



## Newsletter

***Sunday 26th March***

Characters in the Bible 4:

Judas Iscariot

Matt 26 v 14-16, Mark 14 v 17-20  
& 43-46, Matt 27 v 1-5

### **Morning service 10.30am -**

lead by Kathryn Maguire with Clive Tomlinson preaching

All are invited to attend at Bearfield.  
Alternatively everyone is welcome to join on Zoom  
(link available from [secretary@bearfield.org](mailto:secretary@bearfield.org))

***Next week - Sunday 2nd April***

Palm Sunday

John 12 v 12-16, Mark 11 v 12-25, Luke 22 v 7-20

### **Morning service and communion 10.30am -**

with Sarah-Ann Howes leading and preaching

A decorative banner with a light beige background and rounded corners. The text 'O WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.' is written in a stylized, multi-colored font. The letters are outlined in black and filled with various colors like green, blue, and red. The banner has a slight shadow effect.

# Weekly wonderings ...

## Mini retreat in the garden

As you walk slowly around the garden, stop and pay attention to every evidence of spring, no matter how small.

Questions to consider as you walk.

### **The inner garden of your life -**

- Are there elements of your life where you feel wintry or frozen? How might you embrace those areas and show them compassion?
- Where do you see the waters of life flowing freely?
- Where do you see signs of growth, change, nurturing, hope?
- Are there areas that need clearing, uprooting or weeding?
- How is God coaxing life out of you?
- What is being raised to life in you?

### **Prayer**

Be The Gardener of My Soul.

Spirit of the Living God, be the Gardener of my soul.

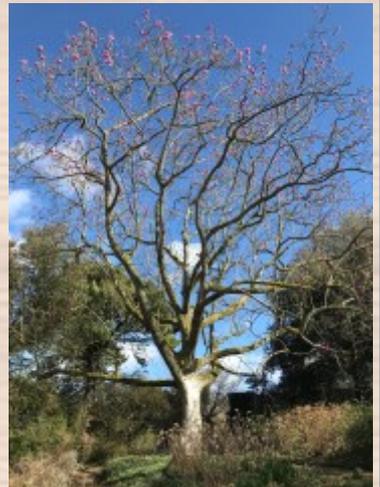
For so long I have been waiting, silent and still –  
experiencing a winter of the soul.

But now, in the strong  
name of Jesus Christ, I dare to ask:  
Clear away the dead growth of the past,  
Break up the hard clods of custom and  
routine,

Stir in the rich compost of vision and  
challenge,

Bury deep in my soul the implanted Word,  
Cultivate and water and tend my heart,  
Until new life buds and opens and flowers.

Amen.



Sue

# Happy Birthday

to

Dee Way

who has her birthday this week



## Pray for...



- Wisdom and guidance from the Lord for all within Bearfield
- For those within our church how are struggling with health, either mental or physical, in particular Julie, Arthur, Gordon, and Peter
- Thank God that Julie's operation last Monday went well
- Liz's mum Linda who has been told she only has weeks left to live. Please pray for peace.
- The recruitment of a new Church Leader as the advert is now live

## This Week

### Tuesday 28th March

10.30am - Morning homegroup

### Wednesday 29th March

10.30am - Oasis coffee morning

1.30pm - Bearcubs Fun Time toddler Group

8pm - Evening homegroup social

### Thursday 30th March

7.30pm -  Prayerfield

### Friday 31st March

7pm - TGI - Bowling trip

## Sunday 26th - Sermon note by SA

### Mary the mother of Jesus - Luke 1 v 26-49

We don't know much about Mary, her name is only mentioned in the bible 19 times, and most of them are to do with the events leading up to the birth of Jesus and his presentation in the temple.

So what can we assume about Mary and what do we know? We can assume that she was an ordinary, hardworking girl from a Jewish family, living in a small town and we know she was engaged to Joseph the carpenter. The engagement period was binding in those days and could only be broken by death or divorce.

So the first mention of Mary in Luke 1 as we heard read, was when the angel appeared to tell her she was going to be with child. The Angel had greeted her with the words "you who are highly favored" and then tells her she has found favor with God. What does it mean to be 'highly favored' – God had chosen her above all others. However if what was being said to her was true and Mary was pregnant, as an unmarried women at that time she could be killed for adultery so it is not surprising that she was scared and troubled.

How would you feel if someone appeared and told you the you were favored and that this amazing thing, that could get you killed, was going to happen to you. It doesn't sound great to me to be chosen above all others to be potentially killed.

But Mary would have known the prophecies in Isaiah 7 v 14 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son". Wouldn't she have been puzzled and confused. Perhaps she was thinking 'How can this be happening to me?'

As we heard Mary declared "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said". Mary must have had a strong faith in God to be so trusting.

Do we trust God, even when told the unbelievable will happen, even when threatened with death? I hope I do, but my faith has never been tested to the extent it was for Mary, I have never been under the threat of death. But many Christians in the world today are.

We next hear about Mary visiting Elizabeth. Elizabeth was a lot older than Mary, and Mary no doubt would have looked up to her, so it is not surprising that when

the angel had told her that Elizabeth was in her sixth month, that Mary wanted to rush off and see her. She was possibly thinking if Elizabeth is with child at her age then perhaps what was said about me is true too.

What a greeting Mary was given. What excitement these two women must have felt. I remember when I was expecting Abbie, how I loved seeing my sisters who were all also expecting at the same time. Thinking how great it was going to be the Abbie would have three cousins all around her age.

And then comes the amazing declaration from Elizabeth “Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished”. What must Mary have been thinking? We read Mary saying “He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. ... The mighty one has done great things for me”.

This young women knows that it is not because of anything she has done, but it is God who does great things through her. She is humble, praising the Lord for what He has done.

Do we rely on our own ability or status? Instead we need to be like Mary, humble and giving God the glory that He is due.

So, so far we have seen that Mary had a very strong faith, was trusting in God and humble. But what was she like as a mother?

Luke 2 tells us of the birth of Jesus and his presentation in the temple. It wouldn't have been an easy time for Joseph and Mary. Now days we have car, buses and trains to get around, and hospitals to give birth in. But poor Mary would have had to walk for days to get to Bethlehem for the census, possible sleeping on the ground as they travelled. And then when she arrived in Bethlehem it is very busy. Then then comes the time for her to give birth and she doesn't have a lovely clean house or hospital to give birth in, no she is where the animals would have been kept. She has a manger not a crib to lie her child in. And then she and Joseph have shepherds come a visit the child.

Luke 2 verses 18-19 tells us “all who heard it (that is the story that the shepherds have shared) were amazed” “... but Mary treasured up all these things in her heart”.

When Jesus is eight days old, Mary and Joseph take Jesus to be presented at the

temple. Here Simeon and Anna both prophesy about Jesus's life.

Then in verses 41-52 we hear about Jesus aged 12 going to Jerusalem for the Passover feast and not returning home with the group, but instead going to the temple. His parents after a day of travelling go looking for him. It says it is three days until they find him. We don't know if that is three days of hunting or a day travelling out, a day travelling back and a day hunting, but either way they are worried. Wouldn't you be! When they find Jesus they ask in verse 48 "Son, why have you treated us like this. We have been anxiously searching for you." Then you get a fairly typical teenager response "Why were you searching for me? Surely you know where I would be." As if all parents know exactly what their teenagers are thinking. But again we are told in verse 51 "But his mother treasured all these things in her heart".

So we can see the love of a mother, not boasting about her child but treasuring things up in her heart, worrying about their safety when they are missing.

No doubt a number of you have a 'baby memory box'. I have here one of the girls boxes – it had the clothes they left hospital in, the shoes and dress they wore for their dedication.

Imagine Mary's memory box – what would she have in it

- Recount of the angels visit
- Greeting from Elizabeth
- Photo of the shepherds visit
- Prophecies from Simeon and Anna when presented at the temple
- Presents from the magi
- Photo of Jesus in the temple at his first Passover

Whenever she looks in the box surely she is thinking "wow, this son of mine is incredibly special". Her heart would have been bursting with love for him.

There are then three more occasions when Mary is mentioned, okay not by name in two of these cases. Firstly in Cana at a wedding. All the wine has gone and Mary knows Jesus is special and can sort it. John 2 verse 5 says 'His mother said to

the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Mary has total trust in him. Do we have that total trust?

Then at the end of Jesus life in John 19 verses 26-27 it says 'When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother.'" What amazing devotion they must have had for each other that Jesus makes sure his mum is going to be cared for and have someone herself to care for.

The final time Mary is mentioned by name is in Acts 1 after Jesus has been taken up to heaven. In verse 14 we read 'They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.' It would appear that Mary had been following Jesus during his time of ministry and she is there at the start of the church.

So to sum up Mary was willing to say yes to God, even if what He's asking seems impossible, uncomfortable, or impractical. She was a women of incredible faith and trust in the Lord. She treasured all that she saw and heard. And she had such love and devotion to Jesus that she was there from the beginning of his life on earth until the beginning of the church.

Are we like Mary? Do we have that trust and faith, regardless of the circumstance? Do we Love? Are we willing to say yes to God?

Jesus, help us be like Mary. Help us to be willing to say 'Yes' to you. Have faith that you are working though all things and trust in your word. May our heart reflect the love that Mary had for you her son and the love that you have for all.

Amen

SA