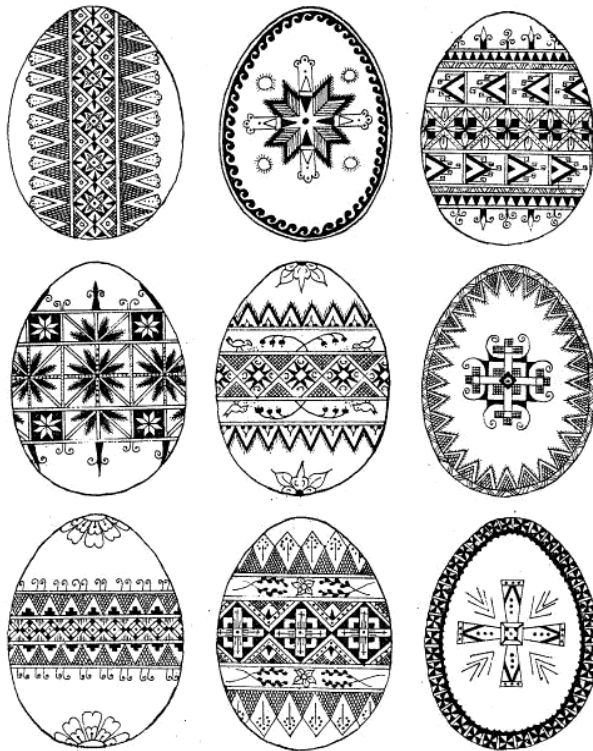


NEWSLETTER FOR APRIL 2010



Holy Week and Easter

We are an Easter people, and Alleluya is our song, said St Augustine of Hippo. Christ's resurrection and ours is the real heart of faith, without which - as St Paul says - we of all people are most to be pitied. Easter joy should mark not only Easter Day, or even the whole Easter season up to Pentecost, but the entire year.

Alleluya ('praise the Lord') was traditionally a word eschewed in Lent (that's why we have a different introduction to the gospel reading) so that when Easter came our songs of praise, with their repeated *Alleluyas*, could ring out even more strongly. Time was, they say, when very scrupulous choirs rehearsing Easter music during Lent solemnly substituted 'Alibaba' each time the word occurred, though I doubt that level-headed East Enders ever did such a daft thing.

Many people - both inside and outside the church - are more comfortable with the idea that *we are a Christmas people, and Once in Royal David's City is our song.* They are more familiar with the Christmas than with the Easter story. (That's not true, by the way, of many of our Muslim neighbours, who know all about the crucifixion.) The birth of Christ, which hallows all human life, is indeed tremendous; but to stay there is nostalgic rather than dynamic. The gospel begins by affirming who and what we are, as children of God. but must move on to be (to use the current diocesan buzz word) TRANSFORMATIVE.

A flyer giving details of all our services is enclosed. Support them as fully as possible, especially for the great 'Three Days' - Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve and Easter Day (yes, this is three, not four, since in the Jewish way of counting they are reckoned from sunset to sunset). If you are going to be away, make sure you keep and mark this sacred time in some way, and in particular make your Easter communion, wherever you are!

Note that as in previous years (though not last year) we shall be joining St Mary Cable Street, and El Community Church, on Maundy Thursday. The evening will begin with a shared supper (so don't eat beforehand!) at 6.30pm in the hall, with songs and prayers and readings around the table; then,

after a short pause, the service continues in church at 8pm, so you can come for either or both parts, though they do belong together. The Watch will continue until midnight - again, you can come and go as you wish during that time.

This year the Good Friday walk of witness follows the 'northern' route. Numbers supporting this event have grown in the last couple of years. It is not about going into the different churches along the way, but witnessing outside them to all who pass by. It ends with hot cross buns at Percy Ingles in Watney Street.

The great Easter Vigil - readings, lighting the new fire, renewal of our baptismal vows and the first communion of Easter - is a powerful and dramatic service, suitable for all ages. Members of St Mary's who are not going to the Cathedral to support a confirmation candidate will be joining us.

On Easter Day, we shall remember Bryan King and the Ritualism Riots again and his family's links with New Zealand, since this is the anniversary of the gift of his controversial vestments and communion vessels to Dunedin Cathedral by his son.

Ritualism Riots

March's event in this programme was a great success. We were joined by three church historians - Professor John Wolffe of the Open University, Dr Dominic Janes of Birkbeck College, and the Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, Dean of Trinity Hall Cambridge (shortly to become Dean of King's College Cambridge). Each of them made presentations about the whats, whys and wherefores of the Riots and their message for us today. The audience came from near and far, and produced some good questions and discussion. As usual, everyone commented on the welcome they received, including refreshments before and after. The three talks will be published on our parish website once we have received the edited texts.

Events in April

Three things to note about the latter part of April - once we have all had our Easter break!

- On Sunday 18 April the **Annual Vestry and Parochial Church Meetings** will follow the morning service (at which there will be no sermon). The first meeting is to elect churchwardens, the second to elect the church council, and to receive various reports on the work of the church, the fabric of the church, and our financial accounts. Much work has gone into this - and this will be the first annual meeting since our registration with the Charity Commission: so come along and support our officers, and find out what this registration involves!
- Friday 23 April is **St George's Day**, and we will keep our patronal festival at 7.30pm - inviting other churches in the deanery to join us - with a bring and share meal and social following.
- The following Sunday, 25 April, is **Marathon Sunday**, so our service will be at 9am, to enable members of the congregation to get through the road blocks. This year the Marathon organisers, rather than the police, are responsible for these arrangements, and Paul Kellaway has kindly agreed to be our point of contact, liaising with them. After the service, it will be all hands to the pump to cater for the crowds and promote our church - an opportunity we need to make the most of!

Concerts

Elspeth Wilkes and her team have arranged a series of Sunday concerts, each at 5pm - 'a trio of trios', since there will be three events each featuring three performers. The first, given by *Vox Pop*, will be on 18 April; the second, by Christopher White's trio, on 16 May; and the third, with Elspeth's own trio, on 13 June. Please put these dates in your diaries now - posters and more details in due course.

The Gate of Heaven

Fifty years ago the new church of St Paul Bow Common was consecrated. It's said that bus conductors announced the stop as 'the gate of heaven' because of the text prominently carved over the door. One of a handful of churches designed by Maguire and Murray (another is in Hulme, Manchester), its features in most books about modern church architecture as one of the first churches to be designed 'from the altar outwards', on liturgical principles. A difficult building to use and maintain, it is still exciting to enter it. We're invited to join them for their anniversary service with the Bishop of London on Thursday 29 April at 7.30pm.

Childrens church leaders

We remain committed to providing high-quality children's work on Sundays, even though numbers are small. We have an excellent team of leaders, working under Alex's guidance, but a couple of them wish to stand down once they have helped some new leaders find their feet. If we had a team of six, it would be a monthly commitment (because we must have two adults each week, apart from the all-age Sunday). If you'd like to consider this enjoyable challenge, have a word with Alex or the Rector.