

The Grapevine

**COVERING THE CHURCHES OF
GREAT & LITTLE CHESTERFORD, LITTLEBURY WITH
LITTLEBURY GREEN, & WENDENS AMBO**

**Welcome to our services today
Fifth Sunday of Lent
Passiontide Begins**

Collect

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; 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.

First Reading *Romans 8.6-11*

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Gospel *John 11.1-45*

A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world. 'When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' 37But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?' Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.' Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Those who are unwell:

Margaret Reed (Gt Chesterford)

Those who need our support:

Betty Dowsett (Littlebury Green)

Lucy Maskell (Great Chestford)

Kylie Moore-Gilbert (in prison in Iran)

Friends and families of those who have died:

Those whose anniversaries are this week

Other topics for your prayers:

- Great Chesterford's Good Neighbour Action Group and groups in our other villages as they meet needs in their communities
- Those ill with Covid19 in hospitals and at home and those treating them
- The world's resources and our stewardship of them
- Those missing loved ones who have died

VICAR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Our church doors are now closed for private prayer as well as for services. We've long known that the Church is the people and not the building, and so we now have an opportunity to be 'Church' in different, new and exciting ways.

Each Sunday, the Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry intends to upload a pre-recorded service with musical accompaniment. You will find the link to these videos on the Cam Villages website and on the 'Church at Home' website page. There are also many resources to help you draw near to God in this unusual time. Please also 'like' and check out our 'Cam Villages Churches' Facebook page for further information and where we are encouraging people to pray and providing useful information to help with this.

I have been thinking a lot about light recently. Last Sunday evening at 7 pm we were encouraged to light a candle as we pray for the world in the midst of this terrible Coronavirus pandemic. It was encouraging to see so many people engaging in prayer and I was surprised by all our non-Christian brothers and sisters who joined in. We can all bring light into the darkness. I am reminded that Jesus said 'I am the light of the world'. Jesus wants us also to be lights in the world and to reflect his light to others. This is an opportunity to be like Jesus to our friends and neighbours, to give them hope and to show that we love them. It is already happening around us and it is gratifying to see. I encourage you to participate in God's work in our communities/villages and continue to share Jesus Christ with those who don't know him.

What better opportunity is there to share the hope we have in Christ's death and resurrection, to support one another and above all to show the love of God to all those who currently sit in darkness?

May the light of Christ shine in you in the coming days.

With love and prayers,
Alex

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you. In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake. Amen

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

Anyone in Great Chesterford who is experiencing difficulties of any sort is encouraged to get in touch with the Good Neighbours Action Group. Contact details are given in the flyer circulated by the Group to every house.

PLANNED GIVING

Those who support All Saints through the weekly envelope scheme can continue to drop their envelopes through the Treasurer's letterbox. This will ensure that the money gets to the bank as soon as possible. (The monthly Parish Share payment has **not** been suspended!)

PARISH OFFICE The Parish Office is now closed to visitors. Dawn is working from home and contactable by telephone and email as usual. You can view the church and parish room diaries and lots of other useful information on the churches' websites.

NEWS

Revd Dr Caroline Currer has been appointed Team Vicar, with responsibility for Ashdon.

Due to the current circumstances, **THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR A NEW TEAM RECTOR IS NOW PAUSED**. The vacancy will continue to be advertised on both the St Mary's website and the Diocesan website, though the interview process will take place at a later date, as soon as it is feasible.

THE TRANSITION PROJECT

While the Tuesday clinic sessions are suspended
online support continues
Please contact us on
www.transitionproject.co.uk

CARTOON BY DAVE WALKER



Cartoonists.com

REFLECTIONS

'The mystery of God's love is not that he takes our pains away, but that he first wants to share them with us. Out of this divine solidarity comes new life.' Henri Nouwen

Jesus does not prevent Lazarus' death, sweeping in heroically as in the climax of a film. Lazarus dies, he is mourned, and he is buried. Jesus then comes into the raw pain and confusion of shock and grief. He dwells there and does not minimise the suffering of his friends. Even though he knows that Lazarus will soon be resurrected, he is so moved that he weeps alongside them. Indeed, it is his compassion that leads Jesus to action as he resurrects Lazarus.

As we draw near to the end of Lent, the cross comes clearer into view. Lazarus' death foreshadows Jesus' death, but by the same token, Lazarus' resurrection is a joyful anticipation of Jesus' own resurrection.

St Paul underlies that we will all receive the gift that Lazarus received. All believers are dwelling places of the Spirit of God who joins us to the Father, through the Son. This same Spirit raised Jesus from the dead lives in us, and we too will be resurrected.

Death does not have the final word. The words Jesus speaks are life and hope and he speaks the same words to us today.

Going deeper

The word *Bethany* translates as 'house of the poor'. Some scholars think it was the place where the poor, the sick and those in need lived, a sort of hospice outside of Jerusalem. What significance does it have that Jesus brings resurrection here?

I wonder...

"...new life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark." (Barbara Brown Taylor, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*)

I wonder... where might God be bringing new life amidst the darkness?

OUR CHURCHES' DIARY

TODAY

29th March

LENT 5

SERVICES ONLINE at www.camvillages.org.uk

THIS WEEK

Alex will be praying on our behalf each day at 11 am
All Saints from Friday Palm Crosses can be found outside the church door; do take one if you wish.

NEXT SUNDAY 5th April PALM SUNDAY

SERVICES ONLINE at www.camvillages.org.uk

MINISTRY TEAM

Team Vicar:

Revd Alex Jeewan

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Revd Tim Hardingham

01799 542874

Revd John Risby

Revd Angela Want

Elizabeth Marshall

01799 530265

Cam Villages Website: www.camvillages.org.uk

Team Rector: Position vacant

Rector's Secretary:

Email: secretary@stmaryssaffronwalden.org

Parish Office

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