



FREEMANTLE BAPTIST CHURCH
Testwood Road, Southampton

In focus

April 2026



LIKE many others today, I often wonder what is going on in the world and with wars, the cost of living crisis that never seems to improve, climate change, injustice... the list goes on... I wonder what the future holds for my myself, my family and my friends?

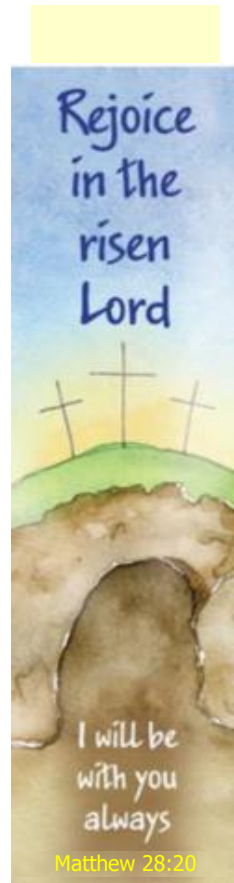
It seems like a big question too. What **does** the future hold? Where **is** the hope?

The brilliant French philosopher Gabriel Marcel wrote: *I almost think that hope is for the soul what breathing is for the living organism. Where hope is lacking, the soul dries up and withers.* For him, hope was needed for survival. Those with hope, it seems live longer and feel more fulfilled.

But where does hope come from? Psalm 71 tells us: *For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust* and Psalm 62 tells us: *our hope comes from [God]. He truly is our rock and our salvation, He is our fortress and we will not be shaken.*

These are big promises from a big God. And fortunately for us, God is bigger than what is going on in the world and He alone can offer us hope of a future, secure in Him. And, with God with us, who shall be against us?

Let me encourage you to put your hope in God, and remember, *God knows the plans He has for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.* Jeremiah 29:11



Revd. Linda Hayes

Welcome

to our **APRIL SERVICES 10.30am**

Our **Sunday mornings** start with **prayer** in the church **between 9.45am and 10.15am.**
You are very welcome to join us.

The services will be led by Revd Linda Hayes unless otherwise stated.

Thurs 2nd MAUNDY THURSDAY 6.30pm

We gather together and remember the night before Jesus died. A simple meal with Communion

Fri 3rd GOOD FRIDAY 9.30am - 11.30am

We gather to reflect and pray on this solemn day focussing on the crucifixion of Jesus

Sun 5th EASTER DAY 10.00am

A Special Easter Breakfast followed by a time of joyful worship.

Reading: John 20 : 1-10

Sun 12th

Subject: **Feast on the beach** *Belong group*

Reading: John 21 : 1-25

Sun 19th New 5 Week Series from 1 Peter

Subject: **Praise for what God has done in Jesus**

Reading: 1 Peter 1 : 3-12 *Will Rosie*

Sun 26th

Subject: **Jesus the cornerstone**

Reading: 1 Peter 2 : 4-10

Sun 3rd May

Subject: **How to live faithfully in a hostile environment**

Reading: 1 Peter 2 : 11-17, 3 : 8-12

You are very welcome to join us any Sunday morning.

All ages welcome. Activities available for the young at heart.

Light refreshments are served after the Service.



Weekly Meetings

TUESDAYS


Turkish language school 5.00pm-6.30pm

Belong 7.00pm-9.00pm
Fortnightly discipleship group exploring aspects of faith.

WEDNESDAYS

Sunflower Café 12.30pm - 3.00pm

Livewires 3.30pm - 4.30pm

 For Key stage 1 children with parents +carers; older and younger siblings welcome.



FRIDAYS

Flowerpots

10am - noon
Baby and toddler group.



SATURDAYS

Impact Church 6.00pm
Polish church

SUNDAYS

Bethel Prayer House 3.00pm



Mon to Fri



Tel: (023) 8078 4969
pp7@paintpotsnursery.co.uk

Previous sermons are on our Facebook page

Wed 1st April Easter Party

3.30pm-5.00pm
For families and everyone else!

Sat 4th Repair Café

10.30am - 1.00pm

Sun 12th Interim Church Meeting

Ater the morning service followed by
Church Lunch

Sun 26th Church Meeting

Ater the morning service

Mon 27th Leaders' Meeting

2.00pm

Contacts: Revd. LINDA HAYES Mob:07963 803884 or linda@dizzyanddaisy.plus.com
Anita Pike Administrator and hall bookings 07814 445929 or calm.pike82@gmail.com



*A prayer for
this church*

*Our Risen
Lord Jesus . . .*

Lord Jesus Christ,
Head of the Church,
Good Shepherd of
Your people,
Lord, we remember that
this is Your church, not ours.
Free us from anxiety about
getting everything right.
Free us from pride when
things go well.
Free us from fear when
decisions feel heavy.

Give us listening hearts.
Teach us patience with
one another.
Help us recognise Your voice
above our own opinions.

Where we need wisdom,
give it.

Where we need courage,
strengthen us.

Where we need humility,
shape us.

Make us leaders who serve,
servants who love,
and a church that reflects You.

Gather us, guide us,
and send us for the sake of
Your kingdom. Amen

**A
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. . . **Light of the world**,
bring the light and peace of your
gospel to the nations.

. . . **Bread of life**,
give food to the hungry
and nourish us all with Your word.

. . . **the way, the truth, the life**,
be with us and all who follow You
in the way.

Deepen our appreciation of Your
truth and fill us with Your life.

. . . **Good Shepherd**
who gave Your life for
the sheep,
recover the straggler,
bind up the injured,
strengthen the sick and lead the
healthy and strong to new
pastures.

. . . **the resurrection and the life**
we give you thanks for all who
have lived and believed in you.
Raise us with them to eternal life.

Amen
Source: Church of England

*Thank you God
for new life in the
spring time,
for flowers and birds,
For bright green new leaves.
Thank you God
for new life at Easter,
for Jesus who is with us,
right now and every day.*



Amen

Is the UK a Christian country?

IT IS A fact that the vast majority of people in the UK will not be observing the Easter weekend for Christian or spiritual reasons.

For those who are not expected to work over the four days it is a welcome break, either to go away, be with family and friends, or maybe to embark on projects in the home or garden.

For many the focus on the cross and resurrection of Jesus may just be a cursory glance or a curiosity. For some, they will look deeper into the significance of the Christian story, further than just eating hot cross buns and chocolate eggs.

However, Easter for Christians, Holy Week, starting at Palm Sunday, through to Easter Day is *absolutely central*, both individually and in the life of the church.

From the very start of the Christian church, this Good News of the crucified and risen Jesus, has spread and been incorporated into the heart of national life. Rulers, sovereigns and monarchs have become sincere Christians both in word and deed.

In recent decades many countries including the UK have become secularised, which begs the question: *Is the UK a Christian country?*

Justin Brierly is one of the eleven writers on the Theos website who gives his opinion and writes:

“Aside from the fact that it’s difficult to define exactly what a ‘Christian’ country is, the UK is probably best described as ‘post-Christian’ in terms of its general attitude towards faith.

Few people know the basics of the Christian story and even fewer actually set foot in church.

Yet ... I still see the values we have inherited from the Christian story bubbling away sub-consciously in our moral instincts for compassion, equality and freedom.

I still see people searching for justice, beauty and meaning in their lives, often in quasi-religious ways. The Christian story has not been buried so deep that it cannot surface again in our country. I see hopeful signs that it will.

Source: theosthinktank.co.uk

Older Christians will remember, often with fondness, when shops were shut on Good Friday and Easter Sunday making Easter a sacred space for everyone.

Today we live in a different age where there is a huge choice of

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Continued: *Is the UK a Christian Country?*

how we can now spend our Easter weekend, from travel, to secular events, fewer shopping restrictions, television, the internet, social media, all which have the effect of using this time as ‘carrying on as normal’.

This surely must be a wake-up call for all Christians not to accept this secularisation passively but be bold with Good News about Jesus, just as the early Christians were after being filled with the Holy Spirit.

In the words of Matthew 28:19 -20, with our ‘sure and steadfast’ faith, we can use our God-given talents to *go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything [Jesus has] commanded, because [He] is with [us] always to the end of the age.*

Les Pike

CHRIST CRUCIFIED



Cross of Jesus, cross of sorrow,
where the blood of Christ was shed,
perfect Man on thee did suffer,
perfect God on thee has bled!

Here the King of all the ages,
throned in light ere worlds could be,
robed in mortal flesh is dying,
crucified by sin for me.

O mysterious condescending!
O abandonment sublime!
Very God Himself is bearing
all the sufferings of time!

Evermore for human failure
by His passion we can plead;
God has born all mortal anguish,
surely He will know our need.

Who shall fathom that descending,
from the rainbow circled throne,
down to earth’s most base profaning,
dying desolate alone.

From the Holy, Holy, Holy,
we adore Thee, O most High,
down to earth’s blaspheming voices
And the shout of Crucifixion.

From John Stainer’s oratorio ‘The Crucifixion’

CHRIST has RISEN



*HE HAS RISEN, He has risen
He has risen, Jesus is alive.*

When the life flowed from His body
seemed like Jesus’ mission failed,
but His sacrifice accomplished
victory over sin and hell.

In the grave God did not leave Him
for His body to decay,
raised to life - the Great Awakening
Satan’s power He overcame.

If there were no resurrection
we ourselves could not be raised,
but the Son of God is living
so our hope is not in vain.

When the Lord rides out of heaven
mighty angels at His side,
they will sound the final trumpet
from the grave we shall arise.

He has given life immortal
we shall see Him face to face,
through eternity we’ll praise Him
Christ the champion of our faith.

Noel & Tricia Richards & Gerald Coates



500 years of reading the Bible in English

IT WAS 500 years ago in 1526 that William Tyndale completed the first English translation of the Bible from the original Greek. He was a brilliant linguist with a passion for the scriptures to be heard by everyone in their own language, but only the Vulgate, that is the Latin translation of the Bible, was authorised in England.

Unable to find a sponsor for his work he moved to the continent and when his translation was complete, printed copies were smuggled back to England in bales of cotton. On the direction of the Bishop of London many were bought for the sole purpose of burning them.

Tyndale's translation is remarkable as he stays accurate to the original Greek text while using short words and sentences readily understandable to ordinary people yet with a beauty of cadence which makes it memorable and meaningful.

Much of his work was used in the Kings James' Bible of 1611 and has carried on into modern translations remaining familiar to us today. *Let there be light* (Gen1:3), *blessed are the pure in heart* (Matt 5:8), *the peace of God which passes all understanding* (Phil 4:7), these are all directly from Tyndale and are just a few examples.

Tyndale never finished his work; the Old Testament which he was translating from Hebrew was incomplete when he was martyred for what were seen as heretical views.



The original Pocket New Testament

A key figure in the English Reformation, William Tyndale challenged practices and beliefs long held by the church which were brought to light through the new translation and consequently, in 1536 he was strangled and burnt at the stake. We are very grateful to God for what Tyndale achieved.

Luke 24 : 4-6 - He is risen

Tyndale's translation

Beholde two men stode by them in shynynge vestures. And as they were a frayde and bowed doune their faces to the erth: they sayd to them: why seke ye the lyvinge amonge the deed? He is not here: but is rysen.

Modern spelling and punctuation

Behold two men stood by them in shining vestures. And as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said to them, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen.'

JON FISHER REFLECTS
on a special day in March



16th March

THREE years to the day that Dad left us to be with the Lord. I woke up early, washed, showered and clean clothes.

I was determined to go to Romsey Abbey to light a candle and reflectively pray.

Things didn't go according to plan. I got there via a kindly taxi. I was in sombre mood but also positive.

As I got to the Abbey I found many gathered outside for a funeral. Not wanting to intrude I walked around the shops and found a super café where I indulged in an egg and bacon sandwich, beautifully made in proper fresh bread. Yummy.

I ambled back to the Abbey and chatted with friendly people who guided me through. I found the Abbey such a peaceful place - steeped in prayer and faith

I lit a candle, put in a prayer request and sat praying for healing as I move on in my life. It really was a beautiful time.

As I came away, I felt peaceful. I sat on a bench outside the Abbey and was witness to leaves being caught in the eddies, round and round they went. I thought even the leaves and wind celebrate such a joyous, wonderful place such as Romsey Abbey. I left for home on a bus, feeling the love of the Lord, just reflecting on the special day.



- ... for your financial giving towards the work and witness of this church during March which came to £1,526.50 a weekly average of £381.62
- ... to Anita for making up the posies of flowers for Mothering Sunday.
- ... to Gary for cleaning the church windows.
- ... to the washers and wipers up on a Sunday morning.

Sunflower Baptist

NOTICE BOARD

Emma, from Young Church, surprised her teacher last week when she thought that Easter commemorates the time when Jesus hides eggs for His disciples to find, and then He turns all the rabbits into chocolate.

A BIBLE VERSE FOR APRIL

1 Corinthians 15 : 20
But now, Christ has risen from the dead.

The Quiet Revival?

DURING THE last year, In Focus has reported that statistics from a YouGov survey, commissioned by the Bible Society, showed a significant increase in church attendance particularly among young men.

As exciting as this seemed to be, the findings were widely questioned and even featured on the Radio 4 programme *More or Less* where Professor Sir John Curtise (of election night fame) carefully analysed them. He came to the conclusion that the Bible Society were not mis-interpreting the results as such but that if they were true there would be very many more people in church.

YouGov have now checked their data more closely and found that through human error, a range of quality control technologies were not activated, leading to the results being unreliable.

‘Frustrating and disappointing’, was the response from Paul Williams, CEO of the Bible Society, but he went on to say this: *We need to shift the emphasis from obsessing too much about precise statistics and move towards asking: what are the stories? What’s really happening in people’s lives? What do we see happening experientially . . . in communities, churches, towns and cities across the country, in different denominations?*

The answer is, there is much to bring hope: Bible sales are soaring, there is increased attendance at Alpha Courses, a record number of confirmations in the Catholic Church and a surge in orders for baptismal pools!

Sadly the Quiet Revival statistics proved not to be reliable but God is at work and the *Quiet Revival is happening!*

Young men of faith - it’s for real!

EBERECHI EZE, the 27-year-old Arsenal midfielder, has declared that his ultimate goal in football is to glorify God.

Faith is central to his life, as he explained on the *Men in Blazers* show: ‘Faith is believing in Jesus Christ. What did Jesus Christ tell me to do? Gonna follow that, gonna live by that . . . that puts things into perspective of what this life really is. Faith anchors my life, it teaches me how to treat people,

how to love people . . . letting go of myself . . . it’s not about me. That’s Jesus Christ that taught me that.’



Eberechi isn’t alone; there are other Christian players on the team including Bukayo Saka, Jurrien Timber, and Noni Madueke who meet together in the *Bible Brothers* group to pray, study the Bible and support each other in their faith.