

# NEWSLINK

APRIL - MAY, 2023

## CANTON UNITING CHURCH



**Hans Memling's** intricate *Scenes from the Passion of Christ* (1470-1) shows a (very imaginative) bird's-eye view of Jerusalem, in which each of the major scenes in Christ's crucifixion are placed. These start at the top left, with Christ riding into the city on Palm Sunday, weave their way down the left side of the painting, which includes the Last Supper almost half way down the left edge, then cross into the centre, for the flagellation. The narrative chain then runs down, turns to the right, and ascends to the crucifixion at the top. That is shown twice, to accommodate the descent from the cross, and scenes following the resurrection are towards the top right.

### **Canton Uniting Church Deacons**

Alison Walker (Chair)	Chair@Cantonuniting.org.uk
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Barbara Morgans (Minutes Secretary)	
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Steve Phillips	

Dear Friends,

March, 2023

We have entered the journey of Lent—‘forty days and nights’. This time designation reflects Jesus’ time in the wilderness before the beginning of his ministry as recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. As it is in all three of the gospels, it is likely that Luke and Matthew used the verse in Mark 1.13 and expanded it. Clearly all three authors thought it was an important story to remember about Jesus. Jesus’ time in the wilderness connects with the forty years the Hebrew people spent in the wilderness, wandering and waiting before they entered the promised land.

But ‘forty’ in both cases is not a literal number. ‘Forty’ simply means a long, very long, time. The ‘forty’ days of Lent actually does not include the Sundays so it too is a long time, longer than the literal forty days.

Sometimes the events life throws at us make time feel very long and slow. It might be the search for a new job that never seems to come; the return of our children after a time of not seeing them; the wait for a doctor’s appointment or the length of treatment offered by the medical staff treating us or a loved one. We simply cannot get our heads around how long it seems. We may feel we are in a ‘wilderness of waiting.’

During Lent we often talk about giving something up, yet in the ‘wilderness of waiting’ what we really want is some kind of comfort. We don’t need pressure to give something up, or sacrifice something else. ‘The wilderness waiting’ is already asking us to sacrifice or reminds us of losses.

If we find ourselves in a ‘wilderness of waiting,’ what comfort would support us? What comfort has helped us in the past? Jesus found his comfort, so it seems, in trusting his life to God. When confronted with the temptations to power and personal authority, he responded by trusting God. He already knew God as love greater than humans can imagine, as present throughout life. Jesus trusted what he knew of God and found his way through the wilderness to his next phase of life—for him a new ministry.

We too have spent years learning about God’s identity. We know God as revealed in Jesus. Our God seeks to create a broad community with varied people, a community where love is guided and justice is practiced. When we find ourselves in a ‘wilderness of waiting,’ we know God is with us. We are not alone. When the waiting feels too much, love comes to us. Love comes through the care of old friends, through the concern of people dealing with our care, through the people who are with us.

Of course the ‘wilderness of waiting’ seems like it lasts forever—forty days and forty nights or forty years. Yet we know that at the end of our Lenten journey, there is Easter—a day of surprises. Whether in the garden or at the empty tomb, Jesus is present. The first visitors to the garden found they were not alone. Either they were together, they found a risen Jesus, or they encountered a stranger with a message of hope. The companionship and hope of Easter are promises to which we can cling when the waiting seems so very long.

May our forty days and nights are only the journey of Lent. Maybe they are something more challenging which we are facing. Whether lenten challenges or life challenges, we offer you these blessings:

May find you good companions. May you feel God's presence. May your Lenten forty days and nights be full of love. May your encounters during Lent call you further toward being workers for justice and peace in Jesus' name.

And may Easter remind you that God surprises us with hope—even during the longest days and nights. May the Resurrection bring you with the warmth of companions—who share love freely and bring you joyful surprises.

Yours in Christ,

Martha and David

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## **News from Andrew W-D!**

CUC is being sought out as a concert venue. Since the pandemic the number of enquiries for presenting concerts in the Sanctuary has shot up. This is a really good feature of our church life: it fulfills our intention to be a community space and brings new people to our church. It is important, I think, that church members support these events when they can, so that the church community is as fully involved as possible.

Here are some details of forthcoming events:

**April 16th (Sunday) 6pm** Rosie Biss and Robin Green. Top classical musicians (Rosie is principal cellist with the WNO orchestra. They play Janacek and the Rachmaninoff Cello Sonata. Tickets:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rosie-biss-robin-green-tickets-531990376537>

**April 28th (Friday) 7-30pm** Spring Concert by the Serenata Choir. Details on the CUC website under 'Concerts'. Admission on the door (includes refreshments)

May 21st (Sunday) 6pm Famed recorder player visits us from Germany - Robert Ehrlich plays 18th-century music accompanied by our very own Andrew Wilson-Dickson and Lucy Robinson (harpsichord and viola da gamba). Tickets:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/robert-ehrlich-recorder-tickets-531993586137>

**June 25th (Sunday) 6pm** Piano recital by Susan Tomes, music by Amy Beach, Ravel and Chaminade. Tickets:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/susan-tomes-piano-tickets-531999323297>

**July 16th (Sunday) 6pm** Recital on the rare 'pardessus de viole', probably a first in Wales? 18th-century French music. Artists from Canada: Mélisande Corriveau and Eric Milne, accompaniment on harpsichord. Tickets:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/melisande-corriveau-eric-milnes-pardessus-de-viole-and-harpsichord-tickets-532006885917>

More to follow!

## Prayer Call

	<b>April</b>	2nd	Abigail, Matt, Brooke and Toby Powell
1st	Hiroko, Richard and Emily Edge	3rd	Julie Richards
2nd	Lent 6: The Leaders of the Nations (Palm Sunday)	4th	Janice Richens
3rd	Toni Edwards	5th	Lucy Robinson and Andrew Wilson-Dickson
4th	Eva Elliott	6th	Barbara Smith
5th	Calum Ellis	7th	Young people
6th	Alan Farnham	8th	David and Malou Smith
7th	Ceri and Phil George	9th	Audrey Takle
8th	Linda Gibbs	10th	David and Joy Thompson
9th	Easter Sunday: The Proclamation of the Gospel	11th	Alison Walker
10th	Rachel, Kate, Evan and Emily Gill	12th	Liz Williams and family
11th	Bronwyn Gregory	13th	Kenneth Woods
12th	Rob, Fiona, Isobel and Alistair Harding	14th	The AA
13th	Jean Hawkins	15th	Rita, Francis, Gloria, Gabriel and Michael
14th	Barbara Jones	16th	Tom and Marieke Arthur
15th	Sian, Joshua and Harri Jones	17th	Chris and Megan Atherton
16th	New Christians	18th	Geraint Atherton
17th	Elinor Kapp	19th	Gwyn Atherton
18th	Olaide, Taiwo, Ore, Korede and Nifemi Kassim	20th	Lowri and Amelia Baldwin
19th	Jenny Keenor	21st	The Emergency Services
20th	Beverley, Christopher, Ioan and Evelyn Kibble	22nd	Keith Bick
21st	Cindy Lim, Arwyn McCabe, Nye Buckle and Caian	23rd	Doreen Cassam
22nd	Ann and Tom Lloyd	24th	Debbie Cheshire, Paige and Lola
23rd	Teachers	25th	David Cooke
24th	Angie Luther	26th	Clive Curtis and Constantino Dumangane
25th	Millie McQuade	27th	Fred and Rowena Davies
26th	Audrey Morgan	28th	Pentecost: The Church
27th	Barbara, Hugh and Bence Morgans	29th	David Dean, Martha McInnes and family
28th	Michael and Katie Munnick, Isla, Leo and Tate	30th	Ann Dobbins
29th	Danielle Phillips, Laura, Will, Cian and Ruby	31st	Marc and Alison Dummer
30th	Those working with children		<b>June</b>
	<b>May</b>	1st	Gareth Dyer
1st	Mandy and Steve Phillips	2nd	Hiroko, Richard and Emily Edge

## **The Pastoral News**

In order to comply with the GDPR Act principles of protecting people`s personal information, we will need to seek people`s permission in sharing information about their personal situations. We will include those who agree to give their permission in future editions of the Newslink.

In the meantime, we remember all those who have been poorly for a while, or who are recently bereaved. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

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## **Sunday Lectionary Readings for April - May, 2023**

### **2nd April, 2023: Sing Hosanna!**

Isaiah 50.4-9a; Psalm 118.1-2,19-29; Philippians 2.5-11; Matthew 21.1-11

Jesus enters Jerusalem as a Passover pilgrim for the last time, demonstrating how he brings in God`s kingdom and setting the stage for the showdown with those he sees as God`s real enemies.

Today, as we focus on Jesus entering Jerusalem, less than a week before his journey to the cross, we explore the reaction of a crowd who seem to be carried away in acts of praise. As a church community, do we have a reputation for celebration?

This week we explore celebrating as a gathered community.

### **9th April, Easter Sunday: Filled with Great Joy**

Acts 10.34-43; Psalm 118.1-2,14-24; Colossians 3.1-4; Matthew 28.1-10

Two women, disciples of Jesus, visit his tomb once the sabbath is over. They find the tomb empty, and experience both fear and joy. They are sent by an angel to tell the rest of the disciples that Jesus is raised. As they run, they fleetingly meet Jesus himself, who repeats the angel`s message.

Most, if not all, of us know the feeling of being at rock bottom; this is the experience of the two women in today`s Gospel story. Jesus had died a cruel death and they go to prepare his body for burial. What they are not prepared for is the sudden change from despair and fear to great joy

This week we explore the dynamic of our response to the resurrection.

### **16th April: Unlocking the Easter Story**

Acts 2.14a,22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1.3-9; John 20.19-31

The risen Jesus appears among his disciples when Thomas is absent. Jesus breathes on them and says, `Receive the Holy Spirit.` A week later, Jesus appears again and speaks to Thomas directly. Thomas cries out, `My Lord and my God!` In the days following Jesus` death and resurrection the rollercoaster ride of the disciples continues. They have moved from sorrow to joy, back to fear and then to faith sprinkled with some disbelief. We see Jesus addressing doubts, restoring faith, offering peace and the Holy Spirit.

This week we explore what happens next.

### **23rd April:** Joining the dots

Acts 2.14a,36-41; Psalm 116.1-4,12-19; 1 Peter 1.17-23; Luke 24.13-35

Two disciples walk back from Jerusalem to their home in Emmaus. They are in despair about the death of Jesus. Jesus appears and walks beside them, but they do not recognise him. He teaches them from the Scriptures, and they see who he is when he breaks bread with them. It had all been happening during the past few days in Jerusalem; how could the stranger on the road not even be aware of it? The two disciples began to enlighten him (or so they thought), but in the end –once his actions had revealed his identity –it is the disciples who were enlightened. An encounter with Jesus is surely not going to leave anyone unchanged.

This week we explore how the Emmaus Road story reveals more about Easter.

### **30th April:** Jesus the Influencer

Acts 2.42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2.19-25; John 10.1-10

Jesus speaks of a shepherd whose sheep know his voice and follow him away from danger. The Pharisees do not understand that Jesus is referring to himself. He also says that he is the gate of the sheepfold, and whoever enters by him will be saved.

In a time when there are many people trying to influence us to do or buy or adopt a certain lifestyle, Jesus reminds us that he knows us and we, by knowing him, can have life in abundance.

This week we explore what it means to know and be known.

### **7th May:** Family Traits

Acts 7.55-60; Psalm 31.1-5,15-16; 1 Peter 2.2-10; John 14.1-14

Jesus reassures his disciples that they will be with him. He explains that he is the way, the truth and the life, and that anyone who has seen him has seen the Father. He promises that he will do anything asked in his name.

Like them or loathe, we all have family traits. Some are a fact of biology, others we acquire from those close to us or who we admire. This week we explore both of these in a variety of activities, and look at 'uniforms we wear' and the behaviour and attitudes we show that reveal who we represent, including how we relate to Jesus.

This week we explore the question: Who do we represent?

### **14th May:** Living Truth

Acts 17.22-31; Psalm 66.8-20; 1 Peter 3.13-22; John 14.15-21

Jesus promises his disciples that God will send the Spirit of truth, who will be with them for ever. He reminds them that those who love him are those who keep his commandments; and these are the ones to whom he will reveal himself.

Truth is a precious commodity often devalued today by those with agendas. Yet Jesus' promise to his disciples was the Spirit of truth. This week we explore what the Spirit of truth looks like in a variety of contexts – relationships, seeking guidance, in prayer and listening, in moral dilemmas and authentic behaviour – and how we learn to distinguish

truth from comfort.

This week we explore what the Spirit of truth looks like in practice.

**21st May:** Gone but not forgotten.

Acts 1.6-14; Psalm 68.1-10,32-35; 1 Peter 4.12-14; 5.6-11; John 17.1-11

On the mount called Olivet, Jesus assures the apostles that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit and then disappears from their sight – he is ascended. The apostles return to Jerusalem, choose Matthias to replace Judas, and – together with the women – spend much time praying.

The Ascension can be seen as great news and sad news. The great news is that Jesus' mission is accomplished. He reigns as King. For the disciples, the sadness is that Jesus is no longer with them physically. It's a turning point. It can be so for us too.

This week we explore the turning point of the Ascension.

**28th May, 2023** Speaking your Language

Acts 2.1-21; Psalm 104.24-34,35b; 1 Corinthians 12.3b-13; John 7.37-39

On the day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples experience being filled dramatically with God's Holy Spirit – the culmination of many centuries of waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise – made known through Old Testament prophets. When the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost, the international community gathered in Jerusalem to hear their own language spoken. They are included in the message of Christ which, from here on, is set to go global.

This week we explore the global vision of Pentecost

**4th June:** We can do this

Isaiah 40.12-17,27-31; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13.11-13; Matthew 28.16-20

Jesus has summoned his disciples to a mountain in Galilee. He tells them that all authority is his and that they should make disciples all over the world, baptizing them and teaching them to obey his commandments. He promises to be with them always. This passage, often called the 'Great Commission', invites us to consider: What does it actually mean to adventure with Jesus? What does that look like in practice, and how might we do it? We are not called to do this alone but together. This week we explore how The Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – might equip us and resource us to go out and live our lives for Jesus. This week we explore being resourced to join God's adventure.



**CANTON UNITING CHURCH** was established in 1995 when New Trinity United Reformed Church joined with Llandaff Road Baptist Church and in 2013 joined with Grand Avenue United Reformed Church Ely which in 2005 had united with Saintwell URC. We are committed to ecumenism through our links with Cytûn, the Covenanted Churches and Churches Together in Canton. Our previous minister was the Chair of the Committee of the Covenanted Baptists which, with the Church in Wales, the Presbyterian, Methodist and United Reformed Churches seeks to bring about the goal of uniting together.

## **CONTACTS**

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## **USUAL WEEKLY DIARY & MONTHLY EVENTS -**

The Wednesday evening prayers on Zoom have finished.

CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**AND FINALLY ...** Please hand in material for the next Newslink to Hugh Morgans by the end of the Morning service on **Sunday, the 21st of May, 2023.**