

# BUXTED METHODIST CHURCH

The regular Sunday Morning Services, held at Buxted, will be led as shown below:

## May Services 2025

4 <sup>th</sup>	10:30	Pat Oakley	Local Preacher	
11 <sup>th</sup>	10:30	Rev Sheila Foreman	Minister	Holy Communion
18 <sup>th</sup>	10:30	Ian Srodzinski		
25 <sup>th</sup>	10:30	Steward		

## June Services 2025

1 <sup>st</sup>	10:30	Pat Oakley	Local Preacher	
8 <sup>th</sup>	10:30	Rev Sheila Foreman	Minister	Holy Communion
15 <sup>th</sup>	10:30	Cathy Agius	Local Preacher	
22 <sup>nd</sup>	10:30	Claire Steen	Local Preacher	
29 <sup>th</sup>	10:30	Steward		

An evening service (6:00 PM via Zoom), normally hosted by Rev Barbara Evans-Routley, will continue to be broadcast throughout 2025.

## Activity Dates for May 2025 and June 2025

12 <sup>th</sup>	May	2:00 PM	Emmaus (delayed because of the Bank Holiday)
10 <sup>th</sup>	May	10:30 AM	Coffee Morning
10 <sup>th</sup>	May	2:00 PM	Art Group
28 <sup>th</sup>	May	10:30 AM	POP-IN
2 <sup>nd</sup>	June	2:00 PM	Emmaus
14 <sup>th</sup>	June	10:30 AM	Coffee Morning
14 <sup>th</sup>	June	2:00 PM	Art Group
25 <sup>th</sup>	June	10:30 AM	POP-IN

### Emmaus

The Emmaus Group will resume on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May (delayed one week because of the May Bank Holiday)

### Art Group

The theme for May will be 'Buildings – Cabins to Castles'.

### Rev Andy Melvin

Andy will be away on Sabbatical Leave during May, June and July. Christine Sweet is acting as an initial 'Point of Contact' for Andy while he is away.

# BUXTED METHODIST CHURCH

This article, reproduced from The Times, was written by the Rev Stephen Cottell Archbishop of York.

## Mary Magdalene's tears in darkness herald light

If joy eludes you this Easter, the power of its stubborn hope need not, the colour and passion of many Easter celebrations may give the impression that the first Easter Day arrived with fanfare and flourish. But as John tells it in his Gospel, Jesus's resurrection was met first with darkness and weeping. In times of uncertainty and upheaval, this detail frees us to see that lament and hope are not, after all, mutually exclusive.

When Easter arrives in John's Gospel, it arrives amid darkness.

Then, as fragile light sweeps slowly into the garden tomb, an absence is revealed: an absence claimed by Christians to be a sign of resurrection rather than defeat.

Jesus's body is gone from the grave. The moment is quiet, utterly unprecedented, and completely bewildering. And it brings the first witness to tears.

These tears are those of Jesus's friend Mary Magdalene, shed as she desperately seeks him. Finding the tomb empty, she comes to the only reasonable conclusion: someone has stolen his body. Mary sobs. And yet soon she will come to recognise a seeming stranger to be Jesus himself.

That recognition dawns with Jesus's soft speaking of her name, "Mary". This gentle and intimate moment distils the wonder of Easter: tears first shed in sorrow are transformed to tears of joy before they've even finished trickling down the contours of Mary's face. The same tears, transformed from sorrow to joy, are offered for the same Jesus, risen from death to life.

Mary's tears, shed in anxiety and desolation, mourning, perhaps even in shame or regret, are familiar to many. But she shows us that those who shed tears of lament can do so while persevering in hope, even when tears of joy seem impossibly far off. By the usual standards, Mary should have given up on Jesus as a catastrophically lost cause: he had been rejected, humiliated, executed, and placed in a tomb. Yet still she turns up in darkness, laments - and finally, wonderfully, finds stubborn hope fulfilled beyond her imagining. John's account also emphasises that the risen Christ does not first reveal himself to people of power: not to the Roman governor, nor the chief priest, not even to the senior disciples, but rather to this weeping Mary. At that place, in that time, a woman's testimony was not considered legally sufficient. Mary is a lowly woman, and yet she - the last person her culture would choose to be a witness - is the first witness chosen by Jesus. He stands before her, not robed in finery, but wearing the scars of his torture and death on the Cross. The risen Jesus is greeted by no fanfare, no flourish, no powerful VIP visitors. Instead, he is greeted by Mary Magdalene sobbing amid darkness.

Over the coming hours many Christians across the globe will begin their Easter celebrations by sitting quietly in darkness. They will do this to relive the transformation represented by Mary's tears. Amid the gloom, the stubborn hope of God will be recalled in Bible readings. Then a single light, the Paschal candle, will be brought into the centre of the people - and the centre of this darkness. This light will be recognised as "the light of Christ", honoured, and then shared quietly but surely. The dawn will spread gently and soon churches will be flooded with light, singing, and the sound of bells as the full triumph of Jesus's resurrection is celebrated.

In the battle zones of Ukraine, the barren fields of Sudan's famine, the rubble of homes in the Middle East, tears and darkness are among the very few things not in short supply. The suffering in these places is beyond comprehension, and yet many people there will greet the dawn of Easter Day with Mary Magdalene's mixture of lament for their situation and stubborn hope.

Increasingly, however, it seems that those of us who look on from afar do so without hope. The temptation is to view these situations as simply intractable, unfixable. Easter dawn reminds us to both lament and hope stubbornly amid this great darkness. Therefore we must not abandon attempts to seek justice in conflicts between nations. Nor "move on" from our concern for climate change. We cannot simply accept the death of innocent non-combatants in war as an uncomfortable side-effect. Nor should we give up on striving to honour truth in our political and public conversation. Stubborn Easter hope will simply not allow us to.

The unimaginable triumph of Easter dawned while it was still dark, and it was met with weeping. By lamenting and remaining stubbornly hopeful, Mary Magdalene refused to abandon the cause of good and right even amid confusion and darkness. Whether or not you celebrate Easter, her example can help us address the uncertainties and darkness that we face with stubborn hope.