoices in God my Saviour; he has looked with favour on
his lowly servant.

2) From this day all generations will call me blessed; the
Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his
name.

3) He has mercy on those who fear him, from generation
to generation.

4) He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered
the proud in their conceit.

5) Casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting
up the lowly.

6) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the
rich away empty.

7) He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, to
remember his promise of mercy.

8) The promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and
his children for ever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.

All The stone which the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone. Alleluia.

*Prayers of thanksgiving are made for the day that is
ending. Intercessions are offered for the church, the world
and for individuals, the sick and the departed.*

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

This hymn may be said or sung:

The strife is o'er, the battle done,
the Victor's triumph won;
O let the song of praise be sung:
Alleluia!

The powers of death have done their worst,
and Jesus hath his foes dispersed:
let shout of holy joy outburst.
Alleluia!

On the third morn he rose again
Glorious in majesty to reign;
O let us swell the joyful strain:
Alleluia!

Lord! by the stripes which wounded thee,
from death's dread sting thy servants free,
that we may live and sing to thee.
Alleluia!

Let us pray:

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

All: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

SERMON FROM THE ARCHDEACON OF DORKING – MARTIN BREADMORE

How can you live for God now?

We all make mistakes or misunderstand the things that are going on around about us.

I heard the story the other day about a woman who'd come home to find her husband frantically shaking and vibrating around the kitchen, with what looked like a wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Thinking he was suffering an electric shock, she smashed a heavy piece of wood into him to jolt him away from the current, breaking his arm in two places as she did. It was only then that she discovered that he was dancing to his favourite music on his iPod. What a nightmare!

There's also the story of the Duke of Wellington when he was fighting against Napoleon in the battle of Waterloo in 1815. Apparently, the battle had finished, and the English lookouts were trying to find news of what had taken place. Through the mist they saw the signals 'Wellington defeated' but then the mist and the cloud came back in again. They were disappointed with that news. As the next day dawned, they looked again and this time they saw the full message. The full message came through 'Wellington defeated' just as before but then with the extra two words: 'the French'. Defeat had turned into victory; sadness was turned into joy. They had the wrong end of the stick.

It's a funny phrase that isn't it: getting the wrong end of the stick. Of course, it means that we've misunderstood something or made a mistake.

As you read the stories of Jesus and his disciples in the New Testament, you can often see that the disciples continually got the wrong end of the stick. They didn't really understand what Jesus was doing and what he was saying.

You remember, for example, a time when some people brought children to Jesus and the disciples said, "no take them away". But Jesus said "no, let them come to me. Because anyone who wants to enter the kingdom of God needs to be like a child". And then there was the occasion

when the disciples came and asked Jesus "how many times should we forgive someone, seven?" Jesus says "no, you should never stop showing forgiveness to other people".

And then there was the occasion when the disciples were having an argument about who was going to have the greatest seats of power, authority and importance in heaven and Jesus said to them: "Look it's not about power and authority. It's about serving other people. That's what it means to follow me, it's not about power and influence and status. It's about service."

You see the disciples kept on getting the wrong end of the stick. They expected Jesus to be their rescuer, the one who would rescue them from the Romans who were ruling them. They were expecting Jesus to do something dramatic; to defeat the Romans, drive them out, and then to establish his new kingdom in its place.

Well of course what happened to Jesus, particularly in the final few days of his life, was dramatic. We've just been reminded how he was strung up on a cross and was crucified. How confused and disappointed the disciples must have felt. They must have felt that it all had gone horribly wrong. The last three years, when they'd been going around with him, hoping that things would be so different. And we know that after Jesus died on that Good Friday, they were afraid, they feared for their lives. They fled and locked themselves behind closed doors. They got it all wrong, they'd made a mistake. It was a waste of their time having followed Jesus. How it must have felt to them that evil had won the day on that Good Friday. All must have seemed gloomy. They must have despaired they must have had so many questions to ask. But of course, on that Easter Sunday morning as the mist clears the clear and full and correct message becomes clear. News came from the tomb that it was empty, and that Jesus had been raised to new life. Not resuscitated but given brand new life again. Jesus was risen from the dead. He was alive. And so even though on Good Friday the disciples had it wrong, they got the wrong end of the stick, as always Jesus was able to turn things upside down. Evil had not won the day; it had not got the final hand or the final word. Jesus had been raised to new life again.

The true message was not that evil had won, but that we are now called to live for him. And that's essentially what Jesus said to his disciples as he comes and meets them. From our reading in Luke, today: once they realize that it was Jesus and it wasn't a ghost, we're told that Jesus opened their minds so that they could understand the scriptures. Just as had he done with those couple of travellers that he'd been with on the Emmaus road, immediately before Jesus appears here to his disciples. Then Jesus goes on to say to them you are witnesses of these things. He instructs them to wait for the Holy Spirit, who's going to come in mighty power in Jerusalem soon. But he calls them to live for him now.

You see the cross and the resurrection has changed everything. Jesus is alive, he has made all things new, and he calls me, he calls you, to follow him, to live for him in every aspect of our lives. So, we're called to whole life discipleship as witnesses of Jesus, that means that you and I are to live for Jesus in every aspect of our lives all the time.

This whole life-giving is all important, it's about all of us being involved and it encompasses every aspect of our lives.

So, what does this look like? Well, it looks like you and me as ordinary people living with an understanding of our role in what God wants to do in and around us. It looks a bit like Albert.

Albert is a bus driver who's passionate about serving people. Albert has a natural way of extending courtesies that make life easier. He waits for the person who's still running for the bus stop and exercises patience with those who've lost their change. He's also bothered about the other drivers in the depot. Not long ago he returned to work after a short strike during which only five drivers had crossed the picket line. He knew what he had to do, "my job tomorrow" he said "is to be a peacemaker. That's why I'm here".

You see Albert has a vision to make a difference in his place of work. Quietly spoken with a sense of humour, a diplomat, and a good listener, he uses his gifts by actively engaging with the relational tensions of his workplace. Along the way he hopes to drive lots of people safely from a to b, to enable as many people as possible to experience grace through his attention to their needs and to speak about Jesus as the one who inspires his vision for a life worth living.

I wonder as you now live for Jesus, how can you be like Albert? You see the reality is that our fundamental identity is that, first and foremost, we are disciples of the risen Lord Jesus. And so, as a whole life follower of Jesus, how can you live for God now in the various places you find yourself in this week?
