

Dear Friends,

Easter Sunday dawns and we celebrate the light of heaven filling our hearts and minds as we read and hear once more the story of Jesus' resurrection. What better than to open our Easter celebrations with a service at first light at St. Margaret's Norton with its hilltop position and views over the countryside and out towards Overy windmill and the sea. The service begins outside the church before dawn and the Easter Candle will be lit from a newly created fire (safely in a brazier), then carried into church where all the congregation's candles will be lit from this flame. The symbol of light being spread from one source to everyone is exactly what Easter is about. The story of Jesus life, death and resurrection is for all, he broke the boundaries of the narrow sectarianism prevalent then in Palestine.

The Jews, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, the Gentiles, the Romans the Greeks, just as today argued about who followed the right way. Jesus exploded into the Holy Land making disciples, healing the sick, showing compassion and tolerance, understanding and forgiveness turning established practice on its head. Now on Easter Sunday he shows us how amongst the darkness and confusion of our world there is extraordinary hope and if we could only catch a glimmering of that with our sunrise and candles we can renew our lives.

In my kitchen I have some small, very small seedlings - I put them in some earth on a sunny windowsill a month or so ago, after much impatient staring and poking on my part they are now in early March tiny cotyledon rising through their dark compost. Soon they will be plugs sufficiently rooted to be put in pots and finally a fruit will form and beautiful polished red peppers with powerful flavour will be plucked and put in my chile con carne exploding in my mouth startling my senses with their fresh taste.

Jesus' resurrection is such a moment, a bursting forth, something so surprising startling and stunning and it is for everybody; the light from that tomb shines brightly in the world still. Let us recapture the moment - Jesus coming back from the grave is not a quiet, dark, velvet, soft chocolatey thing but more like a red hot chile pepper breaking through.

Easter is for all so there will be a service in each of our churches on Easter Sunday, for those who love the traditional language of Cranmer, for those who love the liturgy of Common Worship and as always a Family Service in St. Clements with all the music, symbols, joy and story telling of the Easter moment.

Oh, and mind you we will have some dark, velvet, soft chocolatey things to offer as well.

Wishing you all a happy and exciting Easter.

Steve