

I have frequently been asked the question 'Have you had your jab yet?' We are all eagerly anticipating the day when we will finally be able to put away the masks and hand gel and get back to some semblance of normality. I wonder if it will feel odd to be in a shop or church without wearing a mask, as though we had forgotten to dress properly.

As I write this article in Lent, looking forward the beginning of April, there is that same sense of anticipation of a joyful celebration in the near future, whilst at the same time living through a period of reflection and preparation. If you read this piece as soon as it is published we will still be in Holy Week, a time when we journey with our Lord in the final few days before his death.

On Maundy Thursday we remember Jesus sharing that very special meal with the disciples, which we often call the Last Supper. In past years we would have shared a rather nice meal together in the church. Sadly, we can't do that this year but we will be having a celebration of the Eucharist at 8.30pm, after which we are invited to spend some time in prayer. We recall Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane on the night of his arrest and he asked his disciples to watch and pray with him. They went to sleep but I think the cold will keep us awake!

On Good Friday there will be a short service on Pond Green at 10am. This will be followed by Stations of the Cross in Findon Church at 12noon, which marks the hour of our Lord's crucifixion. There will also be a guided meditation in Patching Church at 2pm, marking the final hour before Jesus died. We are only too aware that so many people have suffered this last year and lost loved ones and the cross is a reminder that God came in human form to share our sufferings, and to be alongside those in pain.

Easter, in this country is very much associated with Spring, and the signs of new life are all around us. The churchyard has been full of snowdrops for quite a while. They symbolise hope and rebirth and that is particularly appropriate for all of us this year I think. But even with the continuing restrictions on our lives Easter reminds us that Jesus has already won the battle over death when he died on the cross. We are all invited to share in the wonderful and abundant new life he offers, which begins in the here and now and continues beyond our death. We will be celebrating this on Easter Morning with a service of light at Findon Church at 8am, followed by a Worship and Praise Service at 10am. This will be supported by the worship band Canticle and will use our brand-new Audio-visual equipment. There will also be a 10.00am Eucharist at Clapham Church.

Do come along and share in the celebrations!

Helena and I wish you a very blessed Holy Week and all the joys of the Easter Season.

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