

Saint Mary's Newsletter: April

Vicar: David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

Vicars Warden: Roger Jennings 07 8243712



SERVICES FOR APRIL

Sunday 2nd:

10am Family communion Service.
Kids & Junior Youth making palm crosses!

Refreshments - Melanie Holdsworth

Sunday 9th:

10:15am Palm Sunday Service with the
Oaks Church - see details opposite.

No refreshments

Friday 14th:

10am Good Friday: Stations of the Cross

Sunday 16th:

10am Easter Sunday Communion

Refreshments - Muriel Riddell

Sunday 23rd:

10am Family Communion - St George's day

English themed Potluck lunch at the
Riddell's after church

Tuesday 25th:

10am ANZAC Service at Gordonton Hall and
Cenotaph - please bring a plate

Sunday 30th:

10am Fresh Expressions Service

Refreshments- Karen Boyer



Children's Church/Junior Youth:

This month Children's church/Junior Youth is earlier in the month (the 2nd) and will be making Palm Crosses for the Palm Sunday service.

Combined Palm Sunday Service:

Sunday 9th please bring along palm fronds - or failing that, some ponga branches! Combined service with the Oaks Christian Centre - meet at St Mary's 10:15am for the 1st part of service, then walking with Donkey down to the Oaks to complete the service there.

Good Friday 14th Apr: 10:00AM. We mark this special Holy Day with a Stations of the Cross service. This is an emotional service where we journey with Jesus on the road to the cross

St George's Day Pot Luck lunch: 23 Apr after church @ the Riddell's, 185 Whitikahu Rd. Followed by a spot of claybird shooting!

ANZAC Service: 10AM at Gordonton Hall 25 April Please bring a plate. We also require at least 4 volunteers to read out names from the roll of honour - please see the vicar

Why did Jesus have to die?

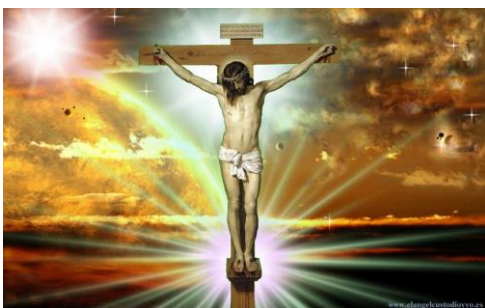
God created earth and man perfect. But when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commands, He had to punish them. A judge who pardons law-breakers isn't a righteous judge. Likewise, overlooking sin would make the holy God unjust. Death is God's just consequence for sin. "For the wages of sin is death" (**Romans 6:23**). Even good works cannot make up for wrongs against the holy God. Compared to His goodness, "All our righteousness's are as filthy rags" (**Isaiah 64:6b**). Ever since Adam's sin, every human has been guilty of disobeying God's righteous laws. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (**Romans 3:23**). Sin is not just big things like murder or blasphemy, but also includes love of money, hatred of enemies, and deceit of tongue and pride. Because of sin, everyone has deserved death – eternal separation from God in hell.

Although God banished Adam and Eve from the garden, He didn't leave them without hope of reconciliation. He promised He would send a Saviour to defeat the serpent (**Genesis 3:15**). Until then, men would sacrifice innocent lambs, showing their repentance from sin and faith in the future Sacrifice from God who would bear their penalty. God reaffirmed His promise of the Sacrifice with men such as Abraham and Moses. Herein lies the beauty of God's perfect plan: God Himself provided the only sacrifice (Jesus) who could atone for the sins of His people. God's perfect Son fulfilled God's perfect requirement of God's perfect law. It is perfectly brilliant in its simplicity. "God made Him (Christ), who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).

From Adam to Jesus, God sent prophets to mankind, warning them of sin's punishment and foretelling the coming Messiah. One prophet, Isaiah, described Him: "Who has believed what they heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors" (**Isaiah 53:1-12**). He likened the coming Sacrifice to a lamb, slaughtered for the sins of others.

Hundreds of years later, Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in the perfect Lord Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary. When the prophet John the Baptist saw Him, he cried, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (**John 1:29**). Crowds thronged Him for healing and teaching, but the religious leaders scorned Him. Mobs cried out, "Crucify Him!" Soldiers beat, mocked, and crucified Him. As Isaiah foretold, Jesus was crucified in between two criminals but was buried in a rich man's tomb. But He didn't remain in the grave. Because God accepted His Lamb's sacrifice, He fulfilled another prophecy by raising Jesus from the dead (**Psalms 16:10; Isaiah 26:19**).

Why did Jesus have to die? Remember, the holy God cannot let sin go unpunished. To bear our own sins would be to suffer God's judgment in the flames of hell. Praise God, He kept His promise to send and sacrifice the perfect Lamb to bear the sins of those who trust in Him. Jesus had to die because He is the only one who can pay the penalty for our sins.



This Month in Christian History:

26 April 1992: Worshippers celebrate the Russian Orthodox Easter in Moscow for the first time in seventy-four years.



Parish Giving

Please consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. Did you know that St Mary's has to pay for our Vicar and all other costs of running a Parish, as well as giving a proportion to the Diocese? Please help us to be sustainable by giving via Automatic Payment. It is an easy way to give and is useful for the parish in running its budget. The Parish Bank Account is:

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Healing & Confession:

Should you require prayer for healing, please indicate to the vicar at the altar rail during Communion so anointing with oil can be given. The confidential act of Reconciliation/Confession (see page 750 of the Prayer Book) is also available on Friday's at the church 9am – 2pm