

The LINK

digital edition

April 2021



**The Parish Church of
St Michael Braintree
www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk**



Signs of new life

Dear Friends,

Despite all we have been going through, may I wish you a very happy Easter, as we celebrate (arguably) the greatest of the Christian festivals. I say that because over a quarter of the four gospels (23 out of 89 chapters) focus on the last week of Jesus' earthly life.

A great deal happened in that week, beginning with Palm Sunday and ending on Easter Sunday. In Holy Week, Jesus went willingly to the cross, to die an agonising death, not for his wrongdoing, but for ours. *"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit."* (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus died so that we can, in repentance and faith, receive God's forgiveness ... to bring us to God.

But wonderfully, he rose to life on the third day, to bring victory over both sin and death. As Jesus himself said, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* (John 11:25).

Easter coincides with Spring – a time when we see new life ... flowers, blossom and lighter evenings.

This Easter will also bring something new to our church life as well. From Easter Sunday we will be re-opening the church for a 10am service each Sunday. Do please join us, if you would like to. You will need to book a seat by the Thursday before (via our website or by phoning the church office). We need to have some limitations (as in the autumn) including social distancing, face coverings and no congregational singing. But we hope it will be an uplifting and helpful experience, to be back in church worshipping our risen Lord.

May this Easter be a happy one for you, not because life is necessarily happy or easy, but because you know God's forgiveness and new life.

Wishing you every blessing,
Nigel



The poster features a light blue sky background with white clouds. The text 'Easter Party' is written in a large, white, cursive font at the top. Below it, 'Join us on Zoom for...' is written in a smaller white font. Three white clouds contain the words 'Songs', 'Games', and 'Story' in blue text. The bottom half of the poster has a green background with a brown cross and two smaller crosses on the left, and a yellow chick and three colorful Easter eggs on the right. The text 'EASTER GARDEN & BONNET COMPETITION' is written in white on the green background. At the bottom, the date and time '4:00PM SATURDAY 3RD APRIL' are written in pink, and the website 'http://stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk' is written in blue.

Easter Party

Join us on Zoom for...

Songs

Games

Story

EASTER GARDEN & BONNET COMPETITION

4:00PM SATURDAY 3RD APRIL

Apply online through the Church Website:
<http://stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk>

MISSION OF THE MONTH MAKE JESUS KNOWN

At the start of the first lockdown Tim decided to switch all MJK's efforts to spread the Gospel of Christ into social media .

He had been using them for a monthly Spirit Boost video that many of you have used but from March 2020 everything was online. In April and again in May over fifty people came to Christ.

It soon became clear that not all could be linked to local churches and so Tim set up a support network (New Christians) online. Early on Tim linked all sorts of questions about life and covid to MJK's website

In the last year hundreds of others have been added to the Kingdom of God through MJK's work on Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter and What's App. Changes in the algorithms used by these platforms reduced the impact across these platforms and so MJK has had to hire an algorithm specialist to restore its breadth of contact with new folk.

Please pray this will be successful.

Pray too for the team dealing with responses many of which are quite distressing as folk with serious personal and contextual situations get in touch. MJK is now working online with people from all round the world, including areas like Pakistan where persecution of Christians is the norm.

Pray for wisdom for the team as they communicate online.

During 2019 the possibility of leasing an empty commercial site on the edge of Oldham centre arose. It would make a useful base for film making indoors (now essential for the online footprint of MJK) and a recording studio for the music which, with accompanying videos, the band was still putting out on the web.

The site also offered the possibility of setting up a milk bar which could act as a first point of contact for students to drop in to on their way to the bus and tram station. After a lot of prayer and explanations by Tim Christian trusts agreed to support the project and the local council were attracted by the plan to use the site to teach local youth how to make videos and recordings (and introduce them to the gospel). All this was on hold during lockdown one but since then the team have worked on site to clear away the old use material and with masses of help from local tradesmen (often at cost and sometimes for free) who can see the benefit the work would give the renovation has progressed so that this summer it will open as another way of bringing the good news of the Lord Jesus to Oldham.

Please pray for the success of this work and for continuing funding. Pray too for a good relationship with the community and council which is Moslem dominated.

Roger Cooke

THE NEW NORMAL - NEARLY THERE?

Evening news on BBC TV shows the latest statistics about the Covid virus in the UK and they are sad. The number of deaths is reported and behind these numbers lie unhappy stories of real people and their families. The only consolation is that the number of cases, hospitalisations and deaths are going down.

THE END IN SIGHT

Coupled with schools re-opening, Nightingale Hospitals closing and the hope of shops opening gives us hope that soon things will be back to normal - or the 'new normal' as we now call it.

Interestingly the 'new normal' is dawning around the time Christians celebrate Easter. The new normal is tentative – we hope that if things go well, if we observe the rules, if the R number gets below 1 then we could have free summer.

'We could have' - it's all uncertain (See the news from Italy). Let's hope that by the middle of June the 'could' is turned to 'we've made it!' However, the Christian message of the resurrection of Jesus speaks not of a 'new normal' but of a 'better normal' and one that is certain. There is no 'could' or 'maybe' about it.

BETTER NORMAL

There will be for certain a 'better normal'. That is because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is tempting to go over the evidence for this certainty – the empty tomb, Mary meeting with Jesus, then Jesus meeting with his ten friends, a week later inviting Thomas to touch his side and his hands. He ate meals with his friends. No wonder these accounts are special to Christians and they keep them and read them at least once a year. They would be happy to take them to court and let them be scrutinised. They have no fear that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is 'alleged' or a 'myth' or 'legend'. They have stood up to the closest examination.

WON'T LAST FOR EVER.....WILL LAST FOR EVER.

Whatever the new normal will look like, it won't last for ever. Cemeteries and crematorium remind us of that. But the Christian message tells us that there is a resurrection. Our Lord Jesus Christ said that he will raise up all who come to him. His words are recorded in John 6:44.

In fact, they will be restored to normal life. The life we lead now, whether in lock-down or whether covid free is not normal. The pain, suffering, disease and growing and the evil we find within ourselves were not intended to be normal. That's not God's 'normal'.

God's loving kindness has something far greater in store for us – the normal life. Sharing Christ's resurrection life won't be boring. Those who are his won't be able to get over enjoying his love and glory. It will never grow stale but get better every day in the bodily resurrection life of heaven.

If that is the case then it is sensible to get an interest in the real normal life. Why not apply to Jesus Christ for the better normal?

Stephen Bailey

THE MESSAGE IN THE WASTEPAPER BASKET

“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you – they are full of Spirit and life. “Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray Him.” (John 6:63-64)

Every time when Christopher and Anne visited their neighbours, they gave them an Evangelical flyer to read. As they left the flyer ended up in the wastepaper basket. In this house nobody wanted to know God.

But the lady who cleaned every week discovered the unread brochures in the wastepaper basket. She took them out and read them. God touched her heart, and she accepted the word of truth. She believed the saving grace from God and gave her life to the saviour Jesus Christ. Thus, the gospel reached this lady through a detour and saved her from eternal death.

God invites all human beings: *“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:22)* Christ has died for all. Many reject His invitation, some accept it. Thus, humanity is divided in two groups: Some do not believe God and go to eternal damnation. Others believe the Lord Jesus and receive forgiveness of their sins and are on the way to Heaven.

God says in Isaiah 55:11: *“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

Because of this we want to scatter God’s Word and trust Him that it will be fruitful.

Supplied by Peter Schaad, translated from his Swiss calendar

APRIL DIARY

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Online services are launched on Sundays as follows:

9.45am – Children’s & Families service – now on Zoom

10.00am – Adult services & monthly Family Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

Links for Zoom services are on Nigel Adams’ weekly email – these need to be accessed “live” (at the time).

The 10am YouTube services are available at these times, or to watch or listen to after those times, on catch-up.

1 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Monthly Zoom Coffee morning” with Nigel & Jo Adams

2 Friday – GOOD FRIDAY

3.00pm Good Friday Reflections on YouTube with Stephen & Jennifer Bailey

3 Saturday

4.00pm Children’s Easter Party on Zoom – book in advance

4 Sunday – EASTER DAY

10:00am Worship on the Web – Easter Family Praise

10:00am Easter Family Praise in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

6.30pm Holy Communion on Zoom

6 Tuesday

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

7 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

11 Sunday

9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

13 Tuesday

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8 - 9pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

14 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

16 Friday

7.30pm Identity Course on Zoom

18 Sunday

9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult service

10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

6:30pm All Age Tonight – Live on Zoom

20 Tuesday MAY LINK SUBMISSION DUE

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

21 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom

23 Friday

7.30pm Identity Course on Zoom

25 Sunday

9:45am Children's and Families Service – Live on Zoom

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

10:00am Morning worship in Church – Book in advance

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

27 Tuesday

2:00pm Bible reading group on Conferoo

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

28 Wednesday

10:00am Meeting Point on Zoom