

Very early in the morning,
God created all that is good and beautiful.

Very early in the morning,
a mother placed her newborn in a manger.

Very early in the morning,
the good news that Jesus was risen and alive
in their midst
was shared with frightened friends.

Thom M Shuman



Easter is the greatest festival in the Christian year, where we celebrate the miracle of new life. We cannot fail to be filled with joy as we see new life bursting out everywhere in the beauty of nature all around us. Is it really possible that those dead-looking branches and dried up bulbs have indeed been full of life after all? So used are we to trusting the wonder of Spring that we hardly question it. But when we experience 'deadness' in our own lives we may not be so trusting of God's promise to us that new life will come.

Our desire for new life may stem from any number of reasons; we may be worn down by illness, or poverty, or loneliness; there may have been life-changing experiences which have knocked our confidence; or we may be struggling with bereavement, where we not only seek the assurance that our loved one still has life, but that we too may be able to find a way of living again.

The disciples, despite having lived with Jesus throughout his ministry and trusting him, nevertheless found themselves afraid and disbelieving after his death at Calvary. Mary Magdalene became the first person to see the risen Lord, yet despite her recounting 'I have seen the Lord' to the others, the Bible tells us that they remained huddled behind locked doors in fear until they had witnessed his risen life for themselves. (John 20).

Jesus broke through into that locked room with the words 'Peace be with you' and continued to be present to them in various situations – while some were fishing, as two walked along the Emmaus road and asked him to join them and their friends for a meal. The result was a complete transformation in them all as they received the Holy Spirit and began fearfully proclaiming 'Christ is risen indeed!'

Our services at St Mary's throughout this season of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, have reflected our belief that Christ came to seek and to save the lost. We hope that all who have come to St Mary's during Holy Week and Easter will have been aware of the sense of peace and presence which both surrounds and fills the church, for here is the place where we find ourselves in the presence of God, who promises us new life. If any of you have come as a visitor, we do hope you will come again. You will be very welcome.

Dazzling God,
bring us to life.

Where we are tired and stressed,
give us the energy to serve your creation;
transform our hardened hearts into fountains of grace;
forgive us for all the damage we have done
and fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Thom M Shuman – from 'Fire & Bread' - a Wild Goose Publication

Maggie Marsh



Job or *Ministry*?

As you may imagine, since our much-loved Vicar, Theresa, left at the beginning of February, we have all been focusing on keeping St Mary's running smoothly during the Vacancy, under the leadership of our Churchwardens, Peter and Dan.

Many people do many things to ensure that we continue to serve the parish, and I wonder if the following article will throw new light on what we do. For the fact remains that we are all called to a ministry of one sort or another. Ordained ministry is just one of many. For those who may be wondering about the things they do, perhaps the following may give some food for thought!

In the Church, some people have a job; others have a ministry.
What is the difference?

If you are doing it because no one else will, it's a *job*.

If you are doing it to serve the Lord, it's a **ministry**.

If you quit because someone criticises you, it's a *job*.

If you keep on serving, it's a **ministry**.

If you'll do it only if it doesn't interfere with other activities, it's a *job*.

If you are committed to it, though it means letting go of other things, it's a **ministry**.

If you quit because no one praises or thanks you, it's a *job*.

If you stay with it, even without recognition, it's a **ministry**.

If your concern is success, it's a *job*.

If your concern is faithfulness, it's a **ministry**.

An average church is filled with people doing *jobs*.

A great, growing church is filled with people doing **ministry**.

If you have a job, give it up and find a ministry! God does not want us being stuck with a job, but excited and faithful to Him in ministry.

(Anna Sandberg as published in 'Wholeness' newspaper, New Zealand)

Continued overleaf

It seems to me that St Mary's is not 'an average church', for nobody in St Mary's has a 'job'. Everyone has a ministry, and is exercising that ministry in a wonderful way, which no doubt our new Vicar will be delighted to encourage!

May God continue to bless us all as we continue to grow together in love, trusting that our future is safe in God's loving hands.

Maggie Marsh



April Services and Events

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| Saturday 6 | 08.30 | Men's Breakfast at Horton Golf Park |
| Sunday 7 | 08.00 | Holy Communion (BCP) |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion and Children's Groups |
| Monday 8 | 19.30 | Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room |
| Saturday 13 | 19.00 | Quiz Night |
| Sunday 14 | 09.30 | Sung Communion - Bishop Paul Presiding |
| Wednesday 17 | 20.00 | PCC in the Cuddington Hall |
| Thursday 18 | 14.30 | Thursday Club in the Cuddington Hall |
| Saturday 20 | 10.00 | Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall |
| Sunday 21 | 09.30 | Sung Communion and Children's Groups |
| Sunday 28 | 09.30 | Sung Communion |

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome