

Loving God, loving others, loving the world

**Notices for 4th April 2021**

Dear Friends

Every Easter, two different Gospel readings are set for Easter Sunday: a reading from either Matthew, Mark or Luke – depending which Gospel we’re following that year – and, every year, the beautiful reading from John’s Gospel, where Mary Magdalene is reunited with the risen Jesus in the garden.

This year, I’m going to preach on the other reading, from Mark – which gives me a great excuse to write about John’s account here.

For me, it’s one of the most beautiful, poignant readings in the whole of Scripture. You’ll remember how it unfolds. Mary goes to the tomb and finds it empty, and weeps at this new, cruel loss, following so soon after the loss of her Lord at his death. She turns from the tomb to see a man she assumes to be the gardener (in typical Johannine fashion he both *is* and *isn’t*) but then he calls her name and she recognises his voice; knows that this is Jesus. ‘My Rabbi’, she replies.

I love the fact that it is in hearing her name that Mary rediscovers Jesus and that her answer is *his* name.

I think Mary was probably called a lot of things in her lifetime. We know that

Jesus cast demons out of her and so she was probably called mad or wicked or dangerous or unclean. Even since her death, she has been called names, ‘prostitute’ amongst them; something which the Bible doesn’t mention at all.

It is Jesus who takes the trouble to really know her, Jesus who accepts her as one of his followers, Jesus who has the right to ‘name’ her, because he knows all the fullness that lies behind her name. ‘Mary!’ he says.

I’m ruminating on what others call us, and what Jesus calls us, and which names we listen to, following a series of conversations that have touched upon this.

You see, coincidentally, just this week, several of you have told me that you’ve been worrying about what people think of you or are saying about you. Almost always, you’ve imagined that what is being said or thought is negative.

Some of this is the product of the pandemic. We’re just not seeing one another in the ebb and flow of life, can’t check out our fears in person – directly or otherwise - and so something small takes on a huge significance until, in our minds, a throwaway remark becomes a devastating character assassination.

And so, perhaps now more than ever, we need to discipline our minds not to ascribe to others things they may never have said or even thought.

And, as ever, we are to listen for God who knows us by name and who calls us beloved, chosen, precious, the apple of his eye.

This Easter, may you silence the inner voice that makes you question your self-worth, and the imaginary voices that put into the mouths of others things they may never have thought, let alone spoken.

This Easter, may you hear the risen Lord calling by name, calling you beloved, chosen, precious, the apple of his eye. Listen to him.

Happy Easter!

Revd Mary

**Services for Holy Week**

**and Easter**

**Maundy Thursday –** 7.30pm Holy Communion

**Good Friday** - 2.00pm The Last Hour, a service of readings, music and reflections

7.30pm Witnesses, a reflective evening service

**Holy Saturday** – please note that there will be no Saturday morning prayers this week.

**Easter Sunday –** 10.30am All-Age Holy Communion

**Walking Holy Week…**

…with children. **Holy Week Scavenger Hunt –** get out and about with the younger members of your family (or the young at heart) and do a Holy Week Scavenger Hunt to help you retell the events of Holy Week. This is also circulated with these notices. If you do it, WhatsApp Revd Mary your

photos, and she’ll add them to our Facebook Page.

….for all ages **Stations of the Cross** in the churchyard. These will remain in place until Sunday 11th April.

**NOTICES**

**Zoom Prayer Gathering**

There will be no Saturday morning prayer gathering this week.

**Working parties in church**

We need two working parties in St Helen’s to get church ready to reopen for worship. The first involves some heavy-lifting, the second is cleaning.

Please let Mary know if you can help with:

**Heavy-lifting: Tuesday 6 April, 10.00am**

**Cleaning: Thursday 8 April, 10.00am**

**Wednesday Holy Communion**

This coming week (Wednesday 7th April) we will be using the Book of Common Prayer.

**Everyday Spirituality**

The Diocese are offering ‘Everyday Spirituality’ taster sessions to help people develop spiritual habits for everyday life. These are on Tuesday 20th April 7-9pm and Saturday 24th April 9.30-11.30am. To book email: liz.rawlings@leicestercofe.org

**St Helen’s APCM: change of date**

Notice is given that the St Helen’s APCM will now be held on Tuesday 18th May at 7.30pm.

**NEWS**

**The Revd Margaret Jacques**

I am delighted to say that Margaret has now been granted her licence (her Permission to Officiate) and will be joining us at St Helen’s, together with Allan, once we are back in our church buildings.

**Thanks from Adrienne and family**

The donations received in Alan’s memory have now been sent to the Fishermen’s Mission. The total amount collected was £830, a wonderful testimony to the love felt by our church communities here and Thornbury and Devon, work colleagues and friends for Alan.

**Contact Details**

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**** St Helen’s website:https://www.sthelensashby.net/

**** Flagstaff Team website: www.flagstaff.org.uk

**** Facebook:

 -The Flagstaff Family of Churches

 -St Helen’s Ashby de la Zouch

**** Twitter: @sthelensashby

Our thanks to you all,

Adrienne, Alison & Kate xx

**Electoral Roll 2021**

If you would like to join our Electoral Roll at St Helen’s, please email Eileen Coombs at eileencoombs@aol.com

The Diocesan Registrar has confirmed that online worship counts as habitual worship and so, if you have only worshipped with us online during the pandemic, you are still eligible – and most welcome – to join the roll.

Once the roll is closed two weeks before the meeting, if we are still not worshipping in our building at that time, the Electoral Roll will be available electronically, on request to revmarygregory@aol.co.uk

**Compassionate Leave**

Please note that Jill is on compassionate leave. Please send any enquiries to Mary, or Stewart, or one or our wardens.

**PRAYER**

The Sick

Pray for those who are sick, disabled or housebound.

**The bereaved**

Pray especially for the families and friends of anyone known to you who is recently bereaved, and for all families for whom the funerals of their loved ones have taken place during the pandemic.