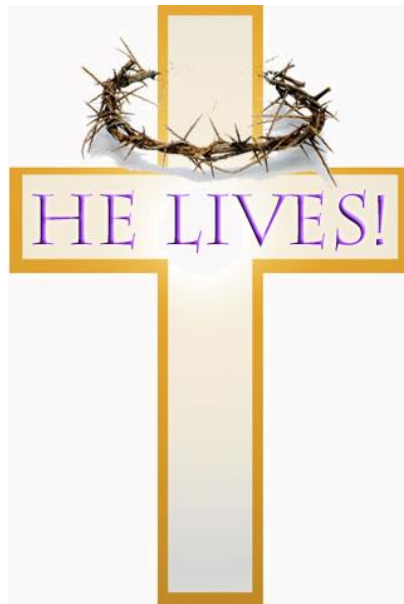


CONNEXIONS

The magazine of

Lavington

United Reformed Church
Bideford



APRIL 2024

50p

APRIL DIARY

Sun.	31 st	11.00am	Easter Day Worship & HC- Revd Colin Biggs
Sun.	7 th	11.00am	Family Worship – Sabrinia Gröschel
Sun.	14 th	11.00am	Family Worship – conducted by the Elders
Wed.	17 th	10.30am	Elders Meeting on Zoom
Sun.	21 st	11.00am	Family Worship – The Minister
Sun.	28 th	11.00am	Family Worship & HC – Mrs Alison Biggs

WEEKLY ACTIVITY

Tuesdays	10am – 1pm	Coffee and lunches mornings and Warm Space
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Mission Statement

Lavington's mission is to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness encompassing the love of Christ and to share this through worship and service.



We are a Fairtrade Church



Dear Friends,

The message of Easter to a world full of pain and despair, is that of hope. Mary went to Jesus' tomb early Sunday morning and saw the stone had been rolled away. She quickly ran to tell Peter and the unnamed disciple, which many assume to be John. They ran to see what had taken place. John arrived at the tomb first, Peter followed closely behind. John, 'stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in' (John 20:5).

The Greek word is '*blepo*' and simply means to glance at something and indicates only that the object impressed itself on John's eyes. He didn't examine what he saw and at this point, didn't fully grasp what had happened.

'Peter came, following him, went into the tomb; and saw' (John 20:6). It goes on to explain that Peter looked at everything in the empty tomb, the linen clothes, the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head, and he even noticed how it had been neatly folded, in a place by itself. This time the Greek word used in verse six is '*theoreo*' and means to take careful notice, to contemplate, to behold with intelligence, to scrutinize over. Something caused Peter to puzzle over what he saw. What did this mean? What had really happened?

Then John, 'went in also and he saw and believed' (John 20:8). The Greek word used here is '*eido*' and means to see with understanding, to get a mental picture, to realize what has taken place. In that moment perhaps John began to understand the meaning of all he had witnessed.

John initially looked in the empty tomb but only glanced at what was inside. It merely made an impression on his eyes. Peter went in afterward scrutinizing and puzzling over all that he saw. Because Peter so pondered over all he saw, John went in the second time, saw and believed. It's those, like Peter, who look intently into the resurrection, the person of Christ and

the Word of God that pave the way for others to see, understand and believe.

May we take time to look carefully at the Easter events this year, may we rejoice in the knowledge that Jesus gives us hope for the coming of God's kingdom of justice and joy for all of creation.

Happy Easter!

Rob Weston

Minister



O God,
Make the doorway of this church
wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship;
narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and strife.
Make its threshold smooth enough to be
no stumbling block to children or barrier to the elderly or disabled.
Let its doors be open and inviting to all who wish to enter here
and its walls resound with the praise and worship of your people.
AMEN



This is your day, eternal Lord:
yours by right of death and resurrection,
yours by victory over cross and grave,
yours by the triumph of unbounded love.

And in your mercy, you have made it our day:
ours by your gift,
ours as your love stoops down to meet us,
ours as we reach up in love to you.

Yours and ours; Easter Day.
You are our Lord; we are your people.
Thanks be to God.

Answers to March Fun





Lovely April is now with us and I know we will all be looking forward to more beautiful Spring flowers and hopefully, some better weather. Goodness knows it's certainly time we had some!

Not many birthdays in April but here they are -

J P	5 th
R Q	5 th
V P	12 th
R C	21 st

Special birthday greetings to R and V. Friends, the Lavington family send you both love and good wishes. Not forgetting R and J!



There are 2 anniversaries this month. The first is that of P and P H on 5th. They will be celebrating their 66th anniversary, a really magnificent achievement. And on 11th J and C H will celebrate theirs. Unfortunately, though, I don't know which anniversary it will be for them. Perhaps you would let me

know please June, so we don't miss a "special" one!

To both couples we wish you happy days and send you love and all good wishes from the Lavington family.

Alison

THANK YOU

M and V H wish to thank friends for their messages and cards received on the occasion of our "blue sapphire" (65th) wedding anniversary.

Also, for the beautiful bouquet from the Lavington family, arranged by L B and delivered by J.

We enjoyed a lovely day with our bridesmaids looking at old photographs, reminiscing and a lot of laughing!

PRAYER DIARY

w/c March 31st

Alleluia! Christ is Risen. He is risen indeed. Loving God, we praise and worship you as we celebrate Easter and the rising of your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for your gift of eternal life which gives us hope and strengthens us to continue our faith journey drawn by your resurrection light into the joy of your presence.

w/c 7th

Jesus Christ as we live in the light of your resurrection give us grace to follow you faithfully. Be alongside us when we doubt your presence in our lives. Renew our faith so we can bear our own fears and anxieties and continue to witness to you in our daily lives. Be with us, whatever our needs and surround us with your peace and love.

w/c 14th

Heavenly Father as your disciples we are asked to be your hands and feet working in your world today. As we prepare, as a church fellowship, to meet at our AGM we pray for the Minister, Elders and all those who hold office or help in any way to bring Christ's message to this part of Bideford. May your Holy Spirit inspire all those who seek to serve Christ, wherever they live, in all they say and do.

w/c 21st

God of hope and love as we are surrounded by your creation help us to take time to stop, appreciate the beauty around us and so be recreated. We give thanks that in quiet thoughtfulness and prayer we can rest and be refreshed. Help us to enjoy those pursuits which give us pleasure and a sense of fulfilment so achieving a true balance between work and rest.

w/c 28th

Lord God, we feel so small and insignificant compared to the world in which we live. There is so much hatred, injustice, or unrest around the globe we feel our prayers fall on deaf ears. In a time of quiet we remember before God those places in His world we wish to pray for.....God of peace and reconciliation, who treats all equally without favour whatever their colour, creed or background, hear our prayers.

These and all our prayers we offer to our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen A



Following our last committee meeting I can now to tell you how much the local committee raised last year.

The Bideford committee organised several good fund raising events throughout 2023 including Christian Aid Week, a musical concert at High St Methodist, the Summer supper, the Quiz and the Carol Concert.

Added to these annual events other money was raised by individual churches, Lent appeals, coffee mornings and cream teas to name but a few. Therefore, the total money raised in 2023 was over £6.000.

The committee thank everyone who contributed to this wonderful effort and hope we will be to to have another successful year in 2024.

Christian Aid Week 2024 will be held from May 12th – May 18th Envelopes will be placed in the pews for any contributions for 2 Sundays. This year we will be collecting for Burundi, East Africa.

Hopefully, several other fund raising events will also take place through the year. Watch this space!!
L and J.

AND CHRIST HAS RISEN

We have waited;
we waited patiently for this day,
this Rising Day overflowing with hope.
And Christ has risen.

We have waited;
we waited patiently for this day sustained by trust,
for all our folly and shallow wisdom
we still have faith in God.
And Christ has risen.

We have waited;
We waited earnestly for this day, sustained by anger;
for we know just how much this world
is in need of a new start.
And Christ has risen

FAVOURITE HYMN - NOW THE GREEN BLADE RISETH

Normally, we would expect a hymn writer to produce the words of his or her hymn and then look for a tune (or someone to write a tune). That makes sense, given that the words are always the most important part of a hymn (even when we love the tune!). So, it is quite an exception when we turn to “Now the green blade rises” (no.243 in *Rejoice and Sing*), written by Canon John Macleod Campbell Crum for the *Oxford Book of Carols* in 1928 (presumably while he was Rector at Farnham in Surrey before being translated to become a Canon of Canterbury Cathedral). The tune of the old French Christmas carol melody *Noël Nouvelet* provided the rhythmic structure that inspired him to produce this lovely Easter poem. His other contribution to *Rejoice and Sing* (No.52: To God who makes all lovely things), is perhaps rather simplistic and dated for today’s taste, but the same cannot be said for this thought provoking and personally relevant hymn.

The words take full advantage of the coincidence of Easter and springtime, something taken for granted by those of us in the northern hemisphere. Whether or not it be of genuine historical significance in relation to the crucifixion of Jesus, the seasonal symbolism of the dying seed and the springing grain is too powerful to ignore (and see John 12 v.24). The first three verses of the hymn firmly anchor those symbols in the Gospel accounts of the burial and resurrection of Jesus, while the last verse adds an important note for all who know the human need for renewal of life and hope.

As with many a ‘folk-based’ tune, Canon Crum’s original words did not maintain a strict relationship with the number of notes: a certain amount of improvisation and “squeezing in” (or “stretching out”) was required – we all know that feeling when we sing the hymn “Be thou my vision”! Over the years, adjustments have been made to the original words, ironing out most of the inconsistencies of metre by discreet insertion of extras syllables here and there. These have been maintained in *Rejoice and Sing*, as well as the elimination of archaisms (‘riseth,’ ‘springeth’).

All of which makes it easier to sing with joy and hope “Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green”.

C

APRIL ROTAS

MINISTRY of FLOWERS

We thank those who are providing flowers for our sanctuary this month and those who arrange them if asked to do so.

7 th	Mrs B B
14 th	Mrs V P
21 st	Mrs A M
28 th	Mrs L W

SIDESMAN DUTIES

7 th	Mrs L C / Mrs J C
14 th	Mr P J / Mr C W
21 st	Mrs A B / Revd C B
28 th	Mrs H M / Mrs L B

VESTRY DUTIES

7 th	Mrs J P
14 th	Mrs L C
21 st	Mrs J C
28 th	Mrs J D

COMMUNION – Change of date from May 5th

Prep	28 th	Mrs J D / Mrs A B
Servers		Mrs J P / Mrs L C

READERS	7 th	Revd C B
	14 th	Mrs J P
	21 st	Mrs A B
	28 th	Mrs H M

OFFERTORY STEWARDS: Mr & Mrs R C

TUESDAY CAFÉ ROTA

	KITCHEN	REFRESHMENTS	COFFEE / TEAS
2 nd	J D J S	J C L C	R S B G
9 th	J D A B	J C J S	H M M T
16 th	J D L B	J C A B	J P L C
23 rd	J D J S	J C L C	? W R
30 th	J D A B	J P C B	L C J S

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED FOR TUESDAY CAFE

The Tuesday Cafe is one of our most important mission activities and we are delighted with the success of the cafe, which is regularly full of happy people enjoying good company and good food. We can only continue to serve everyone if we have enough volunteers. We like to give all volunteers at least one week off per month. We currently have some vacancies, so if you can help out on a regular basis or on an occasional basis - to cover short term illness for example - please let J C know. Volunteers work in different areas (eg: kitchen, tea/coffee area, refreshments counter) so please let us know if there is a particular area you'd like to help in. *Rob*



NEWS OF THE LAVINGTON FAMILY

Our friends at G S Home, **A M**, **B C** and **L G** have had Covid. Thankfully **A** and **B** have now fully recovered. **L** has had a short time in hospital but is now back at the Home where we hope she will get the care and peace she wishes. Our loving thoughts are with them all. **V P** has also been in hospital following with an infection. She is now home with a care package in place. We send her our love and prayers.

Unfortunately, **S G** was unwell and unable to lead our worship in March. We hope she will soon feel a lot better and following rest and recuperation be able to return to work. We are sorry to hear that **C T** is suffering with more pain which further restricts his mobility. He has been seen in hospital and given more medication so we hope that with this help he will improve and be more comfortable. We remember **C W** as he begins hospital treatment and send **L and C** our loving thoughts and prayers at this anxious time.

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ at Easter, we send our love and prayers to all those receiving treatment, those unable to join us for worship, the housebound and those who are anxious or worried at this time. May all be surrounded by God's peace, hope and love.

A

HE LIVES!

Mary Magdalene stood weeping in anguish and despair – and then a voice said “Mary”. She turned and saw him there.....the risen Christ, the Saviour, her own beloved Lord. The Man-God in his beauty, unharmed by nail or sword.

She ran in breathless rapture to tell his grieving friends. That glorious news still echoes out to the world's far ends....its wonder never ceases. New hope its message gives. That shout of life triumphant still thrills the world.....**HE LIVES !**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the beginning of April church members will receive the annual reports and an invite to attend our AGM on Saturday 20th April at 11am. This will be preceded by refreshments from 10.30am in the church halls.

The AGM is an important part of the churches life when we vote into office those who faithfully work to keep Lavington URC witnessing to the local community in Bideford and beyond. It is also an opportunity to thank those who faithfully take on these roles and reaffirm our commitment to help them in their tasks.

This year no serving Elder needs re-electing. However, there is the opportunity to nominate someone from the membership who would be willing to take on the role of an Elder and all that involves. If any member is interested in becoming an Elder, please speak to the Minister or one of the serving Elders.

Please make every effort to attend the meeting or if you are unable to, send in your apologies via any Elder. Thank you.

Alison Biggs, Church Secretary

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 - CD's & DVDs
 - Large selection of Gifts
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- and much more

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9.30 – 4.30pm Saturday 9.30am – 4pm

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JAMES TISSOT

When I was a boy, and my parents discerned that I was taking an interest in religion, they bought me a two-volume boxed set of books, entitled *The Footsteps of Jesus*, whose chapters described different episodes in the life of Christ. Each chapter was preceded by a picture illustrating each episode by a well-known artist. Many of these were by James Tissot, of whom, at that time I had never heard.

He was born Jacques Joseph Tissot in Nantes, France in 1836. His father was a prosperous drapers' merchant and his mother was a milliner. His father wanted Jacques to follow him into the family business, but Jacques had discovered a talent for art and wanted to go to Art school, so in 1857, with the support of his mother, he entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, to be followed by a career as a painter. He changed his name to James at about this time. In his early career he concentrated on painting well-dressed women in high society. He knew several of the Impressionists, but never became one. On the contrary, his style was one of photographic sharpness and accuracy of detail.

He fought in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, but afterwards he fled to London where he stayed for 12 years continuing his painting career. While there he met Kathleen Newton, who became a companion and sitter, but who was destined for an early grave, dying from tuberculosis in 1882. After her death, whilst visiting the church of St. Sulpice in Paris, he had a religious vision in which he saw his beloved Kathleen again. This rekindled his interest in his boyhood Catholicism and inspired him to spend the rest of his life on a series of biblical paintings. Before he started them, he made three visits to the Middle East to make sure that his paintings were architecturally and culturally accurate.

The first series of paintings that he did were called The Life of Christ, which was exhibited to great acclaim in Paris, London, and New York. All the paintings were bought by the Brooklyn Museum. He attempted to do the same for the Old Testament but unfortunately died before the series was completed. He nevertheless produced 80 paintings for it. The paintings were eventually reproduced in book form.

He died suddenly in Doubs, France in 1902, aged 66, a very wealthy man.

C

PREMISES NEWS

In order to reduce our heat loss in the hall and to make more progress as an Eco Church, the Elders and Church Meeting have considered a number of initiatives. We have now fitted a curtain across the entrance hatch to the gas boiler area. In addition, we have installed a draught excluder on one of the doors to the hall to prevent the cold draughts from the corridor. We agreed at Church Meeting to investigate the cost of secondary glazing. We now have a quote which will be discussed at the church meeting. Any secondary glazing will qualify for a 50% eco grant from the South Western synod.

In March we had our Food Hygiene inspection of our kitchen carried out by the officer from Torridge District Council. We were pleased to pass this inspection. Well done to all the volunteers who do such a good job at the Tuesday Cafe. When we receive his full report, we will know whether there are any recommendations for further improvements to our kitchen facilities. The inspection usually takes place once every 2 years; this one was delayed by Covid lockdowns.

A gutter cleaning service has been approached to clear the gutter above the kitchen; hopefully this will solve the problem with damp in the upper room.

Rob

STREET PASTORS

We have received a message from Duncan Withall who heads up the Bideford Street Pastors. Apparently Street Pastors have been asked if they could increase their patrols by the Police and Town Centre Partnership. The reality is that they are struggling to staff the existing planned patrols at the moment. Basically, there is a real need for more Street Pastors. Please could you pray that the right people might be identified to help provide additional afternoon patrols for Bideford? Street Pastors are found in many towns and cities across the UK and provide reassurance for people out late at night.

Since starting in 2009, Bideford Street Pastors and School Pastors has provided a supporting presence in the town; firstly, during the evening and night-time economy but also at daytime events.

During nearly 15 years of caring, listening and helping, Bideford Street Pastors have

- Helped enable a reduction in anti-social behaviour of more than 50%.
- engaged with hundreds of people needing support and
- even be credited with physically saving several lives.

Street Pastors are church members who have a caring heart to take the love of Jesus into the community. People are pleased to see them when they patrol and continually thank the volunteers for being there for them. The training, uniform and the resources required are all provided by Bideford Street Pastors.

If you would like further information, please look online at www.streetpastors.org or talk to Rob.

ECO CHURCH NEXT STEPS

Thank you to everyone at the church meeting in February, when we agreed to take the further steps towards our Eco Church Silver Award. Thank you for all the positive encouragement for this work. We have already received a bird box and bird feeder from Helen and another of our regular visitors has offered to donate a bird box and a bat box. This is great and these will all be fitted in the coming months, hopefully soon as the nesting season has begun now that Spring has arrived! It would be great if we could all add a bird box and a bug hotel in our own gardens too, providing extra homes for our local wildlife.

We have applied for our Silver Award and we will let you know when the new certificate arrives. Within our Synod it is good to hear that Cricklade United Church in Wiltshire has achieved the Bronze Award and Furrough Cross URC in Torbay has also been awarded the Bronze!

Rob



MARY JONES and the BIBLE SOCIETY

In 1800 Mary Jones set out from Llanfihangel-y-Pennant to walk twenty-six miles to Bala to buy a Bible from the Revd Thomas Charles. She had saved for six years to afford one as they were hugely costly and rare items at that time. When she arrived at his home, she found that all the Bibles in the Welsh language had been sold. Mr Charles was so moved by her passion and commitment that he arranged lodgings for her while he waited for more Bibles to arrive. Two days later he was able to provide her with a Bible of her own and also gifted her two more for her family to keep.

The memory of this encounter stayed with him and he went on to help establish the Bible Society four years later. His aim was to help other people like Mary access the Bible for themselves.

The official opening of the Society's state of the art Visitor Centre in Wales opened nearly ten years ago and was celebrated by local residents, school children and guests from around the world. The Society's Chief Executive said *"the Bible went out from Wales to the world and today the world returns to Wales to express its gratitude. We have people from every continent with us"* he said. *"It is a truly international event."*

THE VISITOR

One day, a man went to visit a church. He arrived early, parked his car and got out. Another car pulled up near him and the driver told him, "I always park there. You took my place!" The visitor went inside for Sunday School, found an empty seat and sat down. A young lady from the church approached him and stated, "That's my seat! You took my place!" The visitor was somewhat distressed by this rude welcome, but said nothing. After Sunday School, the visitor went into the church sanctuary and sat down. Another member walked up to him and said, "That's where I always sit. You took my place!" The visitor was even more troubled by this treatment, but still said nothing. Later, as the congregation was praying for Christ to dwell among them, the visitor stood up and his appearance began to change. Horrible scars became visible on his hands and on his sandaled feet. Someone in the congregation noticed him and called out, "What happened to you?" The visitor replied....." I took your place"

THOMAS

Unless I see the marks of the nails on his hands, unless I put my finger into the place where the nails were and my hand into his side, I will never believe."

John 20.v 2

Note: Country names were correct in year of writing.

Put your hand
Thomas,
on the crawling head
of a child imprisoned
in a cot in
Romania.
Place your finger
Thomas,
on the list of those
who have disappeared
in Chile.
Stroke the cheek,
Thomas,
of the little girl
sold into prostitution
in Thailand.
Touch, Thomas,
the gaping wounds
of my world.
Feel, Thomas
the primal wound
of my people.
Reach out your hands,
Thomas,
and place them at the side of the poor.
Grasp my hands, Thomas
and believe.

Fun Page

EASTER WORD SEARCH

T	N	E	L	F	P	V	M	T	N	R	B	N	V	O	N	O	M	M	D	L	E	Y	N	E
P	T	L	L	A	W	W	A	C	S	K	O	F	M	K	S	A	B	O	I	A	A	A	O	M
Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	S	U	O	I	G	I	L	E	R	S	G	C	S	S	S	D	I	I
P	E	N	A	N	C	E	Q	N	X	E	R	G	L	Y	A	F	K	H	C	T	T	N	T	T
J	E	S	U	S	C	H	R	I	S	T	O	H	M	A	O	O	P	U	I	S	E	U	C	G
G	N	O	P	T	L	A	F	H	D	O	U	A	C	R	Y	R	L	R	P	U	R	S	E	N
N	X	S	L	O	E	I	O	A	D	W	G	F	E	F	P	A	Y	C	L	P	T	T	R	I
I	M	P	O	T	C	L	S	F	J	D	Z	H	M	M	O	R	R	H	E	P	R	S	R	R
T	V	H	S	U	Y	C	R	V	A	M	T	P	L	A	P	N	A	T	S	E	I	O	U	P
S	V	U	R	W	H	I	H	L	I	O	P	W	G	R	Y	T	O	Y	E	R	D	C	S	S
A	L	C	E	A	D	M	E	M	N	C	P	M	Y	H	K	J	Y	I	E	B	U	E	E	O
F	X	E	M	A	U	N	D	Y	T	H	U	R	S	D	A	Y	J	T	S	R	U	T	R	A
B	K	H	Y	V	E	B	R	V	E	D	I	T	R	E	T	S	A	E	O	S	M	N	J	E
E	G	B	G	L	J	A	T	O	I	R	A	C	S	I	S	A	D	U	J	M	A	E	E	L
C	R	E	D	E	M	P	T	I	O	N	R	E	V	O	S	S	A	P	U	S	B	P	M	L

betrayal
church
crucifixion
disciples
Eastertide
empty tomb
fasting
Good Friday

Holy Week
Jesus Christ
Judas Iscariot
Last Supper
Lent
Mary Magdalene
Mary Mother of God
Maundy Thursday

Passion of Christ
Passover
penance
Pentecost Sunday
prayer
redemption
religious holiday
resurrection
springtime

Who's who at Lavington URC

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Church & Hall Bookings

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Enquiries for weddings and baptisms are welcomed.

Please contact Church & Hall Bookings Secretary above.

The May issue of Connexions is due out

on Sunday April 28th

Please give items for inclusion to Janet Palmer or send by email to

palmer.jan@tiscali.co.uk

Before or at the latest – Sunday April 21st

Connexions is edited by Janet Palmer
and printed and assembled by Jenny and Ricky Cawsey