

We all have those days or seasons where things seem to go against us, and so we need to enjoy those little victories: the parking space that is right there; the timings which just work; the job that didn't take as long; the conversation which went better than we hoped....when they come along.

But this April and May, we celebrate two big victories: 80th anniversary of VE Day 8th May, and Easter. Victory in Europe Day is the day celebrating the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II of Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on Tuesday, 8 May 1945. Upon the defeat of Germany, celebrations erupted throughout the Western world, especially in the United Kingdom, in North America and in USSR. More than one million people celebrated in the streets throughout the UK to mark the end of the European part of the war. Churchill addressed crowds saying: "God bless you all. This is your victory. In our long history, we have never seen a greater day than this. Everyone, man or woman, has done their best." Let's note three things which made this event so powerful.

Sacrifice: so many had sacrificed so much, even to giving up their lives for the sake of others. This rightly moves us deeply. Jesus says “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15v13).

Peace: war had deeply affected life at home as well as where the battles were fought. Families were separated, communications uncertain, truth and lies mingled, a lack of peace at every level.

Defeat of enemy: there had been so much fear, destruction, spreading evil, so the defeat brought an immense outpouring of relief as well as joy. This was tempered by the fact that Japan was still fighting, but it still felt like a wonderful release.

Now, it's worth pausing to reflect again.

At Easter, Jesus gave himself as an amazing **Sacrifice** for any who would trust and follow him. He paid the price for our rejection of God and took condemnation in our place that we might know a new start as friends with God. This sacrifice brought **Peace**.

Peace with God and as we become united in Jesus, letting go of comparisons and competition, we know peace with each other.

God only knows what will be happening in the international news as you read this, so it is obvious that this peace is the only sense of peace that can last forever.

And, of course, the **Enemy Defeated** was death itself. By dealing with the problem of our human hearts, this was a once for all victory: nothing more to be done. Jesus' death had done it; his resurrection had proved the triumph! A wonderful release from any fear for our significance now and security forever.

God loves you so much that he sent his Son to die in your place, so that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

DONISTHORPE COMMUNITY GROUP VE DAY 80 CELEBRATIONS – Saturday May 3rd.

VE Day Celebrations on Saturday May 3rd organised by Donisthorpe Community Group will be held at St. John's starting with a Traditional Village Fete with skittles, tombola, refreshments, games, crafts, and lots more; from 11.00am - 1.00pm, followed by a VE Day 80 Celebration Afternoon Tea with 'Songs that Rallied a Nation' performed by Melody Blue from 3.00pm – 6.00pm. Tickets for the afternoon tea are £10 per person available from The Halfway House.



FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

LUNCH LIGHT our group that supports folk who are bereaved, plan to meet on **Friday 30th May between 12.30pm – 2.00pm**. So, if you have lost a loved one and would like some company, a chat and a bite

to eat, why not drop in or Telephone Janet 01283 215000, if you want to know more and would like to join us, or if you wish to help out. There is a charge of £3

COFFEEANDCHAT@CHURCH will meet in church on **Tuesday 6th May between 9.30 and 11.00am**.

MAY SERVICES ACROSS THE WOODFIELD TEAM.

(all starting at 10am unless otherwise stated).

Tuesday May 6 th	Coffee & Chat at St. John's Donisthorpe at 9.30am
Sunday May 4 th	Donisthorpe (MP) , Snarestone (HC), Measham (Baptism), Packington, (Breakfast Church), Sweptstone & Normanton (MP)
Saturday May 10 th	St John's Prayer Group meeting Winnie Meadows home at 10am
Sunday May 11 th	Donisthorpe (Baptism) , Appleby (HC), Packington (S of P – VE Day) 10.30am. Measham (MP Lay Led)
Sunday May 18 th	Donisthorpe (Lay Led Worship) , Normanton & Sweptstone (HC) Measham (Breakfast Church), Packington (Baptism) Appleby 'Sunday People',
Sunday May 25 th	Donisthorpe (HC) , Measham & Packington (HC), Appleby (Baptism).
Wednesday May 28 th	Donisthorpe Midweek Holy Communion 10am
Friday May 30 th	Lunch Light at St. John's Donisthorpe (12- 30 – 14.00)

A SPACE FOR PRIVATE PRAYER AND QUIET REFLECTION AT ST. JOHN'S

Need a moment of peace in your day? St John's Church will be open each week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 am to 4 pm for private prayer or quiet reflection. Whether you seek solace, guidance, or simply a tranquil space, the church may be unmanned but our doors will be unlocked and open for you to enter.

Sit for a while at the prayer station, place a 'prayer pebble' in the bowl of water to represent someone or something you are concerned about and we will pick out those pebbles and pray for you and your concerns along with our prayers for the world, the church, our community and individuals at our next Sunday Service.

We have provided this facility in the past when the church was used only on Sundays; now since our transformation, it is possible that groups may be using the church on Tuesday to Thursday and so we have to think more carefully about how we can re-introduce this facility without causing too much disruption to all concerned.

Accordingly when we restart this service next month you will see one of two signs.

Whenever the **'CHURCH OPEN'** sign is hung on the gate, the church will be available for you to enter if you want to pray or have a time of peace and quiet.

The **'CHURCH OCCUPIED'** sign will indicate that the church is being used for another activity and so it will not be possible to enter until that activity has finished.

However, currently Tuesday to Thursday are days when there is little activity between 10am and 4pm and most of that activity anyway is church centred, such as our 'midweek communion



service on the last Wednesday in the month. It is possible to check on church availability before your visit, by going to hallbookingonline.com/villageheart/ then go to Calendar.

If you have someone in mind who you would like us to pray for, don't hesitate to reach out. We're here for you.



Rising Up, Ascension Day – May 29, 2025

Human beings have been trained to measure life based on outcomes. In the secular world, your professional acumen is tied to deliverables and visible and outward results of the tasks set before you. Judgments are assigned when others fall short of goals, desired or imposed. People make value judgments based on their understanding of what is needed in a reasonable amount of time.

The disciples of Jesus were equally tied to the completion of tasks. They never completely understood the mission of Jesus and that ministry requires more than a to-do list where assignments are simply crossed off as they are finished. Jesus healed a blind man. Check! Jesus brought Lazarus back from the dead. Check! The bleeding woman was healed by touching the cloak of Jesus. Check!

For 40 days, there has been a celebration of the resurrection of the Lord and Saviour of the world. Jesus is risen and has made himself visible to the grieving and forlorn disciples who believed that the crucified Jesus had been taken from his tomb. Until he appeared before them, they could not conceive that Jesus was truly the Messiah who could overcome death and a grave. Instead, they believed, like the screaming people at the cross, that he could not save himself. How were they to evaluate his performance during his time with them? He had left them, and they were holed up in a little room in Galilee. Their conclusion was that their rabbi may have been a man with special powers who at any point could be taken away.

As Jesus was preparing the disciples before his death, he taught them how to go out into the world and preach the gospel. He urged them to have the faith necessary to heal those in need in his name. Jesus encouraged them to walk in the world without fear because they knew that a day would come when they would live eternally. As we see in the text from the Acts of the Apostles, just before Jesus is to ascend into heaven, he tells them to wait in Jerusalem for "the promise of the Father." He vows that the gift of the Holy Spirit will be with them shortly.

Once again, as they are trying to check off the to-do list, their question is, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus reminds them that God will deliver God's promises at the right time. Their obligation is to witness to the promise of Jesus throughout the world.

You are charged with a similar ministry. In a world that needs the healing touch of Jesus, you are tasked with showing God's love and speaking in God's name about the transformative power of love, compassion, and mercy. Instead of treating your charge like a task, think of it as a lifelong commitment to share the love of



Christ with as many humans as possible. God continues to show up in the world full of love, and yet, we know that there are many who don't recognize the God who is walking beside them through all the phases of their lives. As faith followers, you have every opportunity to live in peace because you know that you are never alone. When the chips are down and solutions seem hard to come by, that "peace that surpasses all understanding" guides you to clarity and provides the space to find the answers you are seeking. At a time when those around you are concerned about so many issues impacting the world, this is your moment. God did not promise that deliverance would come at the snap of a finger; rather, God promised that he would rescue God's people in due season. We never know the day nor the hour, so we keep praying, we keep loving, we keep helping, and we keep nudging others to have faith in a God who has never failed to answer the prayers of the people.

Jesus visited the disciples a number of times following the resurrection. He allowed them to see his wounds and to touch them in order to deepen their faith. He fed them and ate with them. They prayed together and Jesus once again gave them their marching orders. By now, beloved, they knew three things for sure:

Christ has died: They sat in deep mourning following the crucifixion. The reality began to set in. They reflected on their responses following the events after the Last Supper. Judas had betrayed him. Some had run once Jesus was captured by the Roman soldiers. Peter denied knowing him.

Christ is risen: The women went to the tomb early on the third day to add the spices that they had prepared. Jesus was not there, and they panicked. Two men standing near the tomb said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen." They ran back to tell the others. The men didn't believe them. Peter and the others got up and went to see for themselves. Filled with fear, they decided to escape Jerusalem. Jesus directed them to Galilee.

Christ will come again: Jesus gave them all that they needed while they waited for his return. He did not tell his students to sit and wait forever until he came back. He simply told them to wait until they were "clothed with power from on high." That clothing was the Holy Spirit. He had taught them to go out two by two and to speak the truth in his name. He also instructed them not to worry when they encountered those who did not believe: "Shake off the dust from your feet" and move on. There are many people who need to hear what you modern disciples have to say.

As Christians, you are clothed with that same power from the time of baptism. You are gifted with everything like the disciples. You get to choose what to do with the powers you have been given. We are in this great time of celebration and the exuberance is palpable. The joy can be contagious. This annual period of time is a reminder that Jesus never stops caring for his people.

The season of Easter allows the faithful to hold dear that eternal life is promised to those who follow the life of Jesus. You hear that promise consistently in your daily walk with God. Your relationship is strengthened through prayer and action. Your connection to God is enhanced when you dine at the table of Christ and share in the communion. As God has been revealed to you, so you are called to reveal God to others by the way in which you show up in the world.

As Christ ascends, so you are given an opportunity to rise up. You, beloved, must rise up against the contemporary tax collectors and money changers. You must rise up and help the hungry and the thirsty. You must rise up and love the abused, the unsheltered, and those who have never known love. You must rise up against injustice and the silencing of those who have a message to deliver or a song in their heart. You must rise up and inform people that "if it is not about love, it's not about God." Rise up in this beautiful season of Easter. Rise up and sing your song. Rise up with your heart wide open and share your love. God is with you. God will always be with you. What could be more joyful than that? **Amen.**

The Rev. Kathleen Walker member of the bishop's staff in the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.