



THE CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

St John's, Peterborough
Newsletter
April 2017



Reverend Canon Ian Black,
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Peterborough Cathedral

Easter Joy – A Different Song

A ComRes poll for BBC Religion and Ethics asked about belief in the resurrection of Jesus. This is not an optional extra, but the central belief for Christianity. As St Paul put it 2,000 years ago, if Christ is not raised from the dead then our faith is futile and life is pointless (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).

Despite headlines saying a lot of Christians don't believe this, the picture is much more complex. Most people's faith is more nuanced than tick-box questions permit. Some believe word-for-word the biblical stories; others see the detail having figurative elements and the key point being the reality of a life after this one – for Jesus and ourselves. Without pinning down exactly what resurrection means, it stands for the hope that there is more to life than the physical and that imbues it with purpose and value, all springing from the love of God in Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.

The poll revealed that 93% of what it called 'active' Christians, those who are likely to do

something about it, believe in the resurrection in one form or another.

Easter is the most important festival of the Christian Year; so important it gets its own season lasting 50 days up to Pentecost. Its song is 'Alleluia', sung and said with passion and joy. It stands in contrast to the often-repeated assertion that the life we have is the result of accident and is completely explained by the mechanics and when it stops, it stops. The resurrection sings a different song.

The dramatic change the resurrection brought about in the disciples turned broken, despondent men and women into champions of grace, prepared to even die for this astounding good news. When it gets hold of us new life breaks out in ways that sing this different song to change the world. It is the powerhouse for everything we do.

Canon Ian Black.

You can read more of Ian's blogs & sermons at:
www.canonianblack.wordpress.com.

EASTER SERVICES

MAUNDY THURSDAY:

19.30: Sung Eucharist and Watch (until 22.00) at St John's

GOOD FRIDAY:

10.00: Walk of Witness (from Stanley Recreation Ground) to Cathedral Square. Service at St John's after, followed by hot cross buns, tea and coffee.

19.30: Before the Cross, a service of readings and reflection at St John's

EASTER DAY:

9.15: Holy Communion at St Luke's

11.00: Parish Eucharist at St John's

APCM - Sunday 30th April 2017

The annual meeting is when we celebrate the life of the church, its activities and the people who make it thrive – our valuing, loving and caring. We also count the cash and approve the accounts for the past year, and elect those who will serve on the PCC and Deanery Synod.

It follows the Eucharist at St John's and you are welcome to bring a packed lunch to enjoy together before hand.

Electoral roll forms, so you can vote, are available in the churches – please speak to one of the wardens, or June Bull (Elector Roll Officer) who will be happy to help.

By the way...



...a walk around St John's by parish archivists June & Vernon Bull

Our Vicar & Prebendary of the Cathedral - the Rev'd Joseph Stephen Pratt LL. B - witnesses the confession of the last man to be executed in public at Fengate in 1813.

David Thompson Myers was the last person to be executed in Peterborough – being hung in public on 4th May 1813 outside Fengate gaol (located at the corner of Padholme Road and Carr Dyke).

This was his punishment for confessing to an act of homosexuality. Myers was held in the Abbot's Gaol (Kings Lodgings, formerly Reba, on Cathedral Square) and per newspaper accounts in the Stamford Mercury he was hung in front of a crowd of 5,000. The population of the city at this time was 3,500 - so many had come to the city for this day of entertainment, as executions were public spectacles. The atmosphere could sometimes be quite festive, although riots occasionally broke out.

There was often sympathy for the person about to be hanged and the crowd would jeer the hangman. The reputed dying speeches of the condemned person (sometimes written



for them) were printed and sold at great profit to the gathered crowd.

Myers' crime was sodomy during a period where over 200 crimes had the death penalty, including stealing and burglary. His crime was heard in the Assize Court (now Crown Court) where he was found guilty of a homosexual act in Burghley Park... the other chap got away!

At this time, the type of gallows used and the short drop resulted in death by strangulation which could take up to several minutes before the victim lost consciousness and eventually died.

The last ever woman in Britain to be publicly executed by hanging was Sarah Dazley (convicted of poisoning her husband) whose execution took place outside Bedford Gaol in August 1843.

As the 19th century progressed it was realised that such public spectacles did not deter criminals but encouraged troublemakers and allowed thieves easy pickings from the onlookers. Hence the Prisons Act 1868 made it mandatory that all future executions were to take place within the prison walls.

Two days before his execution Myers made his confession which reads:

"As I believe that Persons in my unhappy Situation are expected to say something at the Place of Execution, and feeling that I shall not be able to do it, I wish these my Dying Words to be inserted in the Stamford papers, and to be made as public as possible. I

D. T. MYERS,

TWO DAYS PREVIOUS TO HIS
EXECUTION,

And left by him with a request that the same might be made public after his Death.

confess that I am guilty of the Crime for which I am about to suffer; and for these and all my Sins, I desire to repent before God with a broken and contrite Heart. I forgive from the bottom of my Soul, everyone who has wronged me, and I earnestly pray to Almighty God that my untimely end may be a warning to others, who are walking in the same path. Oh! May my shameful Death put a stop to that dreadful Crime! May those who have been Partakers with me in my Crimes be brought to true Repentance!! I am a miserable Sinner in the sight of God, and I am deservedly degraded in the sight of Man. But I commit my guilty polluted Soul in to the hands of my Blessed Saviour, to be pardoned and cleansed by Him. And tho I deserve nothing but Punishment for my Sins, I trust, thro the merits of my Redeemer, when I leave this wicked and miserable World, to be received into a World of Purity and Peace.

As my Example has led many into Sin, I hope these, my Dying Words, may lead many to Repentance.

D. T. Myers

Signed in Peterborough Gaol, 2nd of May 1813 in the presence of

J S Pratt, Vicar of Peterborough

John Atkinson, Clerk of the Peace

Thomas Atkinson, Attorney, Peterborough."

It was in Revd Pratt's 7th year as incumbent that he witnessed the statement of a condemned man who

was the last to be publicly hanged in Peterborough. The Revd Joseph Pratt LL.B was our Vicar for 27 years until he was succeeded by the Revd John James MA in 1833

Next issue: French Peterborough - how our Church welcomed the Huguenots!



ORGAN UPDATE

The finishing touches are being put to the organ, which should be back in action, firing on all cylinders soon. You may have heard some of it at our annual concert of Stainer's Crucifixion. Many thanks to everybody who donated to the Sponsor a Pipe Appeal, and to Alun Goulding and his team at Pipe Organ Services for their great work.

St John's Ladies Group

April-July 2017

- 11th April *Tram ride to Dogsthorpe*
- 25th April *Pie in the Sky*
- 9th May Meal
- 23rd May *Froglife*
- 13th June Quiz Evening
- 27th June Annual Outing
- 11th July AGM



Tuesdays Till Two

After a successful 'mini-series' before Easter, St John's CIC brings us another series of Tuesdays Till Two lunchtime concerts, starting on 25th April. Concerts begin at 1pm, with refreshments served by the Green Backyard from 12pm.

- 25th April: Jill Crossland (piano)
- 2nd May: Jonathan Hanley (tenor), Ben Horden (piano)
- 9th May: Roger Stimson (violin), Fergus Black (piano)
- 16th May: Irena Radic (piano)
- 23rd May: Apollo Opera
- 30th May: Pippa Wilson & Melanie White (flutes), Emily Smith (piano)
- 6th June: Antonio Oyarzabal (piano)
- 13th June: David Lovell Brown (organ)



St John's CIC presents: 'Mesh'

An international café, poetry & music event on 17th May.

'Mesh' is a new multicultural event for different communities in Peterborough to discover each other's food and culture.

On 17th May, we will have around 12 poets from Lithuania, the UK, East Timor, and elsewhere. There will also be musical interludes from 3 musicians.

The café will be open from 6pm to 7.15pm with dishes from many different countries, and then there will be around 75 minutes of poetry and music.

The poets will be former St John's poet in residence, Pete Cox, former poet laureate and St John's CIC organiser Keely Mills, CIC organiser Alun Williams, and Karima Shah. Three Lithuanian writers and poets who will be visiting the UK will be appearing. Admission to the event will cost £5.

www.stjohnscic.wordpress.com



Leftover Hot Cross Buns?

Here are a couple of ideas...

Eggy Buns

Why not use them instead of bread to make a delicious sweet brunch? Simply cut the bun in two, soak in a beaten egg mixture, with a couple of pinches of ground cinnamon, or grate in some nutmeg, and fry on either side in melted butter until golden brown. Serve with maple syrup, natural yoghurt, or fresh fruit.

Bun and Butter Pudding

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C/325°F/gas 3. For the custard base, bring 600ml semi-skimmed milk, 400ml single cream and 200ml double cream just to the boil in a saucepan. Cut a vanilla pod in half, scrape out the seeds and add to the pan. Whisk 4 medium free-range eggs with 170g of caster sugar until pale, then whisk in the milk and cream mixture, removing the vanilla pod shell.

2. Dip 6 hot cross buns (halved and spread with butter) in the mixture, then place in an ovenproof dish. Drizzle over 3 tbsps Cognac and sprinkle over a handful of dried and chopped apricots and the zest of 1 orange. Sieve the custard over, and leave it all to soak for at least 15 minutes.

3. Place the dish in a roasting tin, half-fill the tin with hot water, then bake the pudding for about 45 minutes. When cooked it will have a slight crust on top but will still be slightly wobbly inside. Dust with the icing sugar and serve.



COMING UP AT ST JOHN'S...

- 11th April: St John's Ladies Group: 'Tram ride to Dogsthorpe', Stephen Perry, 19.30
- 13th April: Maundy Thursday - Sung Eucharist & Watch, 19.30-22.00
- 14th April: Good Friday - Walk of Witness & Hot Cross Buns 10.00
Service of Readings & Reflection: Before the cross, 19.30
- 25th April: Tuesdays Till Two: Jill Crossland, (Piano) 13.00
St John's Ladies Group: 'Cohesion in the Community', Cllr David Khan, 19.30
- 30th April: Annual Meeting, 12.00
- 2nd May: Tuesdays Till Two: Jonathan Hanley (Tenor), Ben Horden (Piano), 13.00
- 4th May: *Piccolo, Live Classical Music for under-5s*, 10.30
- 9th May: Tuesdays Till Two: Roger Stimson & Fergus Black (piano & violin), 13.00
St John's Ladies Group Meal, 19.30
- 16th May: Tuesdays Till Two: Irena Radić (piano), 13.00
- 17th May: St John's CIC International Café, 18.00-20.30 (*poetry night with music*)
- 22nd May: Peterborough Art Society Exhibition (*until 3rd June*), open daily 10.00-16.00
- 23rd May: Tuesdays Till Two: Apollo Opera, 13.00
- 30th May: Tuesdays Till Two: Pippa Wilson & Melanie White (flutes), Emily Smith (piano), 13.00
- 1st June: *Piccolo, Live Classical Music for under-5s*, 10.30
- 6th June: Tuesdays Till Two: Antonio Oyarzabal, Piano, 13.00
- 13th June: Tuesdays Till Two: David Lovell Brown, Organ, 13.00



Regular Services at St John's & St Luke's:

- Wednesday: Healing Service 19.30, *St Luke's (1st Wed. of the month)*
- Thursday: Morning Prayer 8.15, *St John's*
- Friday: Holy Communion 11.00, *St John's*
- Sunday: Holy Communion 9.15, *St Luke's*
Parish Eucharist 11.00, *St John's*



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Please send contributions for the next newsletter to office@peterborough-stjohns.org.uk by 5th June.