

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

# VIRAL BULLETIN

14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

3rd Sunday of Easter

*Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.*

For information about us please visit: [www.northburychurches.org.uk](http://www.northburychurches.org.uk)



*Sunbeams at St John's, 7th April*

*Photo: Andy Miller*

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# 3rd Sunday of Easter

*Acts 3.12-19 Psalm 4 I John 3.1-7 Luke 24.36b-48*

The Gospel according to St Luke, chapter 24, verse 45:

*Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.*

We are in the season of the important festivals in three world faiths. This year Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan began on 10<sup>th</sup> March and ended yesterday, 8<sup>th</sup> April. Our Christian Holy Week began on 24<sup>th</sup> March, with Easter on 31<sup>st</sup> and the season of Easter continuing until Pentecost on 19<sup>th</sup> May. The Jewish Passover begins on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and runs until 30<sup>th</sup>.

It is not surprising therefore that at this time and because of the situation in Gaza, that religious topics should appear on the media, particularly on those programmes that encourage discussion and phone ins. What I felt about this was that the speakers on behalf of our faith seemed so little able to cope with the discussions and that some of the presenters were also confused about religion – in particular the faith of the Church of England the established faith of our country.

Such want of knowledge must imply a lack of proper religious education, which is not rigorous, and not linked to the psychology of the pupils' understanding at the various stages of development.

When marking examination papers in religious studies one had to be aware of the candidates' knowledge required by the question, they must also show understanding of the beliefs involved, and be able to evaluate the evidence for the truth of the account and the related ethical and moral values.

How would we fare with regard to our *knowledge* of the accounts of our Lord's resurrection? There is a very old film of the life of Jesus – perhaps the first ever made – in which the great stone rolls away from the tomb with flashing of light, revealing Jesus at the entrance in a blaze of glory. That is an entirely false presentation. The four Gospels are united in that Jesus did not move the stone himself. The only witnesses were the women who went to the tomb. Now in Jewish law of the time the testimony of women was regarded as worthless.

St Matthew explains that the great stone was removed by an angel, following an earthquake. Now in the Greek language in which the Gospel was written, the word "angel" simply means "messenger". In this Gospel we have the only record of anyone there at the time – that is the guards, the

temple officials, put there by the High Priest. They tell the most unlikely story – “His disciples took Jesus’ body away, while we slept”. A sleeping witness cannot be a reliable witness.

St Mark, the earliest of the four Gospels, simply tells us that the women found that the stone had been rolled back. They saw a young man wearing a white robe sitting there who told them that Jesus had been raised. Some scholars hold that the young man was Mark himself. St Luke tells a similar story, except that the same message is given to the women by two young men sitting in the tomb. St John tells that Mary Magdalene found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty.

What do we *understand* from these stories? First, that in Jesus God became one of us – a human being – God incarnate. It is the Gospel according to St John that makes this very clear from the start. John begins with a prologue in which he calls God, “the Word”. The Word is God who created all things, and the Word became flesh and lived among us. John includes seven miracles, which he calls signs to make his point.

He records a conversation between Jesus and the Jews which concludes with Jesus saying “Before Abraham was, I AM.” This is a direct claim to be God. “I AM” was the Jewish name for God, the name revealed to Moses at the burning bush, and in the later years it was never spoken, in case of blasphemy.

St John’s gospel continues through the death and burial of Jesus, his resurrection and appearance to the apostles, and finally to Thomas. Thomas responds by saying “My Lord and my **God**”. This is the climax, and probably John was ending his Gospel there. Later a situation arose in the Church which needed clarification of Jesus’ prediction of Peter’s martyrdom, and so another chapter was added. For the eternal God, the creator, the author of life, death could not be the end.

The resurrection means that for humanity death is not the end. For us, as for the human Jesus, it is not the severing of human relationships. When Jesus rose from the tomb it was the reverse – a new relationship with Peter, who had denied him, a new relationship with the disciples who had run away at his arrest and new tasks to go out and preach the gospel to all nations.

How do we *evaluate* all this? Did Jesus really rise from the dead or was it just an elaborate scam by the remaining apostles, to gain popularity and respect and wealth? Perhaps the Roman Empire was tired of the old philosophies of Plato, Zeno and Epicurus and would be attracted by something new.

The problem with scams is that they have to be plausible – and a story about a man executed by the Romans rising to life again was hardly believable, let alone plausible. They gained nothing from it except persecution and martyrdom. So if it had been a scam sooner or later one of them would have said: “This isn’t working. Let’s go back to the fishing.”

There have been many attempts to explain away Jesus’ resurrection.

Perhaps he didn’t really die on the cross, but recovered in the tomb, only to die later of his injuries? No, Roman soldiers would have made sure that he was dead – or have a severe punishment themselves.

Did the women go to the wrong tomb that morning? That kind of mistake would be easily pointed out.

Did someone steal the body of Jesus? The Romans? They were not really interested. The Jewish authorities? They were so eager to deny that Jesus had risen, so they could have confessed, or produced the body.

The apostles? Did they bury Jesus’ body in another tomb? No, these men were ready to face martyrdom, and did so, for preaching Jesus’ resurrection. There have never been any reliable claims for an alternative burial place.

There is no alternative other than to accept the claims of the apostles before the people: “You killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.”

There is one other curious and plausible suggestion. The great stone was not moved to free the risen Jesus from the tomb. The nature of the resurrection appearances show that the risen Christ would appear and disappear without when doors were closed.

The only men near the tomb that morning were the guards. Did they see or hear something – something that, knowing the teaching of Jesus and the claims that he would rise from the dead, something that made them curious. So did they roll away the stone to make sure that the body of Jesus was still there? And when they found that it was not, did they run in terror to the High Priest, who told them to lie about the apostles stealing the body?

There is an ancient document that refers to that possibility.

It is for ourselves, and for the witness of our faith to the world, that we need to open our minds to understand the scriptures.

It is our faith, and the faith of the Church through the ages that: *on the third day he rose again from the dead.*

*Sylvia Bareham*

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## Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

# SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 14 APRIL

### SUNDAY 14 April 3rd SUNDAY OF EASTER

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Culford
8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Lackford
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

### Monday 15 April

### Tuesday 16 April *Isabella Gilmore, deaconess, 1923*

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

### Wednesday 17 April

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
5.00pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds

### Thursday 18 April

9.30am	Eucharist (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
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### Friday 19 April *Alphege, archbishop, martyr, 1012*

5.30pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

### Saturday 20 April

### SUNDAY 21 April 4th SUNDAY OF EASTER

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Parish Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Matins (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham All Saints
10.00am	All Age Worship (gathering at 9.15am).	West Stow
10.30am	All Age Worship	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

## LIVE-STREAMED WORSHIP

The Parish Eucharist is usually live-streamed from St John's on Sundays at 11 am on Facebook [@StJohnsBSE](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsBSE) and later posted onto [www.northburychurches.org.uk](http://www.northburychurches.org.uk)

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# Wonder Club at Lackford

Sunday 7th April



At Wonder Club, we listened to one of the Easter stories, The Road to Emmaus, done Godly Play style.



Afterwards, we came up with words inspired by Easter, had an egg and spoon race, and made edible Easter gardens (Jammy Dodger stone tombs proved popular with the adults!).

*Ali Miller*

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## From the Registers

### Holy Baptism

24<sup>th</sup> March Elijah McDonald

Fornham All Saints

### Funerals

15<sup>th</sup> March Genista Dunham St John's, Bury St Edmunds followed by WSC

20<sup>th</sup> March Alan Groves Fornham St Martin

2<sup>nd</sup> April Christine Rhys-Evans WSC

3<sup>rd</sup> April Olga Webb All Saints', Bury St Edmunds followed by WSC

*WSC - West Suffolk Crematorium*

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## CAPTION COMPETITION RESULT



Some of the entries have been absolutely our cup of tea.  
So here they are:

‘Remind me, does the Rector have scotch in his tea?’

*Julie Morrison*

‘I’d like a pumpkin spiced iced mocha with whipped cream and salted caramel sauce on top in a take-out cup please.’

*Mr Edwin L Lear*

‘I thought you were bringing the milk?’

*Gina Robertson*

Sue found that church always challenged her to ponder the really important questions in life like - ‘do you want your tea in a mug or a cup?’

*Mr Edwin L Lear*

The congregation were enjoying David’s organ music so much that Sue and Lesley began to wonder whether anyone would come through for coffee.

*Lesley Langley*

‘I suppose the Team Rector, with his fondness for puns, would call this a mug shot.’

*Paul Bearing*

But the winner is **Gina Robertson** with:

Sue and Lesley aced the auditions for  
Dinner Ladies: The Musical.

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# BURY ST EDMUNDS OLD SCHOOL FUND GRANTS

The **Bury Old School Fund** is a small local charity which provides modest grants to students in both secondary and tertiary education to assist with costs such as travel and educational materials.

Applicants, or their parents, must live within the town boundaries of Bury St Edmunds in order to be considered for a grant and be under the age of 25.

For an Application Form please e-mail [osfclerk@greene-greene.com](mailto:osfclerk@greene-greene.com).

All Applications for the 2024/2025 academic year must be received by the clerk by close of business on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

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## *Registration now open for* **Churches Count on Nature (CCoN)** *8-15 June 2024*



CCoN focuses on the wildlife found in churchyards and chapel yards, whatever their size. Last year, over 250 churches across England and Wales took part in CCoN, the annual scheme where people visit churchyards, burial grounds and other church spaces to record the plant and animal species they encounter there.

Could your church take part? It will help you engage with the natural world and your wider community.

St Michael's church in the centre of Aldbourne, Wiltshire, for example, partnered with local schools and welcomed over 230 children to their churchyard.

Led by clergy, the children became wildlife detectives, explored hedgehog and small mammal tunnels, set humane traps to find wood mice and bank voles, discovered slow worms, and examined a moth trap catch of 51 species. There was a newfound appreciation for nature and the count was concluded by painting stones with the words of Psalm 24:1 and reflecting on its message that 'The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it'. Churches of any denomination in England and Wales can register to participate.

*To register, visit the noticeboard on the homepage at [www.arocha.org.uk](http://www.arocha.org.uk)*

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# Churches

# Together

in Bury St Edmunds and District

*Claire Rose brings us the highlights from the Churches Together meeting held on Monday 8th April.*

## Looking back

About 100 people attended the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity launch service and the lunches were well received, thank you to all.

The Walk of Witness saw about 600 people in the Cathedral and 400 on the Market Square. There were about 50 people representing 10 different churches taking part and helping in some way. Again, thank you to all who took part in any way.

## Looking forward

Sunday 30th June is the Summer Event in the Abbey Gardens, 2 to 4.30pm. There will be alternate 20 minute slots from the stage with singing and interviews, and from gazebos with events aimed at children and young people.

They are looking to have a choir to lead the singing, any volunteers?

Do please get the date in your diaries and aim to be there.

Help needed - Churches Together are looking for someone to organise the Weekend Thoughts in the Bury Free Press. We are very lucky to have this space. This is just to organise each week, not to write the thoughts.

- Our treasurer Elaine is stepping down at the AGM and we will need a new treasurer. This is not onerous, you do not need any accounting skills (I know, I did it for several years!).

If anyone would like more information or to volunteer in any way, please contact me, Claire 01284 725588 or [clairerose1953@gmail.com](mailto:clairerose1953@gmail.com)

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# CAPTION COMPETITION

A choice of fairtrade wine or chocolate awaits the person providing the winning caption for this photograph of a choirmaster seen recently after conducting a performance at St George's.



Please send in your entries by Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April to the Viral Bulletin at [adrian.mann@btinternet.com](mailto:adrian.mann@btinternet.com)

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## Contacts

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*We also have assistance from priests within the benefice with permission to officiate.*

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## Please don't forget ...

to let Julie Hooton [NBTLVB@outlook.com](mailto:NBTLVB@outlook.com)

and the 'Viral Bulletin' [adrian.mann@btinternet.com](mailto:adrian.mann@btinternet.com)

have details of events which have happened  
and events which are coming up at your church.

And your photos are always welcome, jpeg or png format preferred.

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