

# UNITED CHURCH OF EGHAM

A local union of the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church

## APRIL 2018

Dear Friends,

Easter is almost upon us and having journeyed through Lent, the day of celebration is in sight. For Jesus, the road to Calvary was a painful one, despite the 'high' moment as Jesus received a royal welcome as he entered Jerusalem as King. Yet even then, the shadow of the cross was looming via those who felt threatened by his ability to attract great crowds and were plotting and scheming to put an end to him and his ministry. Acts of betrayal and denial followed by which ultimately led to Jesus being put to death on the cross. If that had been the end of the story we would have nothing to celebrate. However, on the third day Jesus arose from the tomb and so began Christianity. The reality is - no resurrection, no Christianity! The empty cross is the wonder of Easter. Through the cross, a symbol of death and destruction, new life and hope burst forth. The cross became a symbol of victory as Jesus overcame our final enemy, death itself. It is as simple as that.

I am sure it has not passed your notice that Easter Sunday this year falls on 1<sup>st</sup> April - April Fool's Day. It seems to me that there is a strange irony here. Since the fool was not Jesus but rather, it was those who schemed to put him to death. They were foolish enough to believe they could outwit God's plan. In the end, Jesus had the last laugh. This has implications for us as Jesus' followers today. Sometimes we are called 'fools for Christ'. By that I mean that to 'those on the outside', living a Christian life could seem to be a foolish option. Why would you want to follow a man who calls people to follow him by taking up their cross? The answer, of course, is that we know what lies beyond the cross. For Christians there is nothing to fear because Jesus promises believers the gift of eternal life. This is not something new, for as we read in the Apostle Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians, he writes "*For the message about the cross is foolish to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved, it is the power of God*" (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Being fools for God (or Holy Fools) means that there may be times when we are called upon to make a stand for Christ's sake. To go against the flow - being 'counter-cultural' so to speak. Whilst we in the West are very fortunate to have free speech and not face persecution for our faith; in some countries - North Korea, China for example, our brothers and sisters face persecution and death simply for possessing a Bible. Yet they hold fast to the promises of Jesus and for that reason, they are prepared to be considered fools for his sake and for the sake of the gospel. If we want to imitate Christ, we must realize that part of Christ-likeness is to accept the ridicule, which Christ accepted. If we want to be those who truly labour for Christ, we will also have to be fools for his sake. If Christ was willing to be regarded as a fool, so too must we.

The hymn writer, Brian Wren, writes an Easter hymn entitled *Here hangs a man discarded (Singing the Faith 273)* in which he describes the image as being just that. He goes on to name Jesus as a clown in verse 2. But, as the hymn continues, we grasp the real meaning, for in verse 6 he writes:-

*Christ in our darkness risen, help all who long for light  
to hold the hand of promise till faith receives its sight.*

I am prepared to be a fool for Christ... what about you?

Anthea joins me in sending you our warmest greetings and praying that the message of Easter joy be yours today and always. For the Lord is risen, he is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Your friend and Minister, **Alan.**

**MINISTER: Revd Alan Wickens**

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## UNITED CHURCH OF EGHAM - APRIL, 2018

Sunday 1st	EASTER DAY:	
	7.00 am	Sunrise Service on Englefield Green
	11.00 am	Morning Worship and Holy Communion - Revd Alan Wickens
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship and Holy Communion - Revd Alan Wickens
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	8.00 pm	Tuesday at Eight - A talk by Tim Morris on the History of Brooklands.
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Bible Study at Christ Church United Reformed Church, Windsor
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am	Morning Worship - Mr Paul Murphy
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship - Revd Juliet Ushewokunze
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	12.30 pm	Craft Club
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am	Morning Worship - Revd Alan Wickens
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship - Mr Paul Murphy
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Bible Study at Christ Church United Reformed Church, Windsor
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am to 8.00 pm	(Book Sale -----
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup>	8.00 am to 12.30 pm	(----- in the Church)
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	11.00 am	Morning Worship - Mrs Jane Mackerness
	2.30 pm	Induction of Revd Anthea Wickens as Minister of St Paul's United Reformed Church, Bracknell
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship - Revd Alan Wickens
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup>	12.30 pm	Craft Club
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Mental Health Awareness Day meeting at Woking United Reformed Church, Woking (until 4.00 pm)
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am	Morning Worship - Mr Sydney Shore CBE
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship - Revd Andrew Reed

*Regular meetings: we have - BROWNIE GUIDES (Mondays at 6.30 pm); BEAVER SCOUTS (Tuesdays at 6.00 pm); CUB SCOUTS (Thursdays at 7.00 pm); SCOUTS (Fridays at 7.30 pm);*

**COFFEE AND TEA will be served in the Vestibule of the Church each Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10.00 am to noon, when the Church will also be open for prayer. On each Thursday there is a LUNCHTIME SERVICE from 12.30 pm followed by a TIME OF FELLOWSHIP (bring your own salad or sandwich or whatever!) when coffee and tea will be available, and then a SOCIAL AFTERNOON of board games.**

### DUTY ROTA FOR APRIL, 2018

	<i>Sunday Deacons</i>	<i>Sidesmen</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> am	Jane Leckie	Nyree Long and Janet Figgins
pm	Lindsay Mair	Lindsay Mair
8 <sup>th</sup> am	Gordon McCallum	Jill Reynolds and Derek Weston
pm	Graham Burrough	Graham Burrough
15 <sup>th</sup> am	Harry Cumming	Marion Mason and Di James
pm	Graham Burrough	Graham Burrough
22 <sup>nd</sup> am	Jane Leckie	Christine Maynard and Frank Clark
pm	Paul Murphy	Paul Murphy
29 <sup>th</sup> am	Harry Cumming	Derek Weston and Janet Figgins
pm	Anthony Long	Anthony Long

### FLOWER ROTA FOR APRIL, 2018

1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>: Easter flowers; 15<sup>th</sup>: Anthea and Alan Wickens; 22<sup>nd</sup>: Pat Webb; 29<sup>th</sup> Jane Leckie