

Spring is one of my favourite times of year. I love the carpets of bright daffodils, the little green buds on the trees and the dark nights beginning to give way to longer days. But all these signs of new life also remind me that we are approaching Easter.

Last year, for the first time, I attempted to make a Simnel Cake, traditionally associated with Easter and the end of Lent. These cakes have, I discovered, been around since medieval times. In the 17th Century they were also associated with Mothering Sunday; when young servant girls would take a Simnel cake home to their mum on one of their rare days off. It is (supposed to be!) a rich but light fruit cake, covered in marzipan. Since Victorian times, the cake has been decorated with little toasted marzipan balls or figures to represent Jesus's disciples. Sad to say my attempt didn't quite match that description! Perhaps this year I'd best stick to buying some hot cross buns...

But at the heart of Easter and all the various traditions that we associate with this time of year, there are of course events of enormous significance in the Christian faith. We prepare to remember what happened in Holy Week: Jesus's triumphal arrival in Jerusalem; cheering crowds who would later turn their backs on him and hand him over to the Romans to be crucified; his last supper with his closest friends; his betrayal; his arrest and his death on the cross. But most of all we prepare to celebrate his resurrection on Easter Sunday and to celebrate the new life and hope that this offers not only to each one of us in our own lives but also to the whole of creation.

This year at St Swithun's, our Messy Church is on Palm Sunday (20th at 9:30 am) where we especially remember Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem, riding in on a donkey, to the cheers of crowds of people waving palm branches. We would love to welcome you to join us for Messy Church or for any of our other services throughout Holy Week. Take a look at our website for details of services and other forthcoming events.

Wishing you every blessing for Easter.
— Alison Mathew