

We are now in March and looking forward to the end of March and Easter. Having left behind us the joy and celebration of Christmas, we entered the quieter, reflective period of Lent in February—purples, atonement, self-recognition and penitence.

Since Ash Wednesday in February, we have been spending time with Jesus in the desert, reminding ourselves of the struggles that Jesus went through for 40 days before his ministry really started, and our mission and the pain and trouble it can cause at times. We live through Holy Week (which starts on Palm Sunday) and Maundy Thursday and the Last Supper, Good Friday and the excruciating pain of the crucifixion, the silence of Easter Eve, and then, once again, we can glory and celebrate the joy of the Risen Christ on Easter Sunday morning, as he breaks free of the tomb and overcomes death, both for himself and for us. Church bells will ring joyfully throughout the land and mountains of chocolate Easter eggs will be eaten.

But in the midst of all this we do have an earlier celebration this month. On 11th March we celebrate Mothering Sunday, a day when, traditionally, we return to the churches where we were baptised, and in later years, young maids and apprentices were given the day off to go to visit their mothers. For many of us, Mothering Sunday is a day to especially celebrate our mothers and give thanks for all they have done for us. Unfortunately, for some this is not a day of celebration—they perhaps did not know their mothers, or struggled with a relationship with them; and for others the loss of a child brings back painful memories of grief and hurt. For some women, who, despite every medical advance, have never been able to have children of their own, this is also a day of anguish. We hold all these different emotions together as we celebrate Mothering Sunday in our churches. I do hope that whatever your feelings about Mothering Sunday, you might be able to join us and find the service helpful.

Easter is on its way: the celebration of new life; spring; warm sunshine; and quite a few babies being born in the next month or so. Easter is the most important festival in the Christian calendar. Without Easter, there is no point to Christmas, no resurrection, no eternal life. But knowing that there is, and that Christ died for us and rose again in order to make it so, is the greatest hope we can ever wish for.

In the meanwhile, there is much to look forward to and there will be Easter service information follows. I do hope you will be able to join us at some of our services, where you will be MOST welcome.

Wishing you a continued Holy Lent and a very Happy Easter.

Blessings and prayers, Rev Glynis Beckett