



## All Saints' Church

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## Sunday 31st March *Easter Day*

### 10 am Holy Communion led by Revd Margaret Saunders

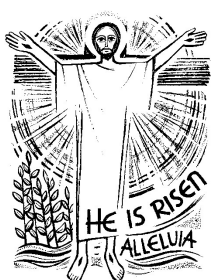
#### Readings

Acts 10 vv 34-43  
John 20 vv 1-18

#### Hymns

298 Christ the Lord is Risen today  
311 The day of resurrection  
306 Now the green blade riseth  
297 Christ is alive .

Dear All Saints',



Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

For those of you reading this on Saturday, our Easter proclamation will be coming slightly early. Given that we are an Easter People however, for whom Easter is a reality every day, I make no excuses for greeting you with it today. This Sunday we are celebrating the incredible good news of Christ risen, new life and forgiveness offered to us and that is always a reason to celebrate.

I suspect that all of us will have resurrection stories that we are particularly drawn to - Mary in the garden for instance, the road to Emmaus might be another, or the story of the barbecue on the beach. If I were to ask you, my suspicion would be that there would be a distinct minority, or even an absence of people identifying the resurrection story in Mark as their favourite. I'm not sure whether I would say it was my favourite, but it is one that I have an affection for. It is the shortest of the 4 Gospels, just 8 verses (or 20 if you include

the other endings which most, if not all, scholars believe were later additions). It also has very little within it. Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome take spices to the tomb intending to anoint Jesus' body. When they arrive at the tomb they discover that the stone has been rolled away and as they enter the tomb they see a young man dressed in a white robe sitting there. He tells them not to be afraid, that Jesus has been raised and to go and tell the disciples and Peter that they will see him in Galilee. The women flee from the tomb and say nothing to anyone because they are afraid.

And that's it. That's how it ends. There is no sighting of Jesus, no great commission, no explanation of the scriptures or restoration of Peter, just the women fleeing from the tomb and telling nobody what has happened. It all feels a bit odd, abrupt, incomplete. It's no wonder that some have written endings to add onto the end. There are some commentators who believe that the original ending was lost, but many believe that Mark intentionally finished his Gospel this way. Why might he have done that? What would have been in his mind? Surely he needed to give evidence of Jesus' resurrection?

Mark's Gospel begins with the words "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God". Those words might refer to the beginning of his writings, but they could also be seen as referring to the whole of Mark's Gospel. This is the beginning, Jesus' life, death and resurrection was the beginning. It was not the end. The fact that we are reading about what happened to the women tells us that at some point they must have told their story, the fact that we are here today, that the good news has spread across the world tells us that at some point they must have told their story. But it also tells us that God is not reliant on his disciples always doing what is asked of them. The women may not have told, but the news got out, and we celebrate this weekend because the news has been passed on, down through the centuries. I quite like that idea. We all know that we are fallible people, that we don't always do what we should, and yet God's good news gets out anyway.

The Gospel was the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, but it was only the beginning. The story continued and continues. Today we are part of the continuation of the story, we are part of the good news of Jesus Christ. As we celebrate this weekend, we can know that our living God continues to work in our lives. Mark didn't give a rounded, completed ending to his gospel, instead we are offered the opportunity to continue the story, to be part of the good news of Jesus Christ. That's why I have an affection for Mark's ending - because I am part of it, part of the ongoing story. And so are you. What a privilege and what a joy.

Happy Easter!

Blessings,  
Rachael, Andrew, Thomas and Samuel

**Morning Prayer** at 9am and **Eucharist** at 9.30am continue on Tuesday morning.  
**Evening Prayer** is on Friday at 4pm.

Everyone is also very welcome to the **Easter Day Sunrise service** at 7am in the grounds of Berkhamsted Castle.

**“Coffee, Chat and Toddlers”** is taking a break on April 2nd and 9th but will be back on 16th. **Friendship Club** is also having an Easter break.

### **Mothering Sunday flower baskets**

Last call for any baskets you have at home and would like to recycle back to Sunnyside Rural Trust nursery. I am planning to return the black crates and the baskets after Easter. Could you drop them off next to the table just inside church entrance. Many thanks, David Pain.

25 works from the **Methodist Modern Art Collection** will be at The Focolare Centre for Unity in Welwyn Garden City **until Sunday 7th April** on the theme of Lent and Easter. The exhibition is titled ‘Deepening the Mystery - unexpected treasures of art’ and will be open **Tuesday to Friday 11am-4pm** and **Saturdays and Sundays 2-5pm**. There is a car park at the Focolare Centre and it is easy to find. The paintings can also be seen online at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/life-and-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/>

## Prayer Requests:

For: Leslie; Ray and Jean Emsall; Margaret Harding; Sue and Tony Danbury; Penny Perry; Tara Ginn; the family and friends of Felicity's brother-in-law, Gavin, who has died; Marnie Taylor; Linda Ezard; Sarah; for Ida and all her family and friends on the death of her dear sister, Joan; for Julie Murdock who has recently died and for her daughter and family and friends.

We pray for our neighbours throughout the world whose lives have been changed by the events in Israel and Palestine, and pray especially for all those who have lost loved ones and homes due to the conflict. We pray that this conflict may not escalate further into neighbouring countries.

We pray too for those who are caught up in war in other parts of the world, including Sudan and Ukraine and for those facing the threat of starvation in the ongoing hostilities;

We also pray for:

All who are refugees, especially those who are not receiving help to rebuild their lives in safety;

We pray that the issue of climate change may not be forgotten and all the nations may act to secure the safety of our world. We pray too for all whose lives have been badly affected by climate changes in the areas where they live.

We continue to pray for:

the children and their families of our church and town;

all who work in the NHS; Social Services and the charities who are supporting the sick or frail;

We pray for those who are helped by Embrace the Middle East, Karibuni Children; the Leprosy Mission; Phakamisa, DENS; the Way Inn with Open Door and for all those who work in these organisations.

We continue to pray for those whose need is ongoing:

Paul Sear and his wife, Peggy; Julia Wright; Corinne & William; Gary Andersen; Charlie; Chris Billington; Graham Rule; Clare Hancock; Heather Gifford; John Malcolm; Betty Harding; Valerie Ruddock; Jenny Wells; Jonathan and Ann Hayes; Martin Turner; Catherine Treves Brown; Sue Judd; Madeleine Brownell; Barbara Conway;

