



MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE
PARISH CHURCH OF
St MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, RUNCORN.
www.runcornstmichaels.org.uk

ISSUE 171

April 2024

Growing Together



In GROWING TOGETHER THIS MONTH:
HUMOUR NEWS

PUZZLE PAGE

SERVICES FOR APRIL
CELEBRATIONS



Bunnies, Eggs, and the Cross.

So it is that time of year again where the conversations begin to pick up pace regarding eggs and bunnies. It is sad really that the devotion to the Easter message has largely been replaced with these somewhat commercialised items for such a sacred time of year. Similar to Christmas with the conversations over elves, Santa and the abundance of gifts that overshadows the need to truly enjoy the Christmas message, (Though we do the Christmas message much better than the Easter message which is right on our door step) So regarding secular practices of bunnies and eggs, should we promote them?

Eggs

You maybe surprised to read that it is thought we, as Christians, brought in the Easter egg. The early Mesopotamian Christians consumed eggs before fasting over Easter (where we now get pancake/shrove Tuesday from), then on Easter day they tucked into Eggs. Decorating Eggs red as gifts at Easter was a part of the practice of the Orthodox church, specifically red to represent the blood of Christ. Then there was the spiritual significance of the sealed Tomb (the shell) and the cracking of the tomb on Easter day (new life). These eggs have now largely been replaced with more expensive chocolate versions as we know, but the message of the egg and its origins can still be the same.

Eggs are a symbol of new life, or hope, and of God's blessing to the world around us.

Bunny's

Now, what about the Easter Bunny? Well, it is thought that this magical bunny originated from pagan roots in ancient times, where animals were celebrated alongside gods, goddesses and nature. Further on, in Germany during the 1500's a children's game emerged during which the "Oschter Haws," or Easter Hare, lays a nest of colourful eggs. How this tied into Christianity is unclear but one source believed it possible that the Blessed Virgin Mary had long been associated with rabbits. This can be seen in the image of The Madonna of the Rabbit, 1525-1530 by Titian (pictured above) which shows what was possibly the beginning of the bunny tradition. However given that the painting is full of symbolism one of which is the medieval thought that rabbits reproduced without intercourse (Virgin birth), this is a false idea. This painting therefore is not the beginning of the Easter bunny or a rubber stamp to participate in this practice, rather an artistic reminder of the Blessed Virginity of Mary.

So, to answer our original question above, should Christians be dealing with bunnies and eggs? Eggs, yes, Bunny's, probably not. Eggs have a strong Christian root and are a wonderful way of connecting with children and families this time of year. I personally do not see any issue in Easter egg hunts, decorating egg competitions, and other things similar, Bunny's on the other hand are different.

This may come as a surprise for you to read but the promotion of an ambiguous, possible pagan, magical bunny within our churches is something we should be trying to avoid and not let the bunny symbol overtake the value of the cross of Christ, of which this part of our year is all about.

We have a responsibility as disciples of Jesus Christ to shine the light of Christ far brighter than any other light around us. And we absolutely must get into the mind-set of doing so at this time of year, otherwise the cross will become meaningless to those around us.

This cross, the tomb and the Easter message is a light that now needs to overpower all else. Here we find hope in a dark world, hope rooted in Jesus Christ, not a bunny.

wishing you blessed Easter,

Rev'd George

APRIL CHURCH SERVICES

Wednesday 3rd April
NO SERVICE TODAY

Sunday 7th April (2nd Sunday of Easter)
9.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Café Style Church



Wednesday 10th April
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 14th April (3rd Sunday of Easter)
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 17th April
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 21st April (4th Sunday of Easter)
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 24th April
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 28th April (5th Sunday of Easter)
10.30am Holy Communion

Prayer for April 2024
based on John 20: 19-end

Almighty Father,
In these weeks after Easter, help us to receive afresh
the new life Jesus' resurrection makes possible.
Lord, come to us. Walk through the locked doors of our fears.
Bring us your peace. Fill us with your Holy Spirit.
Send us onto our daily front lines to share your resurrection
peace and hope and love with those who are lost and lonely.
Thank you for meeting us in Jesus, our Lord and our God.
We are your Easter people. Hallelujah. Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

BIBLE READINGS FOR APRIL

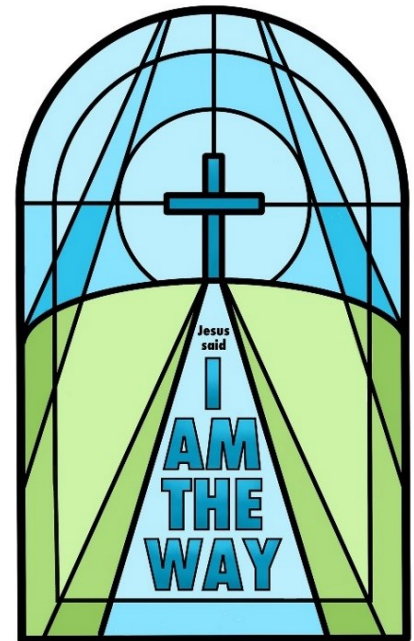
Sunday 7th April
John 20:19-end

Wednesday 10th April
Acts 4: 32-35
John 20:19-31

Sunday 14th April
Acts 3: 12-19
Luke 24: 36b-48

Sunday 21st April
Acts 4: 5-12
John 10: 11-18

Sunday 28th April
Acts 8: 26-40
John 15: 1-8



MAY CHURCH SERVICES

Wednesday 1st May
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 5th May (6th Sunday of Easter)
9.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Café Style Church



Thursday 9th May
Ascension Day
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 12th May (7th Sunday of Easter)
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 15th May
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 19th May (**Pentecost**)
10.30am Holy Communion



Wednesday 22nd May
10.00am Holy Communion

Sunday 26th May (Trinity Sunday)
10.30am Holy Communion

Wednesday 29th May
10.00am Holy Communion

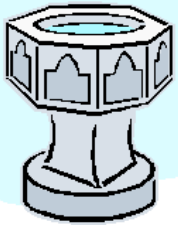
We have welcomed the following into the Church Family through Baptism



Recently we welcomed **one child Blair Florence Wilson (24th March)** into the Church Family.

Please pray for Blair that she may grow up to love and follow Christ. Please pray for their parents and Godparents, and pray that they may seek to know Christ and to worship.

This is the baptism from 24th March



Good likeness

Some children were asked: "What do you think of Jesus?" "Jesus," said one little boy, "is the best photograph God ever had taken."

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS April Birthdays



Congratulations to Daniel Ratcliffe and Helen Browne who celebrate their birthdays on April 1st, and to Walter Yule who celebrates his birthday on 5th April.

CONGRATULATIONS

to
Tom & Una Booth
who celebrated their
Wedding Anniversary
on
26th March 2024



Poverty Sunday

On Sunday 11th February we held our yearly Poverty Sunday drive, where we asked the congregation to bring along 2 or 3 items of food or toiletries for the local food bank. We have done this for a number of years. As a church we thought it was quiet appropriate to use Poverty Sunday instead of Harvest where the food bank will get a lot from schools etc. As you can see from the photograph we donated just over **79kgs food etc.** and **£100 in cash** to the food bank. A big **THANK YOU** from the Vicar and churchwardens for your contributions to the food bank where someone out there will be helped.

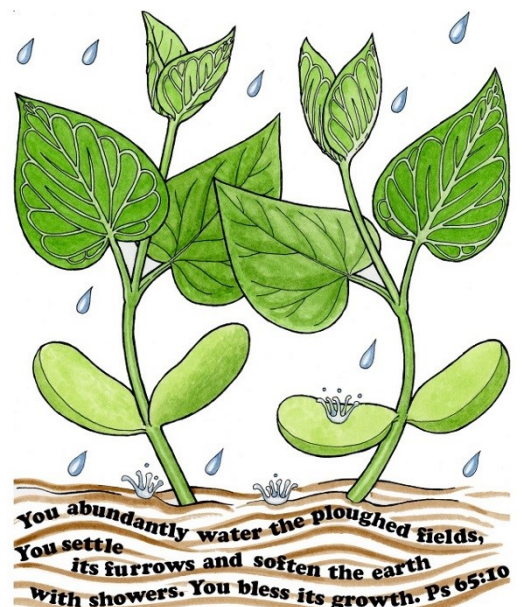


The Hand of Christ

The hand of Christ rests gently on my head,
Love's blessings flow from God's eternal heart into my veins.
The Spirit's breath pulsates within my soul
And in the life that Christ has won for all on Calvary's hill
I step out gladly into God's Creation,
There to praise the holy Name of God,
In triune-majesty forever reigning.

O God most high,
Most Holy Father, blessed Son,
and gracious Spirit, Three-in-One.
We bow before the eternal throne
and, in the strength of love received,
we give your love in blessing
to your world.

By Sam Doubtfire



**You abundantly water the ploughed fields,
You settle its furrows and soften the earth
with showers. You bless its growth. Ps 65:10**

World Autism Acceptance Week, 2nd – 8th April 2024

Autism is on the rise. Or at least, the recognition of it is. According to the website psychcentral.com, there was a 787% exponential increase in the number of people who were diagnosed with autism between 1998 and 2018 in the UK. The National Autistic Society says that in the UK, more than one in every 100 people are now on the autism spectrum. It reckons that around 700,000 adults and children in the UK suffer with the condition to some degree. All of which means that you probably know of someone who has autism, to some degree. And you may know that, as it says on the NHS website:

Autistic people may act in a different way to other people, ... and find it hard to understand how other people think or feel. They may find things like bright lights or loud noises overwhelming, stressful, or uncomfortable. They may get anxious or upset about unfamiliar situations and social events and take longer to understand information.

To help people with autism, you may wish to support this 'acceptance week', by going to the National Autistic Society's website, <https://www.autism.org.uk> and taking part in some way in their fundraising campaign.

The Treasure of Easter!

It's amazing what treasure can be unearthed with metal detectors! In this season of Easter, let's rediscover the greatest unburied treasure of the Resurrection. The Apostle Peter reminds us that God '*has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.*' (1 Peter 1: 3,4). What does he say about this treasure? On the one hand, it is the *reason for hope*. Peter was writing to Christians in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) who faced persecution under the Emperor Nero. In an uncertain world we know that Jesus suffered, but by His resurrection has secured eternal life for us. This inheritance not only guarantees life now, but also for eternity, as it '*is kept in heaven for you*' (4). Do we share this confidence? D.L. Moody, the 19th Century American evangelist, spoke of the time when people would read his obituary: '*Don't believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now*'. On the other hand, this treasure is a *source of joy*. This unburied treasure fills us '*with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*' (8,9). We face all kinds of trials in our lives, but God uses them to refine our faith and character, '*These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.*' (7). We reflect this treasure by developing the Jesus' character and becoming more holy, obedient and loving.

'Christmas is the promise, and Easter is the proof!

Activities at St Michael's Church

St Michael's Maintenance Appeal Committee

Tea & Toast in the Meeting Room

Next Tea & Toast is on 4th May & 1st June

@ 10.00am to 12.00 noon Admission: £2.00

Crafters Group

Crafters Group meets in the Meeting Room every Tuesday from 10.00am to 12noon.

Everyone welcome, especially newcomers.



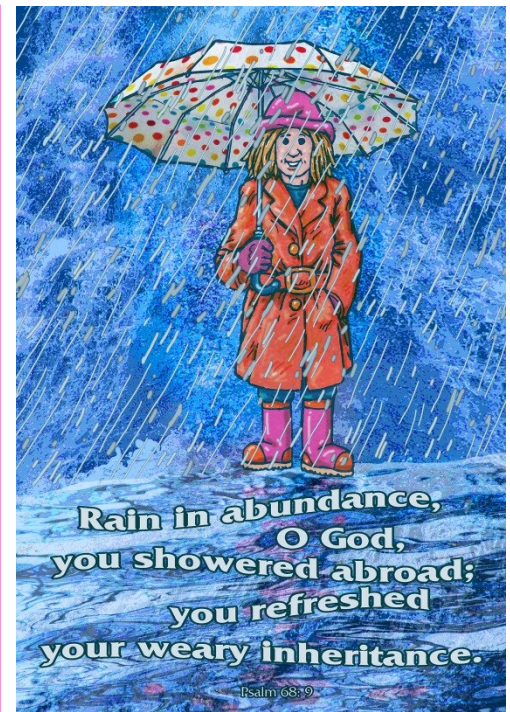
VML

Sing-along sessions on Tuesday nights @ 7.00pm in the Meeting Room. So come along have a cuppa and a sing-along for just £2.



"Police? This is St Mary's Ladies' Knitting & Vigilante Circle. We've detained two gents trying to nick the church silver."

21st April: Anselm, the man who proved there is a God
 Anselm is a good saint to remember next time someone asks you to prove that there is a God. His brilliant and original *Proslogion*, written 1077-8, sets out the 'ontological' proof for God's existence. Nearly ten centuries later, it is still studied by theological students as one of the great philosophical 'proofs' of God's existence. Anselm was born at Aosta in 1033, the son of a spendthrift Lombard nobleman, whom Anselm detested. In time he decided to become a Benedictine monk, and so joined Lanfranc's famous monastery at Bec (c. 1060). He became prior, then abbot. He was loved by his monks, appreciated for his sensitivity and intuitiveness. He remained friends also with Lanfranc, who had gone on to be Archbishop of Canterbury. After Lanfranc's death, Anselm reluctantly agreed to accept the job. Archbishops did not have press offices in those days, but Anselm made his views on Church-versus-King known all the same, and they did not please the king. William Rufus exiled him in 1097 and King Henry I exiled him in 1103. Anselm was utterly committed to what he saw as the cause of God and the Church, and therefore had no time for temporal politics. Peace between archbishop and monarch was not achieved until 1106. Anselm spent the rest of his life in England. His theological stance of 'Faith seeking understanding' and 'the mind at faith's service' were the keys to his life and teaching.



What am I?

I'm not old. I woke up, I lifted my arms, I moved my knees, I turned my neck. Everything made the same noise: Crrrrraaaaaacccccckkkk! So I've come to the conclusion that I'm not old, I'm crispy!



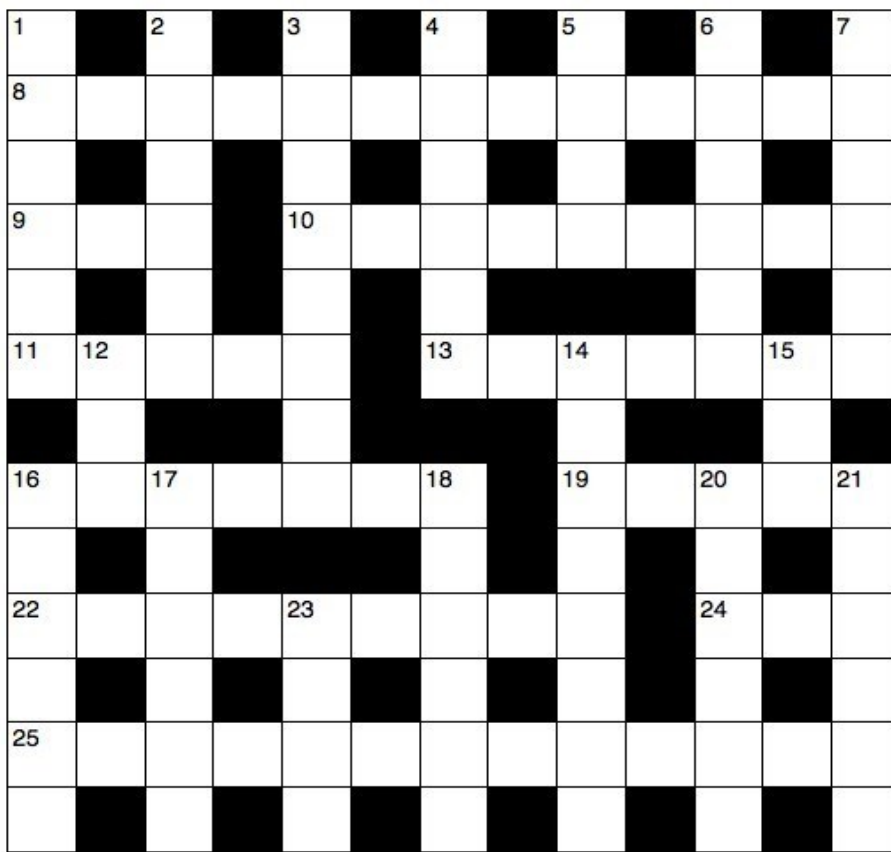
'A Pathway through Lent to Easter'

This year at St Michael we are creating 'A Pathway through Lent to Easter' by painting and decorating rocks and then we will be making a pathway in church garden for all to enjoy. Jeanette Roach asked everyone to get involved, that included the children from church and the congregation and the local school to decorate a rock in the theme of Lent, Easter, Jesus or a Prayer. As you can see from the photograph a lot of people took part. **THANK YOU**



What's the Big Idea? - an Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament: Deuteronomy & Joshua

The setting for these books is Israel's entry into the promised land after 40 years of wanderings in the wilderness. Deuteronomy gives us Moses' addresses on the plains of Moab, as the Israelites prepare to enter Canaan. The book of Joshua recounts the crossing of the Jordan and the victories that give the people control of Canaan. The theme of Deuteronomy is God's covenant and his call for His people's obedience, loyalty and love. The '*shema*' (Heb: 'hear'), expresses this response to God: '*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.*' (Deut. 6:4-6). The book contains instruction on how to live intentionally as God's people in response to His love and mercy. Total loyalty to God is also crucial, with the worship of any other gods being totally rejected. It is also widely quoted in the NT eg. Jesus' temptations (Deut. 8:3, 6:13, 16). The book of Joshua, with its description of the conquest of the land and the destruction of cities and peoples, reminds us that God's love and purposes for us are worked out in the messes, storms and sins of our daily lives. As God says Joshua: '*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*' (Joshua 1:9). Joshua ('The Lord saves') is the same name as Jesus Himself. Jesus overcame all powers of evil to bring God's people into their eternal 'rest' (Heb 4:1-11).



CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

See how you get on with this crossword. There is no prize, but whoever gets it back to the Editor by April 22nd will be entered on a Roll of Honour in the next edition of *Growing Together*.

ACROSS

- 8 'He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the — ' (Isaiah 53:12) (13)
 9 'When they had sung a hymn, they went — to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30) (3)
 10 Comes between Galatians and Philippians (9)
 11 'Your heart will — and swell with joy' (Isaiah 60:5) (5)
 13 Muslim holy month (7)
 16 Ten ears (anag.) (7)
 19 Under (poetic abbrev.) (5)
 22 How Abram described himself to God when he complained that his inheritance would pass to a servant (Genesis 15:2) (9)
 24 'Go to the — , you sluggard' (Proverbs 6:6) (3)
 25 Debar from receiving Communion (13)

DOWN

- 1 My — for His Highest (Oswald Chambers' best-known book) (6)
 2 Festival of the resurrection (6)
 3 'His sons will prepare for war and — a great army' (Daniel 11:10) (8)
 4 'Let not the — string his bow' (Jeremiah 51:3) (6)
 5 Name of the River Thames in and around Oxford (4)
 6 'From then on Judas watched for an opportunity — — him over' (Matthew 26:16) (2,4)
 7 'But Christ is faithful — — — over God's house' (Hebrews 3:6) (2,1,3)
 12 Long-handled implement used to till the soil (Isaiah 7:25) (3)
 14 Order to which monks and nuns devote themselves (8)
 15 Appropriate (Proverbs 15:23) (3)
 16 I, uncle (anag.) (6)
 17 'They gave him — — of broiled fish' (Luke 24:42) (1,5)
 18 'Weren't there three men that we — — and threw into the fire?' (Daniel 3:24) (4,2)
 20 Mountain where Noah's ark came to rest (Genesis 8:4) (6)
 21 'Don't you know that friendship with the world is — towards God?' (James 4:4) (6)
 23 Prominent architectural feature of large cathedrals such as St Paul's (4)

W	I	N	E	T	H	E	A	L	E	R	T	
R	A	E	S	N	U							
O	O	Z	E	P	A	S	S	O	V	E	R	
N	E	B	L	E	Y							
G	A	R	D	E	N	T	O	M	B			
A	E	F	H	B	I	T						
C	A	N	N	O	T	E	L	I	S	H	A	
T	E	R	T	I	C	K						
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F	L	O	G	G	I	N	G	S	T	Y	E	

March
Crossword answer

ROLL OF HONOUR

Two people got the crossword answer and they were
 Jim & Shelagh Goffin,
 &
 Wendy Sefton



April
2024



Please Pray



Please remember the following people in your prayers throughout this month.

Graham & Nicola Aylett George Done

Gerald Cook Helen Browne

Also please remember in your prayers anyone that you know who are home housebound or in hospital.

If you would like us to pray for someone close to you let the Pastoral Care Team know and they could visit someone at home don't hesitate to let them know.

...and the recently bereaved, especially any families known to you

Alfred Derek Johnson



INFORMATION

Revd George Roach
01928 832734

Email: vicar.smaaruncorn@gmail.com
Not on a Friday

Churchwardens

Chris Challoner 01928 715830
Rosemary Lunt 01928 569863

e-mail:

warden@runcornstmichaels.org.uk

If you want to book a wedding, baptism or funeral please phone this number

07722470940

and ask for Robbie

VML



If you have some time to yourself on a Tuesday afternoon, why not tune into the VML Radio Show on HCR 92.3 FM.

Lent Lunches & Prayer Time 2024

Again this year it was great success with many people attending the prayer time, which was led by Revd Helen Browne exploring different ways how we pray during Lent. A huge **THANK YOU** to the people who provided the excellent soup for the Lent Lunches, those being **Margaret Kiely, Sue Fraser, Lynne Clark and Rosemary Lunt** also to **Robbie Littler** for organising the event to VML for running this event. Again a huge thank you to everyone for your donations at the Lent Lunches, the total being **£286** which is going to the British Red Cross Gaza Appeal

Bereavement Café

Davis McMullen in Runcorn and St Michael's Church in partnership with VML will be running a Bereavement Café on **Friday at 12.00noon**, initially once a month with a view to going weekly as the need grows. The idea is to provide a safe and secure space for people recently bereaved or grieving the loss of a loved one. Often it is hard for others to understand what the loss can do to people individually so this Café will be a place of support for anyone who needs it.

This year's café dates are as follows

12th April	9th August
10th May	6th September
7th June	4th October
5th July	8th November
	13th December

Who is he?

A musical concert was about to be performed in a prison. The Governor was talking to a titled lady guest, explaining that the orchestra was made up of murderers, embezzlers and other hardened criminals. The lady then pointed to a man in the corner, holding a trombone. "He looks a tough customer," she whispered. "Whatever has HE done?" The Governor paused and smiled. "Ah, actually, he is the chaplain."