



Happy Easter from St Mary's

St Mary's – at the Heart of Your Community

Doing Church Differently

Happy Easter to everyone living in the parish of St Mary the Virgin, Monkseaton!

At St Mary's we've always been proud of the fact that our people work together. For decades we've believed that all of us are not only blessed, but called by God. As Christians in the home, workplace and neighbourhood we look out for where we think God is at work and put our shoulder to the wheel.

These days we think of ourselves as something more than 'church-goers' attending services. Rather we 'are' or we 'do' church. Just as a doctor practices medicine, so we practice Gospel values, working together as a community that is generous, engaged and open, sustaining our neighbourhood through our energy and hope.

Our clergy and Readers help us to see that we're all called to serve God in the whole of life, and our ambition is that everyone who comes to St Mary's will recognise that we're no longer dependent on clergy to do things for us. Instead we look to them to enable and encourage us to use our gifts.

Now we're embarking on another creative step in our journey. To help St Mary's



people work well together, the Church Council has decided to appoint a Local Ministry Development Team. It sounds a bit of a mouthful, but it's simply a way of having a group chosen by the whole congregation help us develop our gifts and our usefulness for God's work in Monkseaton. We'll be commissioning the new team at our Pentecost service on 31 May, 10.00 am. Look out for more information on our website and a photo gallery of those chosen, for whom we shall be asking the special blessing of the Holy Spirit.

The financial situation

Just a few weeks ago, the General Synod (the Church of England's 'Parliament') had a discussion about the current financial situation – trying to understand how it happened, what lessons we might learn from it, and how churches can be of help to people in their local communities, especially people adversely affected by the present financial situation.

We'd like to offer you a few things – all free, of course!

- Are you, or is someone close to you, worried about losing your home? We'll be happy to send you a free copy of 'Save your home', a booklet of practical tips to help you avoid repossession
- If you're as baffled as most of us about just how the banking crisis grew into a recession, we can send you a copy of 'A brief account of the financial crisis', a reader-friendly report from an expert who also manages church funds.



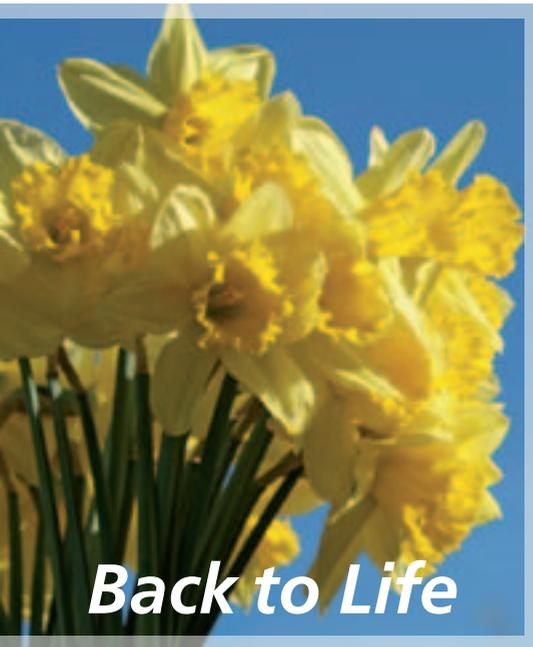
For either or both, just ring the Parish Office on 251 4216, or e-mail us at newsletter@stmarysm Monkseaton.org.uk And here's a couple of prayers you might find helpful:

Prayer for those remaining in the workplace

Life has changed:
colleagues have gone-
redundant or out of work.
Suddenly what seemed so secure is now so very fragile.
It's hard to know what I feel:
sadness, certainly,
guilt, almost, at still having a job to go to,
and fear of the future:
who will be next?
How will I cope with the increased pressure of work?
Lord Jesus, in the midst of this uncertainty, help me to keep going:
to work to the best of my ability,
Taking each day at a time, and taking time each day to walk with you,
For you are the way, the truth and the life.
Amen

Prayer for the current financial situation

Lord God,
we live in disturbing days:
across the world,
prices rise,
debts increase,
banks collapse,
jobs are taken away,
and fragile security is under threat.
Loving God, meet us in our fear and hear our prayer:
be a tower of strength amidst the shifting sands,
and a light in the darkness;
help us receive your gift of peace,
and fix our hearts where true joys are to be found,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



Back to Life

We have seen tough times before, but this has been a bad year, and it's not over yet. We regularly hear of jobs lost, and factories closing, we see the empty spaces in our high street where familiar shops used to be. It's natural to wonder how long it will go on, if the gloom will ever lift.

We are told that these things do end, they move in cycles. Green shoots will appear eventually. Maybe we are learning new values from the difficulties, becoming less materialistic, or learning to appreciate the support we get from family and friends. Perhaps we will be a better society in future. A hopeful thought, but we still need a lift, something to touch us at a deeper level and take us out of our gloom.

Many of us will find that lift in the events of Easter. While Christmas starts on a high note with angels bringing their good news, Easter starts with the gloom of the disciples. Having left their homes and jobs to follow Jesus, all their hopes had come crashing down with his arrest and cruel death. Mary sums up their despair when, going to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus she finds it empty and thinks the worst. "They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him," she says. Bewildered, she sees a man standing there, Jesus himself, but it is only when he calls her by name that she recognizes him.

Over the next days others, like Mary, met the risen Christ, on a dusty road, as they ate together or as they returned to their fishing. They found not only that he was alive, but that he'd brought them, like himself, back to life. And as they looked back on all that they and Jesus had gone through, they realised that He shared our sufferings, that somehow He died for us, and yes, He is alive!

Over Easter and Holy Week before it, we at St Mary's will follow the events of that final week - from the gloom of the disciples to the joys of Easter. We will see once again that there is one who knows the griefs and follies and sufferings we go through, who loves us and calls us by name, and calls us, like himself, back to life.

Countdown to Easter



You will be very welcome to join us for any or all of our week of remembering and celebrating the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

If you come to a Eucharist (Holy Communion) service, don't be concerned if you're not confirmed, or if you don't receive communion in some other church. You're still most welcome. You can always come up for a blessing at communion time (just keep your hands down when the bread and wine are offered). Of course, if you prefer, you can just stay in your seat.

For the Three Hours Devotion on Good Friday afternoon, (with words, prayers and music) there will be several breaks; no one need stay for the full three hours. While the service is under way in Church, there will be activities for children age 5 to 12 in our Church Hall – Godly Play, stories, games, craft activities. Cost £2 to cover materials and squash – children are asked to bring food for

a shared 'picnic'. Further details and an application form available from uniformed organisations and the Church Office.

Easter services for other local churches will appear in the News Guardian on 2 April.

Saturday 4 April	
7.30 pm	The Priory Singers will lead us into Holy Week with a performance of Bach's St John Passion
Palm Sunday (5 April)	
8.00 am	Eucharist and distribution of palms
10.00 am	Procession, Eucharist and distribution of palms
6.00 pm	A service of scripture, song, silence and prayer
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of Holy Week (6-8 April)	
9.00 am	Morning Prayer
9.30 am	Eucharist
7.30 pm	Eucharist
Maundy Thursday (9 April)	
9.30 am	Eucharist
11.00 am	Newcastle Cathedral: Eucharist, renewal of discipleship and blessing of the oils
7.30 pm	Sung Eucharist of the Last Supper and prayer vigil until midnight
Good Friday (10 April)	
9.30 am	Ante-Communion
12.00 noon	Three hours Devotion
Holy Saturday (11 April)	
9.30 am	Lamentations: grieving the death of Jesus, remembering his legacy
Easter Day (12 April)	
5.00 am	Easter Light: Lighting of the Easter Fire and first Eucharist of Easter
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist and Baptism



What St Mary's means to me

Iain doesn't get to church as often as he would like



for health reasons, but we both were very moved by the concern and prayers from members of the congregation when Iain was last in hospital. He started attending St Mary's after his father died, and he found it a very warm and welcoming place. I have gradually been drawn into church life and am getting great fulfilment from my work with the Year of Spiritual Growth group and the stewardship committee. I've also had the chance to get involved in planning some services and I recently wrote my first set of prayers, exhilarating if a little nerve-wracking at the time!

I do welcome changes to how we do things and to the church layout if it might make our church more attractive to new members who don't know or value the tradition that many of our congregation appreciate. The church will die without new blood.

Alison and Iain Campbell

Welcome! This word may not appear on the door, but on



our very first visit to St Mary's we were warmly welcomed by a lady, Jen Dawson, who gave us hymn and service books. This proved a good indication of what was to come. We were encouraged to sing in the choir, to participate in Bible study and discussion groups, to work on the social committee organising a variety of events, to join the Mothers' Union and Menzone.

Of course, through all these activities we have met many people, and over the years these friends at St Mary's have shown us kindness and encouragement in times of sadness and of joy.

Central to all activities is the worship week by week. These services are always carefully prepared and thoughtfully conducted, truly inspired, we feel, by the Holy Spirit. St Mary's has become a very important part of our lives.

Maud and Norman Turnbull

When I first moved to Whitley Bay I really wanted to find a church where I felt



I belonged. The first time I went to St Mary's I was unsure whether it would be welcoming, with a sense of friendship. I think the fact that on my second visit I was asked to help with a youth group says it all! As a new face I was made to feel at home, and so many people wanted to ensure I felt comfortable. It was wonderful.

Over the past 10 years St Mary's has become a big part of my life, and that of my family. The support is unflinching and the sense of community something to feel proud of. As a mother of young children I often talk to visitors, particularly at Christenings, and so many people comment on how 'unstuffy' it is, how different to what they'd expected.

St Mary's is helping me grow, both as a Mum through the Mothers' Union, and as a Christian. I feel so lucky to have found such a wonderful church where my family and I can grow.

Kate Stobart

Coming up...

Justice and Peace

You'd expect any church to be concerned about justice and peace, and of course, at St Mary's we are – but we're thinking about how to tackle it in a rather more systematic and responsive way. There's so much injustice and lack of peace in the world, it can be a bit difficult knowing what to concentrate on first.

We're trying to agree an action plan which will incorporate awareness raising, prayerful support and practical help. Our programme will include some local, national and world issues. If you, irrespective of any connections with St Mary's, have any expert knowledge about a troubled place, or a social justice issue, and you'd like to share it with us, we'd love to hear from you.

Our e-mail address is newsletter@stmarysm Monkseaton.org.uk, or if you'd prefer to ring the Parish Office (251 4216) they'll arrange for someone to call you back.

As the situation in Zimbabwe became more and more desperate last year, we held an information, prayer and fund-raising service. We were able to send a cheque for £322 to Christian Aid's Zimbabwe Fund. But things have got even worse since then, and the Anglican Archbishops have launched a fresh appeal. Bishop Martin, Bishop of Newcastle, comments "The people of Zimbabwe have been suffering the worst humanitarian crisis since Independence. Many have died from cholera, starvation and HIV. A breakdown of the basic civil infrastructure has slowly been destroying the nation and causing unimaginable suffering."

You can contribute to the appeal online, at www.uspg.org.uk – select 'Archbishops' Zimbabwe Appeal'. And you can read the Archbishops' statement at www.archbishopofyork.org/2157.

Summer of Fun!

Plans for a young people's summer event are taking shape, to be held at the YMCA building in North Shields. The date is Saturday 4 July, and the fun will start at 12 noon, running through to 5.00 pm. The music will include live performances from Titus and The Steels, and there will be DJ-ing, food and football. Funds raised will go to a house-build charity in Mexico. Any good ideas or queries? e-mail Fiona at Rock@StMarysMonkseaton.org

St Mary's – at the Heart of Your Community

Church is at the heart of what we do at St Mary's, and these are our weekly services:

Day and time	Worship
Sunday 8.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 10.00am	Parish Communion with children's church and crèche, followed by breakfast
Sunday 6.00pm	Evening Prayer (Healing Service on 2nd Sunday of month)
Monday-Friday 9.00am	Morning Prayer
Tuesday & Wednesday 9.30am	Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer on Tuesday; coffee after service on Wednesday)

If any of the many other activities at St Mary's interest you, please ring the office, and we'll put you in touch with the right person:

- baptisms and weddings,
- Bible Study Groups,
- prayer cells,
- Mothers Union,
- choir singing,
- the Praise Band,
- Menzone (a group for men to share fellowship and to learn more about the faith),
- COGS (a young people's group offering the opportunity for teenagers to explore more deeply issues of faith and life),
- a lunch club,
- Badminton Club,
- Church Hall for group events or parties.



Canon Robin Greenwood,
vicar of
St. Mary's

Information about all these activities is available from St Mary's Parish Office (open Monday – Friday 10.00am – 12.00 noon)

Telephone: **(0191) 251 4216**
(answerphone outside office hours).

Email: **newsletter@stmarysmonkseaton.org.uk**
www.stmarysmonkseaton.co.uk

You'll find us at the junction of Clarendon Gardens and Davison Avenue, Whitley Bay.