

## **From the Vicar - April 2024**

I would like to begin by wishing you a very Happy Easter.

I hope that you enjoy the long Bank Holiday weekend, and that children, teachers and other staff enjoy the school holidays.

The build-up to Easter, and Easter itself, is one of my favourite times of the church year. In Holy Week, Christians remember the last week of Jesus' life, including the Last Supper with his friends, his crucifixion, death and burial. Then, at Easter, we celebrate Jesus' resurrection – his rising from the tomb – which gives us hope that, for us too, death will not be the end. Hope that we, too, will share in Jesus' resurrection, and will enjoy life after death. For many of us, that means a heavenly home, where we will enjoy eternal, abundant life, with Jesus and, perhaps, reunited with our loved ones – with husbands, wives, partners, children, parents, grandparents, neighbours, friends.

One of the most quoted verses from the Bible is found in John's Gospel, Chapter 3, verse 16, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.'

In school, recently, I was asked, "Why didn't God save Jesus from the cross?" I replied that I don't know for certain, but maybe Jesus had to die on the cross, so that we would know just how much God loves us. God loves us so much that he suffered and died, on the cross, for us, to save us. Without Jesus' death on the cross, we wouldn't know just how much God loves us. Without Jesus' death and resurrection, we might not believe that Jesus really was the Son of God. If Jesus hadn't died on the cross, but had gone on to live a long life, maybe there would have been no resurrection. And if there was no resurrection, then there might be no life after death, and no heaven. Christians believe that Jesus' death and resurrection saves us from sin and death, and restores our relationship with the God who loves us so much that he suffered, and died, and rose again, for us. For me, being a Christian – being a follower or disciple of Jesus – is about being loved unconditionally by a God who made me in God's image, for

relationship, and for joy, and for abundant life, in this world and the next. It is about a love that will not let me go. A God who searches for me and finds me when I am lost, or when I wander from the right path.

During Lent, I have been reading the daily 'Come and See' reflections written by Bishop Steven Croft, our Diocesan Bishop, encouraging us to "walk the way of love." Each day, we reflect on the greatest commandment:

"... You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." ...  
"You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' Mark 28-31 (NRSVA)

During this season of Easter, let's all try to spread a little love, joy and peace.

God bless – and happy Easter.

The Revd Karen x