

# Trinity Topics



# Easter 2023



Dear friends,

In the last week before the schools finished for their Easter break, a small group came to Trinity from Beresford Memorial CE First School to explore a bit of the Easter story. They had already been looking at the stories in RE lessons and knew much about the events we mark in “Holy Week” and were willing to explore how the different characters may have felt.

In many ways it was easy - the questions were fairly simple. But quite profoundly they talk about God and the stories without fear of getting it wrong; I wondered when we lose that. We often seem to go quiet when talking about matters of faith - even when opinions or experiences are sought rather than knowledge of history or texts. Matters of faith have always been debated and discussed, ridiculed and commended- it has been the way faith has been passed on and new understandings discovered.



Perhaps as we get older we realise how some people hold fast to a certainty within a story which others question, or wonder about. We fear being tied up in knots by another’s knowledge and being made to look foolish. We generally are not good at accepting the different ways people look at the stories of faith – even when all these different approaches are quite valid and meaningful on an individual’s journey of faith. Just because people think differently does not mean that one person’s faith is “weaker” than someone else’s. It doesn’t mean that they are not playing their part in making God’s kingdom a reality in this world.

From my reading of the Gospel accounts, Jesus never seems to ask people about their faith before he’ll have anything to do with them; he doesn’t quiz them on detail from the Hebrew Scriptures to check on the ‘validity’ of their faith – but whatever faith they have, he accepts them, he heals them and he sends them on their way.

This “Holy Week” and Easter we will remember the discussions and debates where foolishness raises its head (‘Satan entered him’) where people are judged for their actions (the woman who anoints Jesus’ feet and wipes them with her hair), where seekers of Jesus fail to find him (the Greeks) - and Jesus who stood with the oppressed, the marginalised, the sick, the poor and challenged the hypocrites is sent to a criminal’s execution so that the status quo is upheld. And still, the cry from the cross is ‘Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing’. The way the story has been presented to us makes those who worked for Jesus’ execution seem far more foolish than the one who is mocked, denied and betrayed.

Perhaps this Easter we should wonder, question, challenge and see if we too can be led through the teaching of love at the last supper and the horror of ‘Good Friday’ to the empty tomb of Easter Day, to meet with the Risen Jesus, find ourselves accepted and experience new life.

Happy Easter,  
*Richard*



## TRUSTING FAITH!

Faith – you hear the word repeatedly in church. When you hear it, how do you react?

Is your immediate response to feel that it's all about what you believe – how you hold the facts of the Bible stories; how you respond to the death and resurrection of Jesus? Or is it your first response to think about “the faith” - the detail of understanding what God is like, that we have come to after years of study and prayer about Jesus and our vision of God through him? Or, however you try to express it or define it, is faith for you the way you believe the truths and stories of the Bible, how you hold the facts of God's creation and love, seen in the Old Testament covenant with his people and through their history and prophets, culminating in his revelation in Jesus? Or is faith for you holding the historic Creeds of the church and being able to say “Yes, this is what I believe.”?

The older I get, the more I question, and the less certain I am about “facts” about God. But I hope, the greater is my certainty about the importance for me of working out what it means to be a follower of Jesus today. I value the invitation of Jesus that comes over again in the Gospels, “Follow me.” I am encouraged by Acts (Ch19 v9 and v23) where Paul describes early Christianity as “the Way”. I try (often hesitantly I confess) to walk in that way - and then trust that all the rest of life and eternity will look after itself.

“Trust” is a valid interpretation of the word used in the New Testament that is usually translated “faith”. So, I am now trying to read the New Testament, (especially Paul's letters) by replacing the word “faith” with the word “trust”. Try it - and you find phrases like “by grace you are saved through trust”. “Trust (believe in) the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved”, or the great cry of Luther “Trust (faith) alone.” Does this play on words matter? I think so because Christianity is not a logical philosophy to assert the nature of God. It is an all-encompassing way of life and for me the word “trust” has an emotional commitment about it which is nearer to the truth of my experience.

I have two pictures of “trust”. Do you remember this children's game? You stand with your back to your friend, keep your body rigid, and fall backwards into his arms, trusting him to hold you from falling. There is that point where you lose your balance and become totally reliant on him catching you. That's trust. The other picture I have is of two men arguing about something neither can prove. Neither will give way. Then one, in his frustration says, “Put your money where your mouth is!” To trust is to risk, sometimes foolishly, always without absolute certainty.

I believe a lot of things that I cannot prove. I believe in the love others have for me, my family, and my friends. I believe that the creation has the goodness of love as its purpose; I believe that God is love, and his love is demonstrated in the life and death and the continuing life of Jesus of Nazareth, and when aware of, or at my best, I trust my thinking and living to these unprovable statements and gamble my present and future upon them.

Did you ever sing “Trust in the Lord, and don't despair, he is a friend so true. Hallelujah!”? You must be quite old if you did!

**Colin Cooper**

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### The sign of a cross

I once read about Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008), who had spent time in a Soviet forced labour camp. One day as he worked in sub-zero temperatures, worn out and exhausted, he let his shovel drop and landed himself on a bench. He half expected a prison guard to come and beat him to death or drive him back to work, for those were the normal practices for taking an unscheduled rest. Then an emaciated prisoner passed by and quickly made the sign of the cross on the ground. Alexander stared at that sign, the sign of the cross!



Many Christians were being punished in the Soviet labour camps for having a faith in God. That sign of the cross on the ground confronted Alexander in his exhaustion. He must have felt in despair at the hopelessness of his situation. He returned to work. It could have been his "crucifixion" day. Alexander and others were suffering but it was that sign of the cross that awoke some deep inner understanding of what Jesus had experienced at the Jewish Passover time, what we call our Easter time. It was as though Alexander understood and felt that God/Jesus was sharing in his and the Christians' sufferings, in that Soviet labour camp.

The small act by that man of making a sign of the cross on the ground shows us that he was anointed in the Holy Spirit by God. Needless to state, that cup of water, that act of kindness, even that helpful word shared with another, reveals that in small, seemingly insignificant things done by you and me in God's/Christ's love, is but the anointing of the Holy Spirit within our lives. The love of God shed abroad within our hearts. So, take heart, that act given to Alexander in his need, pleased God. What we do in the Spirit will do the same.

For us, some who may have walked in procession with other Christians from the Monument on "Good Friday" following a cross, may we recall the Hebrew prophet Isaiah's words: "he was despised, rejected, knew sorrow, grief". Ch53 v3.

As God knew Alexander's need in that Soviet forced labour camp so God knows each of our needs.

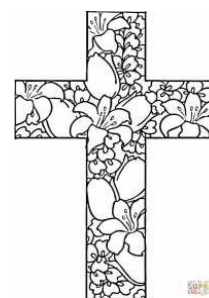
Some words to share with God;

Living God be with me now.

Understanding God make me new.

Loving God accept me because of Jesus and His cross.

**Arthur Massey**



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## My visit to Israel in 1969 part 2



(This follows Part 1 of my memories of the visit with the Stockholm Evangelical Lutheran Church which appeared in the last edition of Trinity Topics)

We continued to experience many other wonderful things.

Our Minister read the Bible passages relating to the places we visited. This was helpful as many places have had name changes over the years.

I recall floating in the brine of the Dead Sea. It was so strange. We had been told to just walk in and sit down, and then we found ourselves just lifted and floating. A few had brought newspapers with them and as they floated, they lay back and read the papers. Others like me tried to swim, but that was difficult if not impossible.

In Hebron we visited the Patriarch's tomb, before attending the market. Hebron, noted for its green coloured glassware, which is beautiful, but too expensive for me, having just finished my nurse training. But I found a box on the ground with 3rd class mini vases, in my price range, so I bought 2. Now each spring I enjoy filling them with snowdrops and enjoy that shopping memory.

In Bethlehem we visited the grotto under the birth church. A star marks out the place where tradition says that Jesus was born. If one kneels just there one can reach and touch the rock under the star. Every other surface is covered with marble and precious metals.

The Orthodox service that we attended in Jerusalem felt so different from what I appreciated as a "normal service", for people were coming and going in and out the whole time. Some came and lit a candle or prayed and then left. I have seen this happen many times now in Sweden when I have attended the Lutheran church services, not by the traditional Swedish congregation of course!

At the Mount of Olives, where Jesus prayed, "not my will, but yours," we saw some ancient olive trees that were held together by sturdy iron bands. We walked along the Via Dolorosa, (Way of Sorrows,) where shopkeepers and beggars competed for our attention and money. We remembered that Jesus walked that way carrying a cross. His love was greater than the pain and death. It was a joy to attend a service by the

“Garden Tomb”. Naturally, the grave was empty. So was the tomb we visited in the huge Church of the Holy Sepulchre where that grave was covered in costly decorations.

There are so many memories of places, people and meetings with God for me to treasure. The Bible came more alive. So, if you have never visited the land of Israel, I can recommend a trip to you.

**Eva Massey**

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## “So, how’s retirement?”

### Pipe and slippers

“So, how’s retirement?” That’s the question I’ve been asked regularly over the past few months, and I’m never quite sure what to say. For me, the word “retirement” has always had connotations of pipe and slippers, of putting one’s feet up and of Bingo and bowls. Among the definitions for “retirement” in my dictionary are “going away”, “going to bed”, “receding or disappearing”, “withdrawing from a contest” and “pulling back”. “So, how’s retirement?!”



### Cricket

Finishing work in May last year meant that the summer months stretched out ahead of me, and at first this provided the opportunity to take a break, watch some cricket and recharge the batteries after nearly 40 years of employment. The transition to home working during lockdown meant that having me around at home all the time was not quite as traumatic for Suzanne as it might have been!

### New Afghan friends

As word spread of my new situation, opportunities started to open up. Maureen Wiskin approached Suzanne and me to ask whether we would support one of the Afghan refugee families which the church had committed to helping settle into life in Leek. Within a few weeks, our family had moved to Milton Keynes (I don’t think it was anything to do with us!), so we shared support for the remaining family with Maureen. Over the past 9 months, it has been both a privilege and an eye-opening experience getting to know the family and helping them with all the practical, financial and social challenges of adjusting to their completely new and strange environment. They too have now moved on to Milton Keynes, but we remain in regular touch with our new Afghan friends.

### New challenges

Over the summer, I was asked if I would consider becoming a Circuit Steward and since September, I have been learning exactly what that involves. I have also recently become a Trustee of the William Carr Trust, a local Christian grant-making charity supporting people in Leek, particularly older people, who are in financial need.

I was very keen that not all my post-employment activities should be focused on the church, because I feel it is very easy for us to get sucked up into entirely church-related activities, and to miss opportunities to get involved in, and serve the wider community. So, I applied to become a volunteer with Leek Citizens Advice. I have been on a steep learning curve over the past six months but am now starting to feel that I can contribute to helping some of the people approaching the organisation for advice and help.

### So, how’s retirement?

“So, how’s retirement?” I think I would answer that it’s been all the following: very different; varied; busy; fulfilling; challenging. I’ve been reminded once again that when one door closes in life, God opens new doors for us providing new opportunities to learn and to serve. I think the pipe and slippers can stay in the cupboard for a few years yet!

**Philip Mann**

## Walking for Pleasure

As many of you will have already noticed, apart from Stoke City, playing my keyboard and reading, walking/hiking and good food play an important part in my life. It has been a pleasure to use these interests by introducing the walking and meal outings to Trinity which appear to have gone down well and will hopefully continue through 2023.

One meal down already at The Mehek, and another planned for March 26th at The Fox and Goose in Foxt with further events planned at 'Thai Siam' in Haywood Street, Leek and hopefully a return to Westwood Golf Club. Trinity Diners are looking good.

While trying to plan walks I will keep in mind that they should be relatively short – 4 to 5 miles and as level as they possibly can be but with places of interest on route. Again, map reading and planning walks are things I get great pleasure from. Interestingly, a couple of years ago our local vet Pat Kinch, persuaded me to take a closer look at The Ordnance Survey app., which is down loadable for £24 pa. Walks and cycle routes are available with the ability to create and store your own routes. Whilst on a walk your progress is tracked by satellite and should a turn be missed you get an alert on the iPhone almost immediately. The idea is brilliant, and the user should never get lost again!

Future walks for our group will hopefully kick in when the weather improves, possibly early after Easter. Watch the notices. Walks being considered are Leek to Rudyard Lake side café and return; Greenway Bank; Knypersley Reservoir; High Peak Trail from Newhaven to Parsley Hay café and return; Hartington to Pilsbury and return, just to mention a few. With the villages of Hartington, Alstonfield, Monyash and Chelmorton only a short drive away, the choice is endless.

Photo: Packhorse bridge over The River Dove approximately 1 mile down.



**Chris Cartlidge**

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## That's smelly!

I once owned a Honda 90 motorbike. Some would argue it was *not* a motorbike! It was *not* a moped – no pedals and it would reach speeds of 50 mph with a following wind and on a steep downward slope!

Anyway, after a late finish at work, on a dark, icy winter's night, I came off my trusty bike at Winnothdale. I had, with caution, just negotiated the ford and was accelerating away when I hit sheet ice and came off. I had two immediate impressions. Firstly, I was embarrassed but there was nobody around and secondly, I could smell woodsmoke from nearby cottage hearths.

Now, 40 years later, on smelling woodsmoke, I am transported back to that winter's night.

Have you ever been in a car when there's been a sudden unexplained smell? Perhaps you look at your fellow passengers and see them wrinkling their noses and casting accusing glances at each other before hitting the window button to let in fresh air. But the smell becomes worse, almost overpowering! The windows are quickly raised, and the smell of rotting flesh is trapped in the car. Realisation dawns. We are following, obviously too closely, a certain type of lorry heading for a local animal rendering plant! Smell is such a powerful sense.

I have recently read Leviticus which details rites to be observed when offering animals as a sacrifice to God. The smell must have been awful. Slaughter, blood drained and spattered over the alter and over the penitent; some meat cooked and eaten, other flesh burned, and the best cuts reserved for the priests. One detail struck me as particularly odd. Blood was to be put on the supplicant's right ear lobe, right thumb, and right big toe! (Leviticus 14 v14) Why? Not explained.

As an accompaniment to the smell must have been the sight of fire and smoke – burnt offerings that were smelly and smoky!

Whereas the sacrifices in Leviticus are described as “an aroma pleasing to the Lord” (Leviticus 6:15) it is people such as you and I who are described in such terms in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 2:14)

I am certain such Levitical instructions are incompatible with modern beliefs but there must be practices we perform today in church which must seem equally odd to those who attend church only occasionally. On balance I don't think we create much of a stink at Trinity but if certain Government policies continue to be pursued, perhaps we should!

After all, above our church door is the instruction found in Micah 6:8 “No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.” That is one Old Testament stricture I am prepared to have a go at.

I must conclude now and close a window – our neighbour has just lit their wood burner and I'm beginning to experience flashbacks.

**Tony Parkes**

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## Friendship

Last year a dear friend of mine became very ill and after some months of illness died. We had been friends for about 40 years, and I was very sad to lose her. We had shared holidays, meals, experiences, faith... lots of conversations, texts - I loved her texts which always included a love and a hug emoji that I knew were genuinely felt. Texts were particularly welcome during the covid lockdown when we couldn't meet and strangely felt more meaningful (more treasured) than a telephone conversation as they were there to look at, at any time.

As I get older it seems that friends are harder to make and unfortunately easier to lose. So, losses are hard. The loss of my friend caused me to contemplate the nature and importance of friendship more generally. I wasn't sure of my own definition of/understanding of friendship, so I looked online to see what others thought.

Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, for example, considered friendship to be a valuable possession and a path to a good life. In fact, he said “For without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods.”

He thought that there are three types of friendship.

- Self-interested friendship - this is the kind of relationship where someone wants to get something out of it, like status or recognition.
- Friendships purely for pleasure - you may enjoy good times together but when problems occur this kind of friend will not stay around.
- The ideal/perfect friendship - Friendship by virtue is reciprocal. It is based on empathy and on the genuine desire that things go well for the other. Love is the fundamental condition to have a friendship of this type.

I think it is widely accepted that friendship is good for us. Friends can lift us up when we're down, give advice on difficult decisions, give us scope to be ourselves and be a source of inspiration. This is likely to help build our confidence and reduce our stress which in turn will help with our physical and emotional wellbeing.

There are, of course, many references to and examples of friendship in the Bible. For example, from Proverbs 27: 9 – “A sweet friendship refreshes the soul.” This past Sunday I read from the Good News Translation of Romans 5 v 11 which says “...we rejoice because of what God has done through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has now made us God's friends.” And it is reassuring to sing the old hymn “What a friend we have in Jesus”. But I believe we must be the embodiment of Jesus' friendship; to be there for each other with empathy and love in the hope that our lives will be enriched and strengthened.

So dear reader, may I call you friend?

**Pam Parkes**

### **Christmastide**

In the mist I vaguely see  
The outline of a Christmas tree  
Prepared to celebrate the feast  
With Magi coming from the East.  
Shepherds come to see the site  
Where Jesus lies, He brings the Light.  
With hope, joy, and inspiration  
Challenge for a new creation.

### **Eastertide**

Grief and sorrow. In fear hiding.  
Some tell that their Lord is living.  
Others despair, they know the loss,  
His life had ended with the cross.  
There's confusion in the story  
But in the end – shout out: "Glory".  
Buns and eggs and Church bells ringing  
Celebrate with joyful singing.

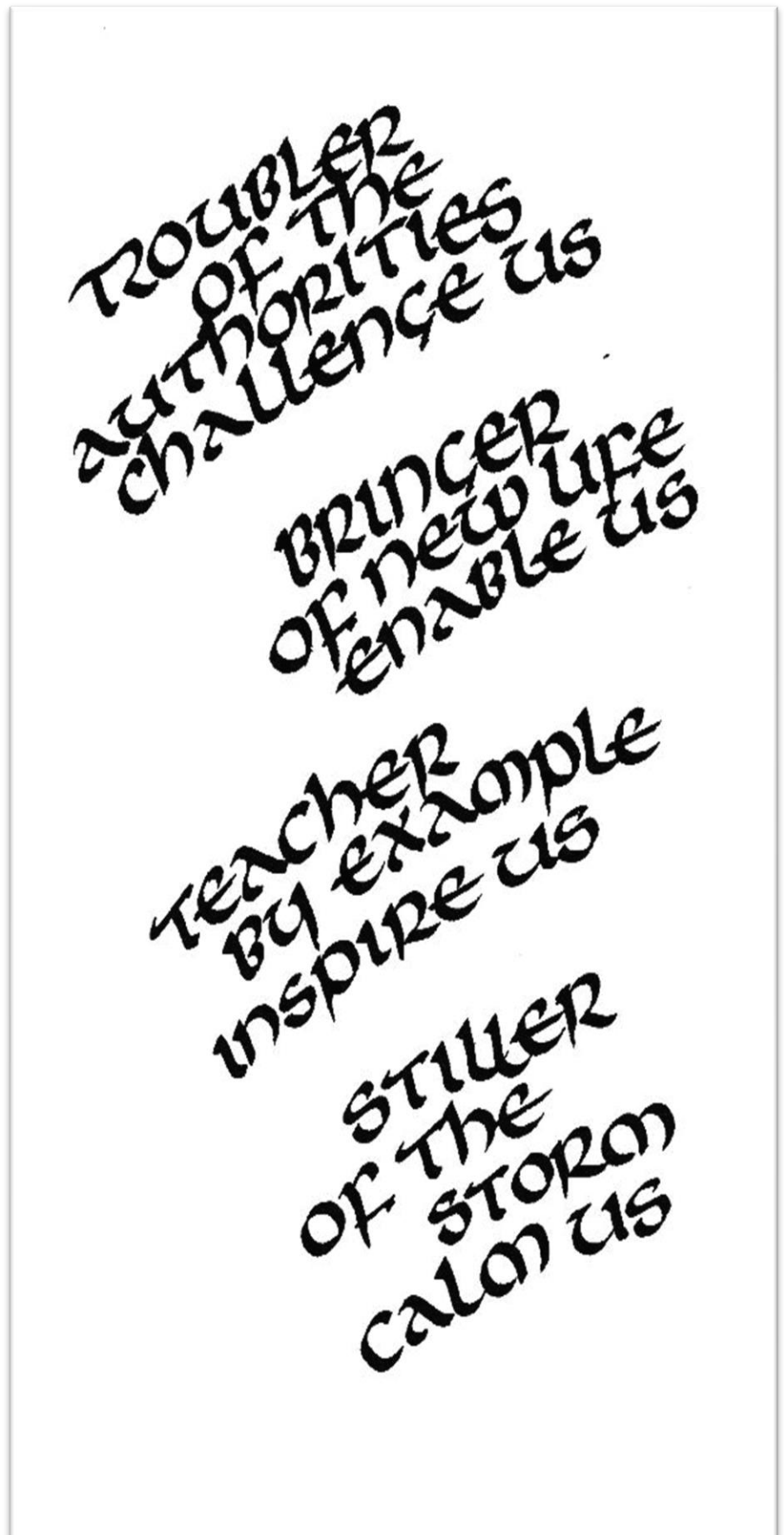
### **Whitsuntide**

Listen, the sound of wind roaring.  
Look, the sight of flames not burning.  
Lost their fear, no longer hiding,  
To the crowds the Good News preaching.  
Hark, the people hear the message  
Understand in their own language.  
Receive the news and pass it on  
Tell the World, tell every-one.

*A series of three reflections. DAH.  
January 2023.*

"But if in your thought you must  
measure time into seasons, let each  
season include all the other seasons"  
For everything there is a season and for  
every season there is a prayer.  
There is no time in the year or in life that  
doesn't lend itself to prayer, and so  
often the seasons of nature and the  
seasons of the soul reflect one another.  
Prayer is for all times and all seasons of  
the year, for all our moods and  
feelings, when the days shorten or  
lengthen, in hard times and gentle, in  
times  
of joy or sorrow, times of want or  
blessing, times of comfort or stress.  
Prayer is for all seasons of our journey  
through life.

**Elizabeth Lowe**





## **Easter traditions - Have you ever wondered?**

### **Where did the name Easter come from?**

According to scholars the Christian holiday is named after the Anglo Saxon Goddess Eostre. She was depicted as a Goddess of fertility, dawn and light. She was honoured at Pagan festivals celebrating the coming of Spring.

### **Why does Easter change dates?**

It's all down to the Lunar year and the position of the moon. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the full moon that takes place on or after the 21st of March, which is said to signal the start of Spring.

### **Where did the Easter bunny idea come from?**

It has no real connection to the Holy day. It dates back to Pre-Christian Germany where the hare was said to be the symbol of the pagan Goddess of Spring and fertility. As Christianity spread across Europe pagan traditions blended with Christian Holy days. The Easter bunny laid a nest of colourful eggs for well - behaved children to gather on Easter Day.

### **Where did painted eggs come from?**

The tradition of decorating eggs with wax and dyes 'Pysanka' comes from Ukraine. Once again it is a call out to the Gods and Goddesses for health and fertility. The tradition flourished in the US taken there by Ukrainian immigrants.

### **Who made the first British chocolate egg?**

Fry's of Bristol made the first chocolate egg in 1873 closely followed by Cadburys in Birmingham in 1875. The Birmingham factory makes 500 million crème eggs every year. If piled up they would be 10x higher than Everest!! The Birmingham factory makes 1.5 million eggs every day making it the most popular egg-shaped chocolate in the world.

### **What is the most expensive egg in the world?**

The most expensive egg was made by Faberge in 1902 in St Petersburg and sold at Christies in London in 2007 for £9 million. It is enamelled with a flap that opens on the hour to reveal a multi coloured cockerel that flaps its wings and nods its head 3 times.

### **Any other traditions?**

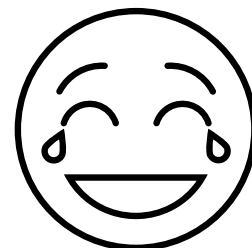
In most of Germany it is illegal to dance in public on Good Friday out of respect for Christians. Pretzels have a connection to Easter because the twists resemble arms crossed in prayer. From the 1950's in Germany it has become traditional to eat them with hard boiled eggs on Good Friday (or so I'm told!)

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## **Time to smile**

### **The mystery voice in the kitchen**

I went shopping one afternoon and when I returned I could hear a man's voice in the kitchen which was very alarming. The voice was constantly saying "It is 1.2 ...." Something I couldn't catch. I was very puzzled at that as the voice seemed to be coming from the combi boiler. After looking at the boiler there didn't seem to be anything wrong with it -so where was the voice coming from?



Fortunately, my nephew who lives in the apartment above mine was in and I summoned him urgently. After he had heard the voice and looked around he then said “Have you got a set of talking scales?” I then remembered that there was a set in the cupboard near to the boiler and on further investigation – Yes, there they were talking away after somehow having switched themselves on and saying, “It is 1.2 ounces”. Thank goodness! Mystery solved. I had visions of having to book into the Premier Inn if I couldn’t solve the mystery.

### Unfortunate ingredient in the mashed potatoes

One of the items written by a doctor in the Comments Book in the dining room at a local hospital was:

“The dinner was OK but could have done without the spider’s legs in the mashed potatoes!”

One dreads to think what the patients were given!



Chris Sales

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## WORDSEARCH

Every space has a Letter AND EVERY LETTER is IN A WORD

A L A R M A  
W I N D O W  
A N D O V E  
R E E D E O  
E S S E N D  
D T R A D E

This wordsearch has 36 letters, 28 words with 3 letters or more, and 9 words with 2 letters in each.

You are invited to take a pencil and paper and write down the words which you find in the grid. The words go across the rows from left to right, down the columns and diagonally down from left to right.

A suggestion: do a line, and a row at a time.

Several words have words in them.

Derek H

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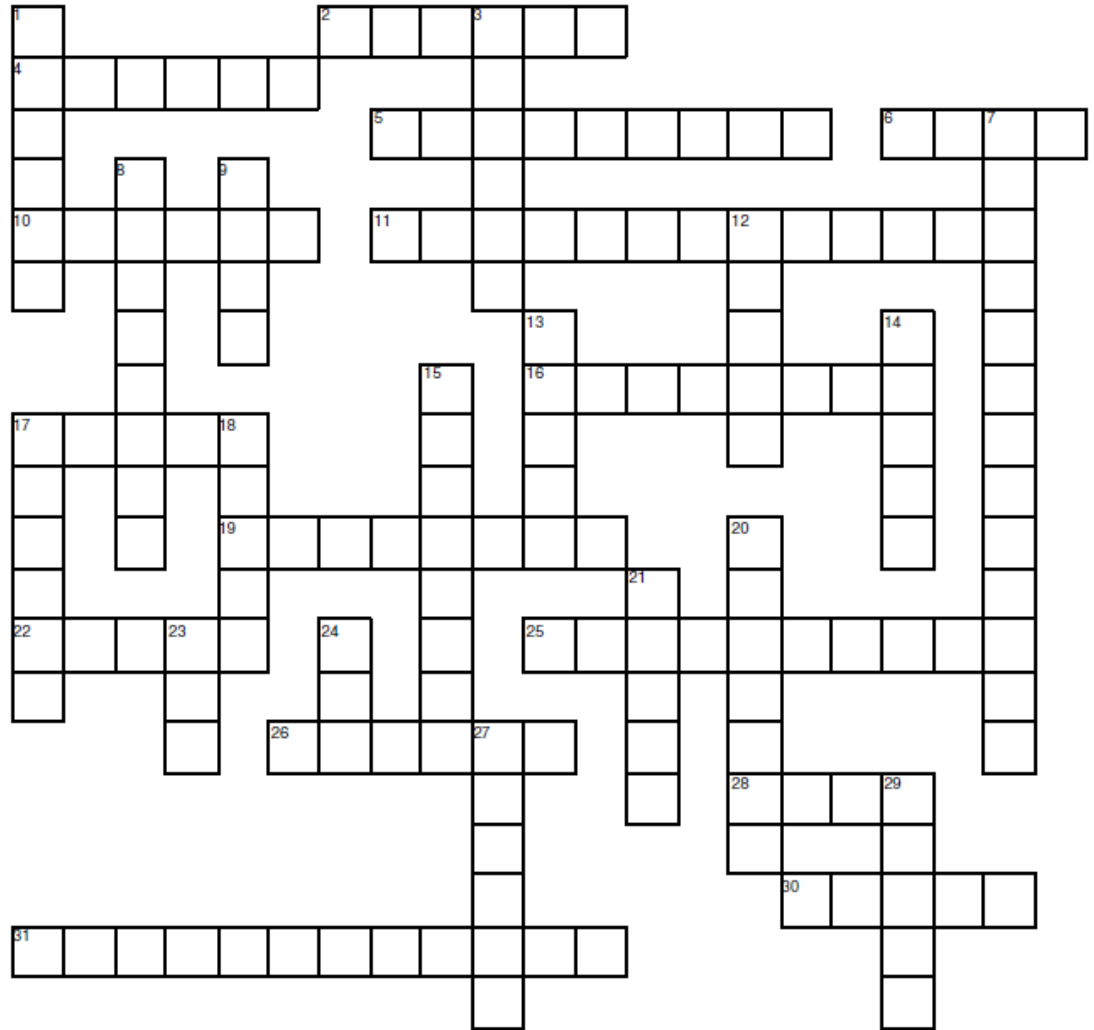
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# Easter Crossword

## ACROSS

- 2 Resurrection Day.  
 4 Jesus ascended to  
 5 Seven weeks after the resurrection.  
 6 Joseph of Arimathea provided this.  
 10 This apostle who doubted.  
 11 The final meal Christ shared with his disciples.  
 16 The religious festival Jesus had come to Jerusalem to celebrate.  
 17 This disciple denied Jesus.  
 19 \_ guarded the Jesus' tomb to make sure His disciples didn't steal His body.  
 22 The soldiers put a crown of \_\_\_\_\_ on Christ's head.  
 25 Where Christ went to pray.  
 26 The day Christ is believed to have been crucified.  
 28 The 40 days (not including Sundays) prior to Easter.  
 30 Jesus told His disciples to go into all the \_\_\_\_ and preach the Gospel.  
 31 Easter celebrates the \_\_\_\_ of Jesus.



## DOWN

- 1 Judas Iscariot received \_\_\_\_\_ of silver for betraying Jesus.  
 3 The animal Christ rode into Jerusalem,  
 7 First to see Jesus after resurrection.  
 8 The place of the skull.  
 9 One week before Christ's crucifixion, multitudes greeted him by waving \_\_\_\_\_ branches.

- 12 He helped Jesus carry His cross.  
 13 A soldier pierced Christ's side with  
 14 Jesus was nailed to a \_\_\_\_.  
 15 "It is \_\_\_\_\_."  
 17 He sentenced Jesus to death.  
 18 "He is not here, for He is \_\_\_\_\_"  
 20 The Biblical account of the resurrection may be found in all four books of the New Testament known as the \_\_\_\_\_.

- 21 An angel rolled away the \_\_\_\_\_ covering the entrance to the tomb.  
 23 Peter and John \_\_\_\_\_ to the tomb of Jesus after hearing that His body was no longer there.  
 24 Peter cut off a soldier's \_\_\_\_  
 27 When those guarding the tomb saw the angel, they were \_\_\_\_\_.  
 29 The number of days Jesus spent in the tomb





**Many thanks to all our contributors.  
Thankful for your friendship, for this holiday, and for the  
grace of Jesus Christ. Happy Easter!  
Pam**