



Outreach

The Parish Newsletter of St. James Church, Briercliffe

Available on our church website, www.briercliffestjames.co.uk

Issue 7 - April 2021



Acknowledging the past and looking to the future

Following Easter, the Christian season traditionally changes to one of joy and brightness and along with the celebrations of Christ's resurrection the Easter eggs we might exchange symbolise new life. In our church and community, with a new vicar and lots to look forward to, we hope and pray that this is the case!

Then

The building of our beautiful church of St. James the Great, now a Grade 2 listed building, began in 1839. It was designed by Architect Edmund Sharpe and built due to the foresight of Revd Robert Mosley Master, a benevolent incumbent of Burnley. Whenever they saw the need he and his wife provided clogs for children. He gave £200 to the building fund, local landowners and industrialists contributed, with the rest of the money coming from ordinary working handloom weavers who made donations of a shilling whenever they could.

The church opened to the public on Sunday 18th July 1841 with two services; in the morning Revd William Mercer MA (incumbent of St. George's Sheffield) preached and in the afternoon Revd John McLindon BA (Curate of Briercliffe) did the same. Collections were made as bills still needed to be paid.

It was on 26th September 1841 that the church was consecrated by Rt Revd John Bird Sumner, Bishop of Chester.

Now

This year, being the 180th anniversary of St. James Church, we hope to have some celebratory services and events. These may still be under some Covid-19 restrictions but with our new vicar, Revd Sharon Greensmith at the helm, we hope to make them memorable. Please look out for what we are planning between July and September. Our focus will need to be on fund raising as, just as in many other places, expenditure has far outweighed our income during the pandemic. In addition this winter's harsh weather has seen the old building suffer some storm damage and stone erosion problems, resulting in some hefty repair bills. Once this work has been completed the bell will need further restoration.

Hopefully, as in times gone by, our congregation and local community will be able to help us with their physical and financial support.



A model of The Last Supper made by Sheila Scott and Diana Holden



Website Resources

Please continue to look at our church website for details of worship and the tentative reopening of the building for a restricted Sunday Service at 10.00am.

Also, the diocese website: www.blackburn.anglican.org has Lent and Easter Resources.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!!

If you read John's Gospel account of what took place early on that first Easter morning, you can see that the heart of Mary Magdalene was broken by the death of Jesus and all she wanted to do was to show her love by preparing Jesus' body, to wash and clean it, as it hadn't been done after his rushed burial. And you can feel her anguish when she finds that even this last act of loving service is not possible. The tomb is empty and yet she still seeks her Lord, '...tell me where he is...' she desperately asks. Jesus once told his followers that whoever searches will find. Mary, in her searching, does find and meets Jesus, but mistakes him for the gardener. One of the most moving verses for me in this passage is when the so-called gardener turns to her and calls her name, 'Mary!' As she is lifted from the depths of sorrow to the heights of great joy, Mary stretches out her arms to touch Jesus only to be told 'Noli me tangere' – do not touch; do not hold me! Piercing through her ecstatic joy comes the pain of reality. I'm sure we have all experienced that at some point in our lives.

In many works of art that depict this scene, Jesus is pictured standing tall in his victorious resurrection freedom, in contrast to Mary who has fallen to the ground, on her knees before him, recumbent with heaviness of heart, of not being able to embrace or touch the man whom she not only thought dead, but whom she dearly loves, adores, and praises. We know the ending of the story - Jesus instructs Mary to, 'go and tell...' which she faithfully does by announcing to the disciples, '**I have seen the Lord!**' with much joy and excitement.

Throughout my discipleship Jesus has given me instructions: do not, come and see, go and tell, go make, take up your cross, follow me. Often his words challenge as I duly take up my cross daily and follow his Way in an act of loving service. Christ's call on my life has taken me on a journey that has, at times, been hard, lonely, and quite scary, taking me away from my comfort zone of security and familiarity to places that have seemed desolate, alien and sometimes even uncomfortable. It has been a demanding road, but it is a journey that leads me closer to God through Christ's leading, guiding, teaching, and encouraging.

Moving from my hometown of Stoke-on-Trent to Briercliffe is one of those times on that journey which makes me feel a little scared and a bit lonely, as I prepare to leave behind the comfort and security of knowing a place inside out; of being surrounded by the familiarity of close family, friends and colleagues, the diocese of Lichfield, and the people in churches where I have served and who have come to know me well. But even though this stage of the journey is leading me to a place unknown, in faith I know it is where Christ is calling me to be, to tend to and to feed his lambs. I am confident that Christ has gone ahead, marking out the route, and that he will be with me (and all of you!) providing the strength needed every step of the way...and that fills me with such hope, joy, and excitement! As we embark on a journey together, it may at times be tough, confusing, despairing, even uncomfortable – emotions experienced by Mary and Jesus' disciples on that first Easter Morning, but I am certain that our needs will be met through the love and grace of our risen Lord.

This Easter, as we joyfully celebrate Christ's resurrection and the beginning of new life found only in him, may you, like me, look forward to the future with Easter joy and hope, as we begin a new journey (and life) together, obviously with Jesus constantly at the helm! We are an Easter people and Alleluia! is our song.

God bless and see you soon.

Rev Sharon



St. James Lanehead C of E School

Go to our church website and click on the link to read their newsletter and a letter about the recruitment of a new School Governor.



Burnley Food Bank

Please continue to support the Food Bank by donating at the Spar Shop; the need will be even greater as the year progresses.



A Prayer for the Vacancy

Generous God, you care for your children by sending a shepherd to guide us along the way of life and discipleship. As we prepare for the coming of our new Vicar, Rev'd. Sharon Greensmith, support and strengthen by your Holy Spirit, the ministry of our Church Wardens, PCC and visiting clergy during this time of vacancy. Help us to look forward with joyful hope to all that we will achieve together in building up your Kingdom in this parish and may the light of your countenance ever shine upon us and bless us. In Jesus' name. **Amen**

Enquiries, please contact the Parish Administrator, Alec Oldham (Tel: 434877) Email: briercliffestjamesad@gmail.com
Churchwardens, Andrea Bettany (Mobile: 07796616961) Chris Holdsworth (Tel: 428623)
Newsletter Editorial Team Co-ordinator, Jeanette Holdsworth (Tel: 428623) Email: cj.holdsworth@hotmail.co.uk
Parish Pastoral Assistant, Janet Hartley (Mobile: 07947217947)