



Pews News

United Benefice of Shenstone & Stonnall



Easter Day – 12th April 2020

**Alleluia, Alleluia, He is Risen!
He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!**

Despite the situation we are in, nothing can diminish the miracle, awe and wonder of that first Easter Day. Let's celebrate the best way we can.



He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

Special Prayer for these times

A prayer for Prime Minister Boris Johnson
and all those in intensive care

God of compassion,
be close to all who are in intensive care,
including our Prime Minister;
in their anxiety, be their consolation;
in their fear, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Collect Prayer – Easter Day

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.



News from the Church of England – current as at 11th April 2020

- All public acts of worship and private prayer opportunities within church are suspended until further notice.
- All church activities are suspended until further notice
- Guidance and ruling on conducting weddings and funerals is available on the websites of Lichfield Diocese and The Church of England. Funeral services cannot be held in church. If there is to be a burial, then the service must be held fully at the graveside. If there is to be a cremation, then the service is to be held fully at the Crematorium subject to their guidelines. Burial of ashes are suspended for the time being.
- <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>
- <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/latest-coronavirus-information>
- All church meetings are cancelled, and this includes PCC meetings and the APCM. The new deadline for APCMs and election of Church Wardens is 31st October.
- Pastoral visits in circumstances where people are self-isolating because they are symptomatic or have been in contact with someone who has been symptomatic, should not be undertaken until their isolation ends. However, please do contact me if you need to speak with me. Pastoral visits in circumstances where someone is self-isolating for their protection *may be made if needed*. Strict health and hygiene practices will be used and social distancing maintained.*

*Taken from The Church of England website

Our Prayers

- We pray for our world, and all in need at this time.
- We pray for our Queen and all the Royal Family, and in particular Prince Charles. We pray for all our Government, our Bishops and Clergy. We pray especially for the Prime Minister.
- Many known to us have had much needed surgery and treatment postponed, be with them all.
- Comfort those who have had to rearrange their weddings.
- We give thanks for those who have been healed
- We thank you for all key and frontline workers. Protect them Lord

Help and Assistance

We want to make sure everyone in our church and our communities stay safe. If you have any need whatever please contact one of our care coordinators who will their best to find someone to help you.

Graham & Margaret Birt 01543 483138

Di Proctor 01543 480442

Val Neale 01543 374430

Contributions for our local foodbanks.

If you would like to make contribution to our food banks the following collection points are available;

For the Lichfield Food Bank (Shenstone Church) –

The Vicarage, St Johns Hill, a container is in the porchway

7 Church Close, Shenstone, a container is outside the door.

For the Thomas Project (Stonnall Church) –

1 Lazy Hill, a box is inside the porch

Social Media

Social media is sometimes regarded as Marmite, you either love it or hate it. However at these times its very useful for keeping in contact with each other. If you've previously avoided using email or social media maybe you're starting to rethink your opinion. If you have recently set up an email account or joined FaceBook please email Rev Liz so she has your email address and 'like' one of the church's pages.

Morning Prayer times on FaceBook

During the week, Monday to Friday, there is a short time of Morning Prayer on both FaceBook pages. This time of prayer is based on the set liturgy for Morning Prayer for the day. You can access an app for this at <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/time-to-pray>. It's a free app and includes Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer for each day.

Church Finances

Although both our churches are closed for public worship and private prayer time our bills still need to be paid. Thank you to those of you who continue to give by standing order. If you usually give by envelope on the plate you will have received a letter with a supply of envelopes in to enable you to continue your donations during our shut down time. You can either save these up till we're able to reopen or contact one of the

wardens and they'll arrange for it to be collected from you. A justgiving page for each church has been set up should you or a family member wish to make a donation, the details are as follows;

For St John the Baptist

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/stjohnthebshenstone>

For St Peter's Church

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/pccofstpetersstonnall>

Spring Harvest at Home



SPRING
HARVEST
Home



If you've missed going to Spring Harvest this year, or perhaps have never been before, this year you can experience Spring Harvest in the comfort of your own home. Subscribe to

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw_t1J2734g

Our readings for this Sunday are;

Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy

Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

Songs for today

Thine be the Glory & See what a morning (Resurrection Hymn)

Thought for today

(transcript of sermon posted on FaceBook 12th April)

We have two great readings today both concerned with how lives were changed because of that first Easter Day. In Acts Peter is in the home of Cornelius giving an outline, a summary of Jesus’ ministry, right up to his crucifixion and beyond. Peter that rough fisherman, who probably had had little formal education at all, is now speaking and preaching the

gospel to anyone who would listen to him. Earlier on in Acts he gives the speech of his life, look it up in Acts 2. Peter had of course been preaching and speaking during the reign of Saul, later to become Paul, so preaching and speaking out would have taken a great deal of courage. Peter's life had changed beyond all recognition after that first Easter. In Matthew's gospel we hear of how Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had gone to see the tomb. These two women were changed beyond all recognition after that first Easter

If we cast our minds back just 7 days, when we thought about how Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a donkey, welcomed by crowds of people excited to see him, they did not think for a minute that he had 5 days left. Two days ago we remembered the crucifixion of Jesus. Today we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and event that changed our lives beyond all recognition.

But let's think about those women at the tomb. As well as the Mother of Jesus, there are lots of other women called 'Mary' in the Bible. Two of these other 'Mary's' were there when Jesus died on the cross (Matthew 27: 56). They also saw Jesus' body taken to a tomb, and they saw a big stone rolled in front (Matthew 27: 61). I imagine that when they saw Jesus dead and buried they thought their lives were ruined forever. Have you ever felt like that? Are you feeling that way today?

On that first Easter day, very early in the morning, the two 'Mary's' were "filled with joy" (Matthew 28: 8)! These two met with the risen Lord Jesus Christ and he spoke to them (Matthew 28: 9-10)! That was the day that changed their lives forever. Jesus was dead. Jesus was buried; but now Jesus was alive! Life could never be the same again. You might be thinking, "OK, that's the story, but did it really happen?" Well, it's an accepted historical fact that many of Jesus' friends insisted that it did. Many of Jesus' friends insisted that they themselves met with Jesus, alive, risen from the dead, for 40 days before he was taken up into heaven. It's also an accepted historical fact that many of Jesus' friends continued to insist that Jesus had risen from the dead, even when they themselves were being crucified. Surely, they would have changed their story if their story was made up; but it was not made up. Jesus had risen from the dead. Those events changed their lives beyond all recognition.

Those changes though took place over a period of time. There had been of course the horrid week, of trial and torture for Jesus. His followers would have been well aware that this was happening, and powerless to do anything. Those in authority made decisions and took actions with terrible consequences, the crucifixion and ultimate death of Jesus. The tomb that Jesus had been laid in was sealed and guarded so no one could access it in any way. The time in between Jesus' arrest and to this glorious morning must have been full of challenges, hurt, fear, distress, disappointment, well you fill in your own emotion here, because there are so many. But look what happened the most glorious, resurrection, new birth and new beginning for so many. An event that has changed lives for the last 2000 years and will continue to change lives.

Today Easter Sunday in 2020 we are living in a time that is similar to that period prior to the first Easter Sunday, potentially full of challenges, hurt, fear, distress, disappointment, well you fill in your own emotion here, because there are so many. But just like at the first Easter Sunday there was a joyful resurrection, a joyful new birth, a joyful new start we too will come through this time of trial. Our lives no doubt, will be changed beyond all recognition. Perhaps though this Easter time will be a time for you to think about your life and how you might change it beyond all recognition, perhaps you could meet with the risen Lord, maybe for the first time, or maybe to reaffirm your relationship with him. There is time to read now, time to pray, time to reflect. Let this Easter be the one where your life is changed beyond all recognition, and you can say with confidence Alleluia, alleluia He is Risen, he is risen indeed.

Please stay safe and well. If you need help please do not hesitate to contact Rev Liz. She will try to find the help you need.

Vicar: - *Revd Liz Chamberlain* 480286 vicar@shenstoneandstonnall.co.uk
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