

St David's Messenger

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DRY BONES CAN LIVE!

In mid-March the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, paid a hectic twenty-four hour visit to the Diocese of Liverpool. His visit was as the Primate of the Province of York, of which the Liverpool diocese is a part.

His time here included visits to various Church-led projects, one of which was to the church of St. James, which rests in the shadow of the Anglican cathedral and which is now undergoing restoration work. This church is what is now referred to as a 'fresh expression', or a place of worship that offers an alternative, contemporary form of worship, attracting those who don't always feel comfortable with the usual church setting.

Another visit was to 'The Place To Be', another 'fresh expression' church based in Speke. 'The Place to Be' is a café-style church, meeting in shop premises and serving the dual role of a place where people of the community can meet during the day, as well as a place where people come together to worship.

Both of these 'fresh expressions', like others, are attempting to meet and answer the worshipping needs of people in a contemporary setting and are welcome and innovative ways in which the Church can minister to people. They are signs of renewal, breathing new life into an old institution which, to be truthful, people – unjustly I think – regard as tired and outworn.

Speaking to members of the clergy at an early morning service

of Holy Communion, the Archbishop summed up the task to which he said the Church was called – namely, **'to make disciples of Jesus, not consumers of religion.'** Words that were inspirational and which resonated with my own long-held conviction that too much religion can be bad for you!

What do I mean by that?

Well it's plain to observe, the evidence is there to see, that institutions often blur the real intentions of their founders. We see this in all types of institutions and organisations – Parliament, the National Health Service, etc etc., - anything you like to name. Once the structures are in place and subject to regulation, the dynamic on which a body is based and takes its energy from can either slow down or become so cumbersome as to make any progress difficult. It's this, I think, the Archbishop was referring to.

There is a new realism in the Church. New ideas are taking shape and there is a recognition that 'making new disciples' is more important than making 'consumers of religion', or 'pew fodder' as I like to call it. Instead, we – the Church, that is – are here to assist people to find the answers that they ask about God, Jesus and the Christian faith, and to do so in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them. This is what, I suppose, a 'fresh expression' tries to do.

In the Old Testament, in the book of Ezekiel, chapter 37, the prophet Ezekiel is given a vision of dry bones, which suddenly reform, take on sinews, flesh and skin, and into which God blows his breath – new life. Ezekiel's vision has much to say to a Church attempting to re-shape itself and to be relevant to a people – shall we say – who have not lost faith so much, but perhaps lost faith in *it*.

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, and the new life that follows it, to some extent reminds us of the Easter story, which we will recall later this month.

At the end of Holy Week we see a group of disciples, dispirited, fearful and disconsolate as Jesus is nailed to the cross, tortured and defeated. But just when *all* seems lost God grasps back the initiative and acts.

Through the Resurrection of Jesus God shows us that we are never defeated where he is. The new initiatives taking place in the Church to meet the needs of modern people are one way that we see this happening, but we see it too in more traditional places of worship, where the Spirit of Jesus is quietly at work too, energising, inspiring and motivating the ongoing work of his Church – the visible sign of his resurrected presence in the world.

Christ is alive. Alleluia!

Best wishes and a Happy Easter.
Robert Williams.

Published by the people of St David's Church for all local residents

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HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY, 17 April	8.00 am Holy Communion 10.30 am Sung Eucharist
Monday, 18 April	7.30 pm Stations of the Cross-
Tuesday, 19 April	7.30 pm Stations of the Cross
Wednesday, 20 April	7.30 pm Stations of the Cross
MAUNDY THURSDAY 21 April	7.30 pm United Service of Holy Communion at Childwall Valley Methodist Church
GOOD FRIDAY 22 April	10.30 am Informal Service for Families & Children 1.30 pm The Liturgy for Good Friday
EASTER DAY, 24 April	8.00 am Holy Communion 10.30 am Sung Eucharist & Easter Ceremonies

KIDS CORNER

Ji! Welcome to your corner! - The chat, prayer and puzzle corner!

Welcome to our new readers! If it's your birthday this month—HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU! If you are not too well or very ill—We pray that you will get well soon!

(Little Jim—"Hello Brian! It's a busy month this month. What have you got for us?")

Hi, Little Jim! This month we are going to chat about trees, plants and shrubs you may see in or about the church. But first, let's see what is happening this April.

1st April—April Fool's Day—(No nasty tricks!)

3rd April— Mothering Sunday (Mothers' Day) - Give thanks in prayer for Mary the mother of Jesus, our mother the church, and the love and caring of our Mums.

17th April—Palm Sunday—The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem for the final part of His mission on earth for God, His Father.

21st April— Maundy Thursday— Jesus had His last meal with His

disciples on this day. The Queen gives sets of special Maundy Money to deserving people on this day. In fact several years ago a person of St David's Church received Maundy Money from the Queen.

22nd April—Good Friday—The day Jesus died a cruel death, on a cross of wood, so that we would be forgiven for all of our sins, if we said sorry to God and really meant it.

23rd April—St George's Day—This is the celebration day of the Patron Saint of England.

24th April—Easter Day—The day that Jesus beat death and rose alive from His grave, giving to us the gift of eternal life which was promised to us by God, His Father.

Easter Day is also the day we receive Easter Eggs, chocolate or decorated hard boiled eggs. We have games with them like "Hunt the Easter egg" when we have to find the hidden egg and "rolling the Easter egg", when we roll our eggs down a hill to see which one reaches the bottom first.

25th April—Easter Monday—Public Holiday.

29th April—The wedding of His Royal Highness Prince William of

Wales and Catherine Elizabeth Middleton.

SEASONAL TREES, PLANTS AND SHRUBS IN AND OUT OF CHURCH

The Yew Tree may be seen growing in churchyards. Do not eat the berries—they are poisonous to humans and animals. The branches of the yew were often used to represent palms on Palm Sunday which was sometimes known as Yew Sunday. The yew branches were also used to decorate the church at Easter.

The Holly has prickly leaves, thought of as a reminder of the crown of thorns which Jesus wore when He was crucified. The red berries are like the drops of His blood which was shed for us.

The Daffodil and the Lily are beautiful flowers which remind us of everlasting life. Though the bulbs look dried up and dead when they are placed in a pot of soil or the ground, new life springs within them and they bloom into beautiful flowers which we decorate the church with at Easter time.

PRAYER

Lord, Thank you for Jesus, our Saviour and Friend, who died so that we might be forgiven and have everlasting life. Thank you for our mums who love us, cherish us and care for us. Amen.

PUZZLE

Do your nine times table up to 12 and find which answer of the 12 is the odd one out.

1 x 9 =

2 x 9 =

3 x 9 =

4 x 9 =

5 x 9 =

6 x 9 =

7 x 9 =

8 x 9 =

9 x 9 =

10 x 9 =

11 x 9 =

12 x 9 =

(Little Jim—"Some of your puzzles are very strange, Brian!")

Well, that's all for now!

A Happy Easter to you all!
See you soon! Take care! Brian.