



Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

We live in the time now between Easter and the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost – between the resurrection and the formation of the Church, between Jesus humanly present in the world, and the Holy Spirit with us as we celebrate at all times and in all places.

For the first Christians it was a time of discovery – they were exploring for the first time what resurrection meant, and facing all the questions “is it real?” “what does it mean?” and so forth. They didn’t know what to do, they simply had to wait, and their time of waiting was a time to think things through. They didn’t even know they were “Christians” at first – that was a name crafted by people outside the church to describe the believers at Antioch some time after the events we remember in this season.

It was a time of waiting, which became a call to action, and there is plenty going on. As we think of our community – as I write, the local election results are not fully declared, but it is obvious there are major changes, and some people who have served our community well have lost their seats, while new people who have heard the call to service

(Continued on page 2)



Nathan Greene THE RESURRECTION - Jesus Christ, Easter Morning



have taken their place.

In the Church, too, there is plenty going on. There will be more elections on the 23rd May – do pray for candidates and voters – but on the same day in the afternoon we have community singing as part of Dementia Action Week at St Mary’s – an event for everyone to join in.

On 22nd June at Reading Minster in a service at 11.00am Leonard will be ordained priest. He came to Thatcham to have his vocation tested and discerned, and I think we can testify to his quality.

On 2nd July in the evening we welcome Revd Nicola Hulks as our new Team Vicar in a service at St Barnabas Church/ Thatcham Park School.

These are perhaps the most obvious visible signs of God at work in our midst, but there are others too. If you didn’t make our annual meeting to ask for a copy of the reports – there are clues there.

This week we remembered St Philip and St James, Apostles of Jesus – part of the central core, yet people of whom we know little. Much of the best work of the church goes unnoticed and unrecorded as “soul by soul and silently” God is at work. In a sense Easter to Ascension is the season when we both rejoice in the resurrection and also remember the unseen work of God in our midst.



<http://e-nklings-revschuldheisz.blogspot.com/2016/05/sermon-for-feast-of-st-philip-and-st.html>

And from Ascension to Pentecost we are invited to pray as Jesus taught us “thy kingdom come”. And don’t miss the joint churches Pentecost service at Green Lane Church on 9 June (Pentecost) evening – people tell me how they used to enjoy such services, but you will only enjoy it if you join in!

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

Mark



christian aid week
12-18 MAY

I need to know that Christ can feel

John 20:19-31

New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

Jesus appears to his disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'

Jesus appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!'

But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'

²⁸ Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

The purpose of John's gospel

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

marks of the crucifixion. How extraordinary that is.

Here is a body, shown to Thomas and the other disciples, that is not perfect and unmarked, as we might expect, but that still has scars on its hands, and a great gaping wound in its side.

I need to know that God is real; I need to know that Christ can feel... Thomas draws our attention to the body of Christ. There is a reality here that is quite disconcerting. It reiterates the picture in Matthew 28:9 of the women in the garden taking hold of Jesus' feet, and that in Luke 24:39, where he invites his disciples to feel his hands and feet, for, he says, I have flesh and bones, unlike a ghost.

The risen Jesus is substantial, material, not ethereal. He retains the integrity of body and soul; flesh and spirit are still one in him. In life, in death, in life beyond death, he is undivided.

The resurrection is an absolutely clear message that bodies matter, that the miracle and the mystery of the incarnation, Jesus Christ the Word made flesh, is neither accidental nor incidental. It is the whole point.

We know and are known in the body, and it is as whole persons that we live and fall and die and are raised to new life.

The marks of our lives are an integral part of who we really are, as they are of Jesus. And it is in the reality of our lives that we are most personal, most relational, most loved and precious. It is that reality that reminds us that the masses huddled in misery and squalor in refugee camps across the world are not just masses,

Without the story of Thomas, we would not know that most surprising thing – that the risen Jesus still bore the

Share and Prayer (S.A.P.)

An informal group meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month (10.30 am to 12.30 pm) to discuss various topics and views, with home made refreshments and concluding with prayers.

For details contact Linda Beaumont on 864223

Tuesday 14 May

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they are persons, and that the driven and fanatical armed groups spreading terror across parts of Central Africa are persons, and that it was for persons that Christ lived and died and was raised. It is in our bodies, in the giftedness of them, but also in their wounds that we remember who we are.

How could the risen body of Christ be anything other than marked with his wounds? In Christ's crucified body is named all the violence of the world. We have to remember, for if we do not remember the wounds, we will not remember the love that was greater than the violence.

We are part of a body. But it is not just any body. It is a resurrection body. As part of that body, we carry wounds, and some of them are very ugly. We carry, all of us, the torturer's wounds as well as the victims. Bearing the marks is part of being church. But we also share the life that is given back to us through the body.

When we minister the Word made flesh to each other, as we do every Christian Aid Week, we are inviting each other to embrace what is hopeful and new and strange and as intimate as indwelling. So let us celebrate the resurrection of the wounded body of Christ.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/weekly-worship-28-april>

This months prayer

“Hallelujah, He is RISEN!

He is RISEN indeed, Hallelujah!”

Almighty God, Creator of the universe and everything in it, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We praise your holy name and express our gratitude for giving us new life through Jesus your son, who died and rose again that we might be forgiven and accepted into your presence. As we rejoice in this Eastertide, we take a breath and pause to reflect, once again, on that once-for-all sacrifice Jesus made for us at Calvary. Words alone cannot capture our feelings of thankfulness, or indeed our heartfelt gratefulness for the pain and humiliation he suffered on the cross. And he did it for you, the reader; me, the writer and all of humankind, no matter where they live, or their colour, creed, political or sexual persuasion.

Put simply, for everyone.

We ask you to rebuild those areas of our lives that have crumbled under pressure, and you know Lord what each of us goes through every day; the heartaches, worries and frustrations.

Give us strength to work through them.

We ask you to renew those things that we have ignored or forgotten. Help us spend more quality time with you in prayer, either alone or in each other's company.

We pray that through your Holy Spirit, you would give us Faith, Hope and Love and a heart for service.

We lift up to you the work of the church and pray for your blessing and provision for all clergy. We give thanks for the appointment of Nicola, the new Team Vicar and pray for her as she takes up her post, serving at St. Barnabas in Thattham.



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We pray for Leonard, our curate who will be priested in June, and for all in training or considering full time ministry.

We pray for your world, and specifically for those places at war; Syria and the on-going troubles in Afghanistan. For those countries where food is scarce and crops have failed because of drought. We pray that you would send rain where it is needed. And for closer to home, we pray for all who rely on food banks and struggle to make ends meet. May they know your presence in their lives and take comfort that you are with them.

We pray for those in hospital, nursing home or hospice and for all carers, both paid and unpaid. We give thanks for our surgeons, doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals. Give them wisdom, energy and rest.

Lord, we have so much to thank you for;

For calling us, adopting us as your children, for answered prayer, for wiping sins away, for undeserved love and your amazing grace.

In the knowledge that we have been put on this planet for a purpose, give us the resources, time and stamina we need to serve you and our fellow beings to bring a bit more of Heaven to Earth by proclaiming your message of hope to all who will hear it and counting us worthy of the task.

Amen.

For the Record...

Baptism

7 Apr Matilda Jane Lockwood
28 Apr Jaden St Clair Peters

Weddings

6 Apr Robert Allun & Gemma Lindup
13 Apr Alexander Jones & Alice Laidler
26 Apr Joshua Evans & Emma Trincas

Funerals

15 Apr Ron Johnson 87
15 Apr George Goodliffe 82
17 Apr Stella Matthews 91
26 Apr Ray Curtis 84



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C A M E O

(come and meet each other)

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Dates for you diary

May

Sat 11 **Sunday on Saturday (SoS)**
 Sat 18 Concert - **Barfield Handbells** 7.30 pm
 Sun 19 **Christian Aid Coffee and Cakes**
 Thu 30 **Ascension Day Service** 7.00am +
 Breakfast

June

Sun 9 **Pentecost**
 Sun 16 **Cream Teas** - St Mary's
 Sat 22 **Priesting of Revd Leonard Onugha** -
 Reading Minster

July

Tue 2 **Licensing of Revd Nicola Hulks as
 Team Vicar** - at St Barnabas,
 Thatcham Park School

Sun 14 Jul **United Service of Remembrance** -
 3pm, London Road Cemetery
 Thu 29 Aug **Fun on The Broadway** - 10am-3pm,
 The Broadway Green
 Sat 7 Sep **French Market** - 9am, The Broadway
 Sat 12 - **Thatcham Festival** - Various venues
 Sun 20 Oct across Thatcham
 Sun 10 Nov **Remembrance Parade** - from
 10.30am, Parade through the town
 centre with services at the War
 Memorial and St Mary's Church
 Mon 11 Nov **Armistice Day** - from 10.45am, The
 War Memorial, Bath Road
 Fri 6 Dec **Christmas Lights Switch On** - from
 5pm. Switch on at 7pm, The
 Broadway
 Sun 15 Dec **Mayor's Civic Carol Service** - 4pm, St
 Mary's Church

Thatcham Town Council's Community & Civic Events 2019

Sun 12 May **Mayor Making** - 3pm, Frank
 Hutchings Community Hall
 Mon 13 May **Mayor Making (2nd part)** - Council
 Offices, Brownsfield Road
 Sun 30 Jun **Thatcham Family Fun Day** - 11am-
 4pm, Henwick Worthy Sports Ground



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Who's Who in the Thatcham Team Ministry

Team Rector

Mark Bennet 867342

Team Vicar - St. Barnabas

Vacant

Associate Clergy:

Marion Fontaine 861742

Brenda Harland 865064

Leonard Onugha

Parish Administrator

Ann Watts 862277

The Parish office is open Monday and Friday mornings, 9.30am to 1.00pm, answer phone at other times.

Email: admin.stmarysthattham@ntlbusiness.com

Churchwardens

Viv Druce 820718

Chris Watts 864567

Glenn Peters 869409

Future copies

Connect is published ten times a year and is available from St. Mary's and St. Barnabas Churches, Thatcham, or by post from the Parish Office, tel. 862277.

Article Deadline

Please give articles for the **June** edition to Steve Rice (860431) or any of the clergy or churchwardens or email julie@dunwell.org by **15th May**.



Services at St. Mary's Church

Sunday Services

Morning Services

8.00 am **Holy Communion**

10.00 am **Parish Communion**

Children's groups on 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays at 10 am, workshop on 3rd Sundays.

The Parish Communion services on the 1st Sunday of the month is for people of all ages, especially the young, (includes Baptism Welcome).

6.30 pm Evening Services

1st Sunday **Sung Evensong**

2nd Sunday **No service**

3rd Sunday **Healing Service**

Weekday Services

Wednesdays

9.45 am **Holy Communion**

10.30 am **'ABC'** (Adults, Babies, Children)

Every Weekday

9.00 am **Morning Prayer** (In the chapel)



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Services at St. Barnabas Church

(meeting in Thatcham Park School)

10.00 am Sunday Services

1st Sunday **Worship Service**

2nd Sunday **Communion**

3rd Sunday **Worship Service**

4th Sunday **Communion**

5th Sunday **Worship Service**

More details from Revd. Brenda Harland 01635 865064

www.stbarnabasthattham.weebly.com

Serving to Build Community



C A M E O

CAMEO update - at the beginning of the year CAMEO had a few changes - Joan Collins who started it all 5 years ago after doing a sterling job has decided to take a step back, we would like to thank her for all the hard work Joan did, and she still is baking cakes. So myself Theresa and Ann - Viv will be carrying on the good work. We actually started off with 5 of us that first Monday and now we can have between 35 - 40 that can turn up.

We do aim to please everybody (not easy) with something different every week including a time for chit-chat, but so far have had the story of fish and chips - then a lovely fish, chicken and chips lunch delicious. Memories of the 1940's - 1950's included lots of fun and laughter remembering those days. Singing thanks to Viv we had the Sound of Music singing the songs and listening to the story, one thing for sure everybody loves singing. And we look forward to more fun and laughter in the future.

If you are somebody else you know is lonely, needs to friends to talk too, please tell them about CAMEO. Will see you soon - Monday afternoons 2pm-4pm. And last but not least thank you everybody that provide the cakes.

Theresa

My Broken Hosanna: Two Weeks of Easter - From Palm Sunday to the London Marathon

Week 1: Palm Sunday to Easter Day

The highs of Palm Sunday's joyful procession: There is much to love about the sacramental tradition. My holy week began with the combined worship and procession from St Mary to the URC church. In truth though, I spent crucial portions of that morning securing the 'family silver,' since the procession normally leaves St Mary's church with some valuable worship items still on display. On my return from making safe the Church and items I stood outside the URC main chapel for much of the Eucharist in order not to disturb the poignant celebration going on inside. Nevertheless, I could rejoice with the psalmist and say "How good and pleasant it is when God's people sit together in unity!"

"[he] has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father -- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen."

Deacon of the Oil: On Maundy Thursday I was one of the deacons of oil at the Diocesan Chrism Service at Dorchester Abbey. The Chrism service is an annual service at which Licenced Lay Ministers, Deacons, Priests, Bishops, and laity all renew their commitment to Christ, and their vows to serve the community of believers and the world in his name.

I felt privileged to observe this old tradition at close quarters, most touchingly, the moment when the Bishops were led in the affirmation of their vows by the chair of the diocesan house of laity. It was a very good reminder to all that what is most important in our tradition is that which we have in common, our baptism. Those called to serve the body in various offices remain part of the one body.

When my central moment of 'fame' came, I delivered my line "The Oil of Chrism," in a manner any thespian would be proud of, and crucially without dropping the

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oil! Minutes of fame, and service over, I quickly made my way back to Thatcham in time for our foot-washing service.

My soul is downcast within me;
therefore I will remember you...
Deep calls to deep in the roar of your
waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers have swept
over me...
I say to God my Rock, "Why have you
forgotten me?
Why must I go about mourning, oppressed
by the enemy?"

The lows of Maundy Thursday: Mark and I stripped the church of her usual decorations with the 'haunting' Taizé chants of "stay with me, remain here with me" in our ears. As we did this I felt some measure of Christ's trepidation at what surely now lay ahead. This feeling was heightened by thoughts of a friend, Simon, who has been sent home on palliative care, essentially to die. Trepidation merged with feelings of abandonment as we kept vigil in the lady chapel. I watched the numbers that had gathered for the foot-washing service reduce to a hardy handful that stayed on for the vigil, and then as the minutes ticked away toward midnight, the handful became a numbered few. We were truly alone. Yet in like manner Christ faced death regardless, alone. The loneliness of an impending death did not buy him a reprieve. Simon continues on a similar lonely journey. In answer to the Psalmist's questions "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?" I answered that I feel frustrated, I feel abandoned by

God, and the certainty of Simon's ultimate healing beyond the grave does little to lift my sense of helplessness and near despair. For whatever the victim's age, death remains a violent tear in the fabric of our humanity.

The pathos of Good Friday: The finality of the Last Hour was made very poignant by Paul Bullock hammering down the cross into its stand with a soul-shattering clap in the middle of that service. My children talked about the reality conveyed by that moment for days afterwards. The brutal treatment meted to Christ. His body broken, like a fresh olive bruised, torn apart, then crushed such that what was once on the inside was now on the outside that the precious oil might flow.

"nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
He was despised and rejected by humankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised,
and we held him in low esteem...
punished... stricken... afflicted...
pierced... crushed..."

The triumphant shout of Easter dawn: The triumphal euphoria of Easter morning as I prepared for worship at St Barnabas was all too quickly sobered by the news coming out of Sri Lanka. Even as I spoke of God's vindication of Christ's claims to sovereignty and divinity by the resurrection, my thoughts were never far from the unfolding evil. The reality was summed up in a WhatsApp message I received from a friend, "Christ is

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Risen Alleluia! And his risen body bears the scars of suffering still.”

Week 2: Easter Monday to the London Marathon

At the end of my two weeks of Easter were the hilarious pictures of the runner dressed-up as Big Ben trying to get across the finish line having underestimated the height of his spire and overestimated that of the structure at the finishing line. It emerged that the gentleman ran the marathon in that costume in an attempt to get into the Guinness Book of World Records for the fastest marathon time for a person dressed as a landmark. I am a big fan of positive human endeavour, so we must not forget what a hero that runner was for trying at all. However, as I watched those funny scenes at the finish line, I remembered a verse from the book of Hebrews, the author’s encouragement to live the resurrection life.

“therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Aside from the comedy of the moment, that runner reminded me of some of my observations from the first time I went along a marathon route to cheer on the runners. I noticed how the inexperienced runners

gradually disposed of the superfluous and fancy items they had kitted themselves with and carried with them for the marathon. I noticed that as the going got tougher as the miles run increased even seemingly weightless items like head bands were discarded by the tiring runners. Of course, a keen observer would have noticed that the elite and more experienced runners carried very little with them, and even then each item they did have on them was of the most essence. I also observed, though it may seem strange, that some of the loudest cheers were not for the elite runners but rather for those who slowed their pace to help struggling runners along the route, and for others running in support of a larger cause than just themselves (often in fancy costume).

It struck me again that the resurrection life is a call to deny ourselves instant gratification, holding on only to the essentials for the race of life. It is a call to take up our crosses, to bear one another’s burden, to put up with certain difficulties of mind, body, and spirit for the goal of winning the crown of life. To follow in the way of Christ along his uneasy path, for the sake of his kingdom. To bring healing to people, whilst struggling on ourselves as wounded healers, fellow runners in life’s unforgiving marathon. The resurrection life appears the race that receives heaven’s loudest cheer.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

As I reflect back on those two weeks I perceived once again that it is perhaps right to be angry at Simon’s

Next Men’s Fellowship Breakfast

Saturday 4 May 2019
8.00am

Thatcham Baptist Church

Speaker: Nick Redmond—organiser of Dads (Grandads) and Kids Camping Weekends

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intractable illness, and at the senseless violence in Sri Lanka. It seems right to rage at my feeling of powerlessness and sense of abandonment. If for no other reason it continues to remind me that something is wrong with our world. There must be more than this. Feeling rage, dissatisfaction, presents as the right response to the perceived 'injustice' of the way things are. The alternative would be indifference, a living death. For though on the cross of the first Easter the

war was won, we remain in a constant battle until Christ returns.

So, I embraced again the importance of (lament) prayer. I infer that we will (appear to) lose some and win some battles regardless of whether we pray or not. I also judge that if we pray, we will win a few more than if we don't. I concede that I will never know which ones I'll win and which I'll lose beforehand. Consequently, I have no choice but to pray for them all. All my battles. Every situation. Above all, it is often said that through the austerity of prayer we grow closer to God. Therefore, whilst we may be downcast and troubled within, we can continue to put our hope in God, for he promises that we will yet praise him, our Savior and our God. Nevertheless, till Christ returns, my hosanna remains broken, every loss will hurt, really hurt.

"Christ is Risen Alleluia! And his risen body bears the scars of suffering still."

Leonard



Ride and Stride for Churches

Ride and Stride 2018 is now a pretty distant memory for most of us, but with the final results now in it's worth pausing to take note of what we achieved, and to thank all those who helped us achieve it. Altogether some 75 riders and striders made 471 visits to 72 churches, and raised almost £19,000 for the Royal County of Berkshire Churches Trust – money that will go directly to helping keep the churches of our county in good repair. In 2017/18 the Trust paid out £31,000 in grants for church repairs and improvements, and the money raised through Ride and Stride made a vital contribution to this total. So thank you to all who took part, whether as Riders and Striders, as local organisers, or as stewards on the day who welcomed visitors and offered much-appreciated refreshments to enthusiastic but sometimes weary participants.

Ride and Stride is a great event. Nationally it raises over £1 million each year for our churches. But besides this, for those who take part it offers a splendid opportunity to see some of the wonderful churches of our county – churches built with love and in faith, with dedication and hard work, and with skill and artistry. Our task today is to maintain them with the same love and faith, and in the same manner.

Last year I walked with a friend through Reading. Some of the churches I had visited before, some were new to me, but all gave me cause to stop and stare and wonder. I started at the church of the English Martyrs in Tilehurst and ended (via Reading Abbey ruins and the church of St James) at St Peter's in Caversham, and altogether visited sixteen churches. There were too many to describe here individually, but some stand out – the lofty interior of J P St Aubyn's All Saints, Downshire Square; the wonderful furnishings (including a Pugin screen) at Holy Trinity; the grandeur of the Minster; the classical restraint of St Mary Castle Street; the quietness of the burial ground behind the Friends' Meeting House in Church Street; the Victorian gothic masterpiece that is Henry Woodyer's Christ Church; and the magnificent series of stained glass windows by C E Kempe at St Luke's. And at many of them I met people who clearly loved their churches and were glad to share their love and their knowledge with me. It was a





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great way to spend a Saturday, and an inspiration to be reminded of the magnificent heritage we have in Berkshire.

Doubtless other participants could tell similar stories of their experiences elsewhere in Berkshire. I myself am planning to explore another part of the county in September 2019. If you would like to take part, have a word with your local organiser* – or email rideandstrideberks@gmail.com. Whether you visit two churches or twenty, I'm sure you'll have a good day, and whether you raise £50 or £500, every penny will help our churches.



NEWBURY
Choral
SOCIETY
Summer Season 2019

Lauridsen: *Lux aeterna*

Vaughan Williams: *Three Shakespeare Songs*

and popular works by Britten, Elgar Rutter, Tavener and others

Conductor: Cathal Garvey

Saturday 29th June 2019, 7:30pm
Douai Abbey, Woolhampton

Tickets £15, under 16s £5, available online at www.newburychoral.org.uk or Newbury Corn Exchange: 0845 5218218 and from choir members



You and your family are invited to:

Sunday
On
Saturday



Come and find out about what happened after Easter when Jesus cooked breakfast on the beach!

At: St Barnabas Church
In: Thatcham Park School
On: 11th May 2019
From: 4.30pm until 6.30pm
www.stbarnabasthatcham.weebly.com

And you can be sure there will be fun, crafts, games, and a short service of songs, stories and prayers followed by lots of lovely food! No need to cook when you get home!

Fun for all the family!



Barfield Handbell Ringers



St. Mary's Church, Thatcham
Saturday 18th May 2019, 7.30pm
Tickets £6 / £5 concessions

from "Picture It", High Street, Thatcham,
or email dianne@barfield.org.uk

