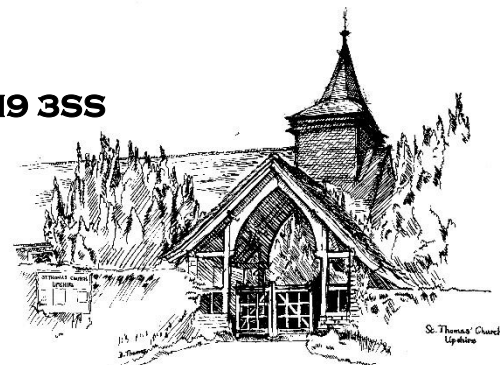


# ST THOMAS' CHURCH, UPSHIRE EN9 3SS

## NEWSLETTER

*April 2026*



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This Newsletter is free: donations to Lyn Wackett. Copy date for May Newsletter: 14<sup>th</sup> April

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. The PCC has adopted the Church of England's policies and best practice on safeguarding which may be found on the Church of England website and also on the Diocese of Chelmsford website.

### SERVICES AND DIARY FOR APRIL

Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Good Friday 2pm-3pm Last hour at the Cross	
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Sunday 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 28:1-10
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup>	3pm-4pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church	
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday of Easter 9.15 am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Acts 2:14a, 22-32	John 20:19-end
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am for 12 noon COMMUNITY LUNCH in church. 07899 846711 to book, Please let us know if you have to cancel	
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday of Easter 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36-41	Luke 24:13-35
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	2.15pm Upshire Mothers' Union meet in the Village Hall – all welcome	
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Sunday of Easter 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Ezekiel 37:1-14	John 11:1-45
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Fifth Sunday of Easter 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Acts 7:55-end	John 14:1-14
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> May	3-4pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church	

### CHURCH FLOWERS

We will be flower arranging, the Easter Lilies, in the church on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April from 10.00 am, you are welcome to come along and help.

Each month we can create memorial dedications, wedding, anniversary or special occasion flowers - Contact Kate Dale email: [dalek16@btinternet.com](mailto:dalek16@btinternet.com)

## **THE VICAR WRITES**

Each year on 22nd April, communities around the world observe Earth Day — a moment to consider the beauty and fragility of our planet.

For Christians, care for the earth is not merely a social movement; it is a spiritual calling.

From the very beginning of the bible in the opening chapter of Book of Genesis, we learn that creation is not accidental — it is intentional. God saw all that He made and called it “very good.” The earth belongs to Him not us. Our role is to be good stewards of what he has made: To tend it, care for it as we use it to sustain our lives.

The heavens declare God’s glory (Psalm 19), and every mountain, ocean, and living creature whispers His creativity and power. When we are walking in our beautiful forest, noticing the signs of spring that are coming to life all around us, as we pause to notice the intricacy of a flower or the vastness of the sky, we are invited into worship.

Caring for creation begins with gratitude. We protect what we recognize as a gift.

In Book of Genesis 2:15, humanity is placed in the garden “to work it and take care of it.” This calling shapes a distinctly Christian approach to Earth Day.

Stewardship means:

- Using resources wisely
- Avoiding wastefulness
- Respecting the balance of ecosystems
- Considering how our choices affect future generations

Care of God’s creation is not about elevating nature above people; it is about honouring the Creator by responsibly managing what He has entrusted to us.

Environmental responsibility is also an expression of love. Pollution, neglect, and overconsumption often impact the most vulnerable communities first. When we act thoughtfully — conserving, cleaning, planting, restoring — we participate in tangible love for our neighbours.

The command to love one another must always extend beyond words into how we shape the world we share.

Our care for the earth is and should be a quiet witness to our faith in God, our call to worship him and our responsibility to love all that God has made.

Earth Day is also a good reminder of the many ways our church and we, as individual Christians, can respond in practical ways to the calling God has placed on us.

We could do things like

- Organize a litter pick around the forest
- Encourage native plants in our churchyard and maintain it well
- Reduce waste at church events
- Practice simple sustainability habits such as recycling, low energy appliances and upcycling rather than buying new.
- Spending intentional time outdoors, thanking God for His handiwork

Individually these may seem small things but the truth is small actions, done faithfully, reflect big truths. So this spring let us honour God not only with our words, but with the way we care for the world He has placed in our hands.

In that way we may have a fighting chance of handing on to the next generation a planet in better shape than we received.

Happy earth day everyone!

Revd Jane

Revd Jane Yeadon

Team Vicar St Thomas, Upshire and Holy Innocents, High Beech

Benefice Youth Missioner

MB: 07960 604416

*Monday is my rest day*

## PRAYER REQUESTS

You are invited to offer names to be added to our prayer diary to remember those who are unwell or unhappy. First names only are required as God will know who we are praying for.

Contact Lyn Wackett on 01992 711573 or email [lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk)

This month we pray for Laura, Alan & Pam, Lesley, Charlie & John, Anne, Pam & John, Barbara, Vernon, Mal, Sue, Ann & Cyril, Rosalind, Doreen, Maureen, Carol & George, Terry, Jackie, Andrea & her Mum & Dad, Nina, Carmel & the Price family, Nigel, Lola, Pearl, Susan & Alan, Jackie & Linda, Graham, Christine, Chris, Izzie, Pennie, Steve, Dan & Kevin.

## GROWER'S CORNER

April and everything is greening up! The birds are nesting and singing. (I have been enjoying the Merlin app on my phone, it's helping me tune into the sound of each bird). Dad would always talk about fools spring and to make sure that we don't get too tempted to plant out young tender plants. Mum and Dad got married in April and apparently there was a sprinkling of snow. It is always good to keep a check on the weather. Mostly I'll be playing the hokey-pokey with my pots and trays of seedlings, bringing them out in the sunshine and back under cover for the evening.

### **Update on the plots:**

More progress has been made, I have diligently kept weeding. The new plot has not been worked for over 3 years before us taking it on so the usual suspects of cinquefoil, bindweed and couch grass keep on making an unwelcome appearance. The 1st potatoes are chitted and ready to go in very soon. I am hoping to make a start on painting the fences and sheds as they are both in great need of a up.

The new seed station at home along with heat mats and grow lights has worked a treat and I am in the process of moving these seedlings out to the greenhouse.

The early spring bulbs have put on a good display and we looking forward to the tulips and alliums. Stef's next project is to make a work bench at the back of the plot.

### **April to do:**

- Hoe off any weed seeds that have appeared
- Cover bed to keep the weeds out
- Keep mulching beds
- Keep a close eye on seedlings, potting on where necessary
- Water regularly when dry
- Construct sturdy supports in preparation of planting beans and sweet peas
- Shade seedlings where necessary
- Earth up early potatoes as new growth appears

### **April planting/sowings:**

- Direct sow care stow, parsnips, spinach and radishes as soil warms
- Plant out hardened off broad beans and onions
- Keep succession sowing lettuces and radishes and beetroot
- Sow cucumbers, melons and courgettes in indoors

### **Flowers/shrubs/trees**

- Protect early blossom with fleece or netting including strawberries
- Mulch fruit bushes to conserve moisture.
- Sow half-hardy annuals such as zinnias, cosmos and marigolds indoors
- Feed spring bulbs

**Tip:** Keep a hoe handy to remove weeds as they appear.

"Sweet April Showers, Do spring May flowers." Thomas Tusser

Happy Gardening  
Love Louise.

## **PLANT SALE 10<sup>th</sup> May**

We would be delighted to receive any seedlings or other plants for our Parishioners' Stall at the Plant Sale. If you are splitting perennials could you spare a piece for us, please. Plants can be brought along to the sale on the Sunday or left with Lyn at 94 Upshire Road. Thank you.

St Thomas Church, Upshire Bank details

St Thomas Church Upshire PCC

HSBC Bank

Sort Code 40 45 20

Account number 00724505

Any queries regarding setting up a Standing Order, giving a donation to the church, Gift Aid or about joining the Parish Giving Scheme please contact our Treasurer, Ruth Moore on 07852 668633

[Ruth4366@gmail.com](mailto:Ruth4366@gmail.com)

If you are able to Gift Aid donations this increases your gift without any extra cost to yourself.



## ST THOMAS' SEEDLINGS

**1<sup>st</sup> Saturdays of each month (unless otherwise stated)**

A free Stay and Play church group for children and those who care for them

Join us Saturdays 3-4pm for messy craft, play, songs and stories along with a welcome cuppa

St Thomas' Church, Horseshoe Hill, Upshire, EN9 3SS



### ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Our mailing list to receive the electronic version of the Newsletter is now in excess of 100 participants so if you are not one of those and wish to be included please send your email address to Kate at [dalek16@btinternet.com](mailto:dalek16@btinternet.com) or phone 02085083942. We are looking to reduce our 'paper footprint' for climate change by printing fewer copies – your contribution will help. Thank you.

### NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Thank you to the people who have sent in articles to be included in the Newsletter. Please keep them coming! Anything: maybe a poem you have written, what you have been doing in the garden, childhood memories, something that happened to make you smile, it all makes for interesting reading.

ANAGRAM Unscramble this 10 letter anagram: EPICDRAMAS. The answer will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

### **ST THOMAS' CHURCH COMMUNITY LUNCHEES 2026**

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays, 11.30 for 12noon start

15<sup>th</sup> April, 20<sup>th</sup> May, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> October,

11<sup>th</sup> November (a week earlier than usual), 2<sup>nd</sup> December (Christmas Lunch)

If after booking you are unable to come, please phone to cancel,  
we can then offer a place to people on the waiting list.

### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The APCM of St Thomas' Church will be held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April at 3pm. All are welcome to attend the meeting but only those on the electoral roll will be allowed to vote. At this meeting the church accounts and past activities will be reviewed and elections held for church wardens and PCC members. If you are interested in joining the PCC in any way please speak to Rev Jane Yeadon.

### SHOEBOXES

Don't forget to keep saving your shoeboxes ready for them to be covered and filled with useful items for needy people in Ukraine and eastern Europe. Also keep watching out for bargains and special offers on items to go in the boxes. Boxes and goodies can be left with Lyn at 94 Upshire Road.

## UPSHIRE MOTHERS' UNION

The 8th March marked International Women's Day (IWD), a global celebration of women's contributions and a call to action for gender equality. This year's theme 'Give to Gain' highlighted the power of generosity, solidarity and shared commitment in transforming women's lives.

For 150 years, Mothers' Union has put faith into action. Across the world, the members and supporters give in ways that create lasting change, strengthening families, equipping women with skills and confidence, building economic resilience, and nurturing both spiritual and practical wellbeing.

The MU global programmes support women to grow in confidence and capability. Through literacy initiatives, savings groups, and livelihood training, women are equipped to make informed decisions about their lives and their families' futures. These are not quick fixes, but long-term investments in dignity, stability and hope.

In Rwanda, MU's partnership with Five Talents supports savings groups alongside agricultural and literacy training. Participants develop financial discipline, plan and invest in income-generating activities. Agricultural training improves food security and household income, while literacy enables women to read, write and manage records, strengthening their participation in community and family life.

Odette gained new agricultural skills, learning that garlic could grow in her region, something she had seen but never imagined cultivating locally. Inspired by this knowledge, she began exploring garlic farming to diversify her income and improve her family's livelihood. Reflecting on her experience, she shared: "I used to see garlic, but I did not know it could be cultivated here in Rwanda. I am happy to have learned this, and I will now start growing it."

Uzamukunda grew up without access to formal education and was unable to read or write. This deeply affected her confidence and opportunities. Through the Literacy Programme, she gained skills that transformed not only her practical abilities, but her sense of dignity and hope for the future. Literacy restored her confidence and opened new possibilities.

The Gospel calls us to give generously of our time, our compassion and our resources. Giving is not simply an act of kindness but a demonstration of our worship, where barriers are broken down and people are enabled to flourish. 'Give to Gain' echoes this truth. When we give, we participate in building a world where women are affirmed and supported, families are strengthened, communities thrive, and justice slowly replaces harm.

In the life-changing work of Mothers' Union, we see this play out every day: women gain confidence, skills, peace and freedom because someone chose to give. As MU marked International Women's Day 2026, they recommitted to this principle, that through generosity, we build stronger families, stronger churches and a more just and compassionate world.

Our next meeting is on 22<sup>nd</sup> April at 2.15pm, in the Village Hall, followed by tea and cake. This month we have a MU Trustee giving a Mystery 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Talk. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Tea Hostesses: Sue McKinley and Lyn Wackett. Raffle: Kate Dale.

## STAMPS

Please continue to save your postage stamps and foreign or out of circulation coins as the charities we support can use them to raise funds. At present we collect the coins for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance and The British Legion and stamps for British Heart Foundation. Stamps and coins can be left with Lyn & Dave at 94 Upshire Road – please leave in the porch if no reply. Please leave about ½" of envelope around the stamps. Thank you.

## HIGH BEACH CHURCH

**Good Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**, noon to 1pm: Easter Garden Service – an interactive service suitable for all the family.

Come and make an Easter Garden to take home with you.

1-2pm: Reflections for Good Friday

2-3pm: Good Friday service with choir and readings.

**Easter Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April**: 5.30am Easter Dawn Service

10.30am Easter Eucharist followed by Easter egg hunt for younger people

**ANAGRAM** The answer to the anagram is PARAMEDICS.

At **HOME INSTEAD** Epping Forest we recognise that as we get older, you may need help to be able to stay living in your own home. We Tailor our care packages to meet your needs making it possible for you to stay living in your own home where you are happiest.

Our services include Dementia Care, Personal Care, Home Help, Companionship and much more.

Our monthly Memory Lane and Singing for the Brain Sessions are held at Theydon Bois Village Hall providing lots of fun complimented with refreshments served by our lovely Team. Why not contact us to find out more and to get a copy of our What's on Where Guide (WOW Guide) and future newsletters.

Telephone 01992 666777 or email: [Victoria.rigby@homeinstead.co.uk](mailto:Victoria.rigby@homeinstead.co.uk)

**ABBEY CHURCH Music for Lunch** – Saturdays at 12 noon. Refreshments available from 11.30am. All welcome, free admission with retiring collection.

April 18<sup>th</sup>: Selva Armonica vocal ensemble

25<sup>th</sup>: Jennifer Townsend *flute*, Jonathan Lilley *piano*

### **UPSHIRE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB**

Held in Upshire Village Hall, Mondays 2.00-4.30pm, Tuesdays 7.00-9.30pm No experience necessary. Tuition and bowls available. It's fun to play! Contact Fred on 01992 711720 or Jean on 07733 084815.

**WOOL** Several of our members and their friends knit items for various charities but our supply of wool is running low again. If you have any spare wool you no longer need we would appreciate it: donations can be left with Lyn at 94 Upshire Road (leave in porch if no reply) or brought to church on any Sunday. Thank you

### **50/50 CLUB**

Congratulations to the winners of the 50/50 Club Draw in February who were:

1 <sup>st</sup> :	£35	No. 60	John Atkinson of Waltham Abbey
2 <sup>nd</sup> :	£25	No. 36	Jennifer Lewin of Sawbridgeworth
3 <sup>rd</sup> :	£15	No. 28	Susan Heather of Harlow

It is not too late to join Draw 17 of St Thomas' 50/50 Club.

There will still be monthly draws and the entry fee is £12.00 every six months (or £2 for every month of membership). Each member is entitled to a maximum of two entries, couples can have four. Please complete the form below and return it to me; payment by Bank Transfer is preferred or alternatively you may pay by cheque or cash to the address stated. Please let me know if you pay by Bank Transfer so I can include your number in the Draw (email [lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 01992 711573).

Our thanks to all our members for their support of St Thomas' Church. Good luck to everyone who enters.

### **St Thomas' Church 50/50 Club Draw 17**

**January to June 2026**

I wish to become a member of St Thomas' 50/50 Club and have paid by Bank Transfer to HSBC Bank, A/c St Thomas Church Upshire PCC, Sort Code 404520, A/c No: 00724505.

**OR** I enclose cash/cheque of £12 per entry (maximum 2 per person). Please make cheques payable to St Thomas' Church Upshire PCC and return your entries to Lyn Wackett, 94 Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3PA.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

## **COMING UP AT ST THOMAS':**

Monthly Community Lunches (see separate article)

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April: Brass Band Concert 3.00 for 3.30 start

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May: Quiz Night 6.30 for 7.00 start

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May: Plant Sale 1.00 – 4.30 and Sunday Afternoon Teas 1.30-4.30pm.

Sunday Afternoon Teas 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays 2.30-4.30pm

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July: Summer Fayre & Teas 1.30-4.30pm

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September: Macmillan Coffee Morning 10.30am-2.00pm

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September: Harvest and last Sunday of Afternoon Teas 2.30-4.30pm Service at 4.00pm

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October: Quiz Night 6.30 for 7.00pm

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November: Christmas Fayre in Village Hall 10.30am-2.00pm

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December: Brass Band Christmas Concert 3.00 for 3.30 start

## ENFIELD BRASS BAND 'SPRING INTO BRASS'

Join us for this lively concert on  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April 3pm for 3.30pm start in the church

To book phone Lyn on 01992 711573      Adults £10, children under 16s £5  
Refreshments, raffle

## COPPER JAR

Thank you to everyone who donated their coppers and small change to Water Aid via our Copper Jar, raising £32 when last emptied.

## ST THOMAS' MONTHLY LUNCHES

If you, or a friend (or two!) are at a loss at what to cook for Wednesday lunch why not join us at St Thomas' Church for our friendly monthly lunches?

During the colder months we have a roast dinner of home-cooked beef, Yorkshire pudding and fresh vegetables followed by a delicious selection of mostly home-made desserts – these are served at a separate table with a good choice – fruit crumbles, trifles, Bakewell tart, cakes and more with custard and cream, then tea or coffee. Vegetarian option is always available, please mention this when you book. Starting from April we will have a delicious range of salad with home-cooked ham or cheese, with egg, new potatoes and the choice of desserts.

Pre-booking is necessary to assist with catering, so remember this: on Wednesday, don't cook, do book! Phone Pauline on 07899 846711 to book. We look forward to seeing you there!

## POPPY PROJECT

Saturdays 11<sup>th</sup> April, 9<sup>th</sup> May & 6<sup>th</sup> June, 1.00-3.00pm. Monthly meet up at Waltham Abbey Library. Come along and get involved.

## ST LAWRENCE CHURCH, NINEFIELDS

St George's Afternoon, Late Lunch followed by Quiz, 2pm-5pm, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April in Hillhouse C of E School, Ninefields, EN9 3EL. Please contact Valerie on 01992 713996 for tickets, Adults £10, children £5.

St Thomas' Church, Upshire, EN9 3SS

## QUIZ NIGHT

In the church on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 6.30 for 7pm start  
Tables of 8, or come along and help make up a table  
£10 per person included nibbles & hot drink.  
Book with Pauline on 07899 846711

**Did you know that** one mother in Russia gave birth to 69 children, including twins, triplets and quadruplets, and all survived to adulthood.

## Cooper's Cards

40a Sun Street, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1EJ  
(Library end)

Greetings cards, balloons, toys, wrapping paper, stationery and seasonal items  
Family run and friendly shop, pet friendly  
Monday to Saturday 8am to 5pm

### WALTHAM ABBEY FLOWER CLUB

We meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday in the month except January, June, August and December at Waltham Abbey Community Centre, Crooked Mile, EN9 1QD. Doors open 1.45 for 2pm start.

Next meeting: 28<sup>th</sup> April: demonstration, tba. All are welcome, raffle, sales table, tea, coffee and homemade cake.

Further details from Chris on 07792 594443.

### **AN OPERA FOR EASTER?**

To all intents and purposes Wagner was not a nice man. He was an adulterer, outspoken, often in debt and a revolutionary who had to go into exile to avoid imprisonment. But by golly, could he write music! He is best known for his operas although he has written other pieces of music. Operas by the likes of Verdi, Puccini, Bizet, Mascagni and many others contain arias which often bring audiences to their feet in applause; Wagner's operas, though, could be described as setting monologues to music which listeners new to the genre can find difficult. But with patience it can become incredibly joyful, stirring and almost hypnotic.

One needs a lot of patience with Wagner's last opera, Parsifal, because it is nigh on four hours long but it is a relatively simple story with at its heart the Holy Grail and the sacred lance which was used by a Roman soldier to pierce the Saviour's side. A knight, Titirel, who had been entrusted with guarding the Grail and lance set up a brotherhood of knights who inhabited a castle cut off from the rest of the world. To join the brotherhood the knights had to take a vow of celibacy but as with all stories there was a character, Klingsor, who was an evil magician and who coveted the Grail. He set up his own realm nearby and knights who attempted to defeat him invariably succumbed to the wiles and charms of Klingsor's flower maidens. Titirel's son Amfortas also attempted to defeat Klingsor, taking with him the lance, but was seduced by Kundry, 'a terrible beautiful woman', who had laughed at the Saviour as he

hung on the cross and who was condemned in consequence to lead a tragic double life as a demonic seductress in Klingsor's realm and a penitent Mary Magdalene in the service of the Grail. Whilst Amfortas was being seduced Klingsor seized the sacred lance and pierced his side inflicting an incurable, painful wound that could only be cured by a person who is innocent and pure, and who learns wisdom through compassion.

Enter Parsifal, who one learns later, is the 'pure fool.' He had been caught by the knights having shot a swan in their forest where all animals and birds were protected. Realizing that he was a fool he was released but allowed to witness the ceremony of the Grail which Titurel orders Amfortas to undertake. Although the ceremony reinforces the knights' vow of celibacy and strengthens the aging Titurel, Amfortas is left in terrible pain for which nothing will ease it. Parsifal leaves the knights' kingdom and wanders throughout the world coming across Klingsor's realm where he defeats Klingsor's warriors. Klingsor realizes that he has come up against a worthy opponent and orders Kundry to seduce him. But Parsifal does not succumb to the charms of the seductress, kills Klingsor and retrieves the sacred lance. Meanwhile Kundry is so angry that she has not been able to seduce Parsifal that she puts a curse on him which blinds him meaning that he will not be able to find his way back to the knights' realm. Of course, in all stories everything must come right in the end so it is that Parsifal after wandering for years fighting battles with enemies but only using his dagger for in all the time he has kept the sacred lance covered and unused; he eventually stumbles across the knights' kingdom where he is at first not recognised. However, the knights' realm is not what it was, Titurel has died and because of the pain that Amfortas experiences he has refused to allow the ceremony of the Grail to take place. Consequently, the knights had aged, become infirm and their castle in a state of disrepair. Realizing that the lance has been returned the knights demand that the ceremony take place. Kundry also appears and with the ceremony occurring she is absolved of her past sins and Parsifal's sight is returned. He then uses the lance to cure Amfortas' wound and associated pain, following which he is proclaimed the new King of the knights.

I first saw Parsifal at the Royal Opera House in 2013 and was transfixed with the story, the music and the singing. The production though was of a modern design which was a bit off putting at first, but the quality of the singing made up for it in bounds. Incidentally, this production was conducted by the great Antonio Pappano who always manages to get the best from the orchestra. The other oddity was the depiction of the Holy Grail which probably at the last supper would have been a chalice carved from wood; here it was depicted as a small boy in loincloth! And at the final ceremony the small boy had become a young man, still in loin cloth, I suppose to show the passing of time. Whether the Director also had ideas of depicting Christ, I don't know, but it made one sit up and think.

At that time the only DVD of the opera I could find was a production from 1993 at the New York Metropolitan Opera conducted by another great conductor, James Levine. This production was more in line with the time of the events with costumes reflecting that although again the Grail was not depicted quite how one would imagine for in this production it was more akin to a garden urn and would have held at least a gallon of wine!

Since acquiring the Met DVD all those years ago, the ROH production has become available through their website and if one wants to dip their toe into the waters of a Wagner opera then I can recommend this one highly for the singing is sublime, powerful and magical but don't forget, you will need four hours to watch it right through! An opera for Easter? It has been suggested that as this opera was written towards the end of Wagner's life, he was looking for atonement of his past misdemeanors. Whatever, but the things this opera brings out in its story are compassion, salvation, redemption and forgiveness, surely things that the Easter message portrays so strongly?

Adrian J Liddle

## **EASTER FAITH**

Three years after the Russian Revolution of 1917, a great anti-God rally was arranged in Kiev. The powerful orator Bukharin was sent from Moscow, and for an hour he demolished the Christian faith with argument, abuse and ridicule. At the end there was silence.

Then a man rose and asked to speak. He was a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church. He went and stood next to Bukharin. Facing the people, he raised his arms and spoke just three triumphant words: 'Christ is risen!' At once the entire assembly rose to their feet and gave the joyful response "He is risen indeed!" It was a devastating moment for an atheist politician, who had no answer to give to this ancient Easter liturgy. He had not realized he was simply too late: how can you convince people who have already experienced God, that he does not exist?