

**Sermon : Easter 3 April 19, 2015 – APCM**

**The Revd Jutta Brueck**

**Acts 3.12-19, 1 John 3.1-7, Luke 24.36b-48**

Today is the Sunday when we are holding our Annual Parochial Church Meeting – a point in the year when we take stock of the last calendar year, and we also look ahead by electing church wardens and representatives to the Parochial Church Council, as well as receiving a presentation of the Budget, which is a financial expression of the plans we have for the year ahead.

When we cast our minds back to last year, 2014, there is a great deal to celebrate – and we are extremely grateful to Jackie Bartholomew, who has been our church archivist for many years, putting together a folder which reflects all the events and activities we have been engaged in, as well as special occasions in the lives of members of the congregation.

2014 was another rich year: I don't know what stand out for you, but some of the highlights for me included the showing of Lent Films, Holy Week and Easter with The Revd Dr Alastair Coles; our second Prayer48 with an Eastertide feel; the appearance of the children's gazebo which has been evolving into this beautiful space including a tree and roof full of stars. In June, we held a joyful Confirmation service at which Bishop John Taylor confirmed 10 young people and two adults. Later in the year we commemorated the centenary of the start of WW1 with several events and a display during the Remembrance Sunday weekend. Then, there is all the loving service going on behind the scenes, formal and informal, looking after the building, supporting our worship, offering pastoral care to individuals and care homes, the home group, which has been flourishing, the Sunday schools, and many new people of all ages who have joined us.

So much to celebrate and be thankful for as we celebrate our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Now, as we are looking ahead, I am conscious that we are doing so with mixed feelings. On the one hand, we have so much to be thankful for, we have got our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations coming up – Prayer48, the Beating of the Bounds on 14<sup>th</sup> June and St. James Day -, but then also my departure, as a result of Martin's appointment as the next Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The Church of England process for the replacement of incumbents does not allow us to advertise for a new incumbent until I have gone. It means there will be a period where you, as the congregation, assisted by Debbie, Geoffrey and Peter, have to take responsibility for the running of the church under the leadership of the church wardens and the PCC. That can feel like a daunting task, especially for those who have generously volunteered to take on those roles. However, it gives us a chance to not 'to sit and wait', but to say how, together, do we share in God's work in his community and the

communities of which we are part, and what Christian life together do we want to invite a new priest to join us in?

Let us imagine for a moment that Jesus appears in our midst today, just as he did on that first Easter Day we heard about in the gospel. There the eleven were hiding in the upper room in Jerusalem, wondering what had happened to Jesus. They were trying to come to terms with 'absence', not of a vicar, but of Jesus himself. But then, what happened? In the midst of their anxiety and fear, he appears

Imagine Jesus here, in our midst now, as physical presence. What would he say to us as we face the changes ahead? What is Jesus, risen from the dead, saying to us?

- *Peace be with you!* - What next?
- What comes to your mind? .....something like 'Love one another as I have loved you? (John 13.34) ... or 'Do not be afraid' .....I am with you always until the end of the age.' (Mt. 28.20)
- *You did not choose me, but I chose you. (John 15.16)*

Like those first disciples, we are called to be Easter people - people who know and trust in the presence of the risen Christ, people who follow his example of loving service.

And, a lot of the time, we may feel like the disciples on that first Easter Day ... unsure what is going on and lying ahead. And we do know how their story evolves – how those confused and anxious disciples are equipped and empowered by the spirit of the risen Christ to build the Church, of which we are part, here in Cambridge, 2000 years later.

And as we take stock today we know that Jesus has been with us – as individuals and as a Church – and Jesus will be with us in what lies ahead.

He is asking us to trust him, to follow him in loving, self-giving service and to spread the good news of his resurrection in our own time.

As we hold our Annual Parochial Church meeting today,

let us wholeheartedly give thanks for Christ's presence with us and pray together in the words of this morning's collect:

**Risen Christ,                    you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope.  
    Help us to know your presence with us,  
    Strengthen us to proclaim your risen life  
    and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**