

## Notices

Instructions to access the live stream for services:-

- Navigate to the main St Mary's Woodkirk Facebook page.  
[www.facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk](http://www.facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk).
- All scheduled lives will be pinned at the top of the page and you can join them by clicking on them at the time that they start.
- Alternatively a link to the live will also be published on our **A Church Near You** page
- Find the event taking place and click on "More about this event" this will automatically take you straight to the live service on Facebook.

If you wish to make a donation to the work of this church or if you wish to pay your weekly collection via our bank account then the details are given below:-

Yorkshire Bank Morley  
Sort Code 05-01-31  
Account – Woodkirk PCC 31405751

Thank you - Sharon



## WELCOME TO ST MARY'S WOODKIRK

 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Leeds

*Engaging with God  
Engaging with Each Other  
Engaging with the Community*

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021 – Easter Sunday**

**Church OPEN**

**10.30am Holy Communion – Easter Sunday**  
(Service streamed via Facebook live)

*Instructions to Connect given in column 4*

### Services for next week

**There will be NO services between Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April and Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April as all the Staff have a well deserved break after the busyness of Holy Week.**

I am taking some time off during this week.

### Next Sunday's Services are as follows: -

10.30am Easter 2 Holy Communion streamed as above. CHURCH IS OPEN!!

### FOR YOUR PRAYERS

From our Parish Prayer Diary: Local Hospitals and Staff  
From our Church Prayer Diary: Baptism Families

We pray for Baptism Families, Wedding Couples and Funeral Families.

### Those who have asked for prayers for healing:

Kevin, Richard, Grace, Betty, Lionel, Frank, Nicole, Simon, Faith, Alfie, Bree, Marlene, Philip, Jillian, Brian, Jerry, Louise, Mark, Sandra, David, and Richard.

The family and friends of those who have recently died:  
Mavis Marsden

And those whose **anniversaries** fall at this time:  
Ronnie Bourne

**VICAR:** Revd. Sharon Wilkinson 07539 466724  
*Email: vicar@stmarywoodkirk.org*

**READER:** Dawn Tattersfield 07840 739239  
*Email: dawn@stmarywoodkirk.org*

**PASTORAL MINISTER:** Gail Townsend 07792 975814  
*Email: gail@stmarywoodkirk.org*

**EDITOR:** Dave Townsend 07745 301746  
*Email: dave@stmarywoodkirk.org*

**CHRISTENINGS** can be booked by contacting:  
**BAPTISM CO-ORDINATOR:** Barbara Tate  
*Email: barbara@stmarywoodkirk.org*

**WEDDINGS** can be booked by contacting our:  
**WEDDING CO-ORDINATOR:** Gail Townsend 07792 975814  
*Email: gail@stmarywoodkirk.org*

**CHURCH WEBSITE:** [www.stmarywoodkirk.org](http://www.stmarywoodkirk.org)

**FACEBOOK:** regular updates about life at St Mary's can be found on our Facebook pages:  
*St Mary's Church, Woodkirk,  
and Friends of Woodkirk Churchyard.*

**TWITTER:** tweet us and follow us @stmarywoodkirk

Scripture Readings for the coming week:-

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April – Easter Sunday – Church Open/streamed live**

Acts 10:34-43

John 20:1-18

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April – No Service today**

Psalms 111

Mark 16:1-8

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April – No Service today**

Psalms 136

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

**Weds 7<sup>th</sup> April – No Service today**

Acts 3:1-10

Luke 24:13-35

**Thurs 8<sup>th</sup> April – No Service today**

Psalms 104

Revelation 22:4,5

**Fri 9<sup>th</sup> April – No Service today**

Psalms 115

Luke 8:41-56

**Lent Reflections**

Thank you to all who came to the Lent Reflections – I have arranged a Zoom Meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00pm for anyone who would like to ask any questions. I will send out the meeting details next week.

**Easter Sunday is a wonderful day to be opening our Church Building once more. Alleluia, Alleluia, Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia.**

(Church Open and Streamed live)

Please can I remind you of the following:-

- a) We will open on Sunday's only for the first four weeks – this will reduce the risk of transmission and will allow the majority of those over the age of seventy to have had their second injections. This will be reviewed at the PCC Meeting in April.
- b) There will be social distancing in place, there will be no free movement around the church and there can be no mingling at the end of the services. Please, please when asked to leave by the person on duty do so – this is for your benefit as well as others.
- c) Face masks should be worn and of course there is no singing permitted. Neither will there be coffee or tea at the end of the Service.
- d) We will continue to stream all services.
- e) We can only have so many bubbles in church due to the size of the building.

- f) If you do not feel ready to comeback, or safe to come back or are still shielding then please take it at your own pace and join us on line. Everyone, on line and in building, make up the church.

A reminder that Holy Communion will be offered in one kind only and I will come to you to administer the bread. At this point I will be masked and gloved and your element of bread will remain in a covered ciborium until I have masked up and sanitised my hands and put on gloves. Then and only then will I open the ciborium. When I come to you if you can hold your hands together and flat then I can place the wafer into your hands without my gloved hands touching yours. If there is contact then I will go back and re-sanitise my hands and put on new gloves before I administer to the next person. This seemed to work very well in the past and is the safest way at the moment.

Certainly up until (at least) 21<sup>st</sup> June we will continue to follow all the government guidelines on numbers, social distancing and face masks.

The PCC will continue to review their decisions in light of new guidance from the Government and the Church of England. Always our priority will be your safety and the safety of those who volunteer.

**National Day of Reflection – 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

The National Day of Reflection appeared to go very well and if you would like to add your name of a loved one that has died during the past year March 20-March 21 to our planned St Mary's Memorial Wall Hanging then please contact Dawn on 07840739239.

I will look forward to seeing some of you in Church on Sunday but if you are not ready yet to come back into Church then I will keep you in my prayers.

If you are struggling or need anything then please do not hesitate to contact either Gail or Dawn this week as from Monday to Friday I am taking some time off. They will be in touch with me if necessary.

Love and prayers to you all.

Sharon

## Vicar's Letter

What changed because of Easter? Unbelievers scoff at resurrection. Theologians debate the empty tomb. No one can "prove" Easter. But one thing is clear: the first Easter transformed a motley band of fearful, confused disciples into joyful witnesses to the risen Jesus. Their experience of Jesus as the Christ changed them into fearless proclaimers of the Good News in the face of persecution and to the ends of the known world.

What changes in *our* lives because of Easter? The world is still a mess. From the coronavirus pandemic to climate change's growing impact, the Trump administration's scorched-earth policies after Joe Biden's election, the Azerbaijani-Armenian war over Nagorno-Karabakh, and a deadly conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region, it has been an eventful year. Suffering has not disappeared. Death still comes to all. As individuals or as tribes, ethnic groups or political parties or nations, we inflict pain on one another. But the risen Christ invites us to stand close to those who suffer: "Come, put your fingers into the wounds in my palms and your hand into the gash in my side."

Some of us sidestep suffering, thinking that avoiding it brings happiness, but God stands with the brokenhearted. When we stand with the suffering, we encounter the God of mercy. Easter compels us to seek others wherever they are suffering, especially where suffering occurs on a vast scale. Once you know these things, you will be blessed if you put them into practice.

**This is the way forward:** believing that we share one planet, depend upon one another for survival, and are able to ease one another's paths. Life isn't about keeping track of our advancements or lapses in virtue; it's about keeping our eyes fixed on God. It's about God inviting us to drop our defences and to turn toward a new way of loving. When love holds the scales, as the poet Kabir says, they stop working. There is no need to measure, compare, mete out justice, or give each person her due; none of us deserves what God is always giving.

Many of us are still much more comfortable with a just God than a merciful God. We're bothered by those strange parables about the day laborers who work only one hour and get the same pay as those who toiled a full shift under the hot sun. We don't understand why Jesus

commends the cheating servant who cooked the books and slashed the amount due from his master's creditors. We want life to be fair. We work hard at being good; we want to get what we deserve. But of course, we never get what we deserve from God. We always get mercy, pressed down and overflowing, undeserved and wondrous. From that experience of God flows Easter joy. We are loved, held, and cherished, no matter what.

Author Richard Rohr, in *Hope Against Darkness*, writes:

*The wonder of the resurrection stories in the Gospels is that Jesus has no punitive attitude toward the authorities or his cowardly followers; and the followers themselves never call for any kind of holy war against those who killed their leader. Something new has clearly transpired in history. This is not the common and expected story line. All Jesus does is breathe forgiveness (John 20:22).*

Reconciliation, compassion, forgiveness, and community all become possible when we experience Easter. God longs for our hearts and wants us to draw closer, but also closer to our neighbours near and far. Easter is a call to solidarity.

Once we are grounded in God, we are compelled to be with people who are not like ourselves. Why? Because God is other, and comes as a stranger. In opening up to people and ideas we find strange, we become open to encountering God. We must take risks, venture into relationships that stretch us, and include strangers in our circle. It's not a burden but a gift. Where else can we expect to meet the God whose best name is "surprise"?

Easter means we live for others and not for ourselves. Many centuries ago the Sufi poet Rumi wrote:

*Become the one that when you walk in,  
Luck shifts to the one who needs it.  
If you've not been fed, be bread.*

An extraordinary description of Eucharist. Pray to become someone from whom luck shifts, so that the other may get more. Even if you are hungry, focus on your neighbours and find ways to be bread for them. Feeling lonely or depressed? Do something for someone else! Think nobody pays attention to you? Give your attention to others instead. Give thanks, not just when you have

your daily bread, but that you can be bread for others. Then God's own joy will grow in your heart.

We see in scripture that when God is active people move toward solidarity, away from their natural tendency to stay in their comfort zones of family, clan, or chosen people. Use God's eyes to look out at our world. See others as God sees them, as a beloved. Love wants to be with the beloved. That is the movement underlying all solidarity.

Easter in the real world means becoming more and more loving. No matter what our calling in life, our real work is to carry this love as comfort for all who long for God, to go everywhere God goes, which is always outward to the stranger, the alien, the poor, and the forgotten – the nobodies of this world. That is the source of Easter joy.

Easter is love stronger than death, love that is itself a martyrdom, costing everything. It is not cheap grace. It is not warm, fuzzy feelings, or syrupy spirituality. How can we speak of God amid unspeakable suffering? All we can say is that God lives in these forsaken places, and is there before us. Our God is the God of loss and diminishment and failure; the God of refugee camps, abandonment, misunderstandings, pain, loneliness, and slow deaths; the God whose life seemingly ended on a cross, but who in that very surrender transformed suffering once and for all. That is the Good News.

The Easter stories in scripture are giddy with surprises and delirious joy. We too live in Easter. The only Jesus we can know is the risen Christ. We ought to pore over these stories and ask: How is this happening in *my* life now? Where does God appear to wipe away tears, to give me courage, to keep me from backsliding into old ways, to invite me to feed his sheep?

With so much to be grateful for we grow in love. A joy that does not depend on external circumstances bubbles up in us. This joy is God's Easter gift to us, and nothing can take it from us.

Sharon