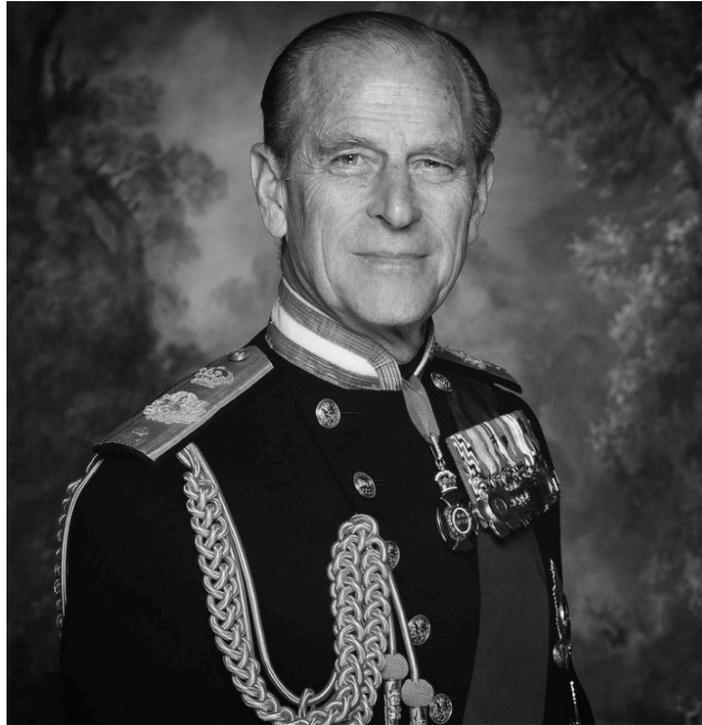


**Second Sunday of Easter
Sunday, 11th April 2021**



Dear Friends,

It is with deep sorrow that Her Majesty the Queen has announced the death of her beloved husband, His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who died peacefully at Windsor Castle during the morning of Friday, 9th April 2021.

Our parish churches are open for people should they wish to spend some time in contemplation and prayer. Please observe Coronavirus regulations, wearing face masks at all times and keeping 2-metres distance from others -respecting their space and privacy. Sadly it is not permissible for muffled bells to be rung at this time.

In keeping with Her Majesty's specific instructions, we are not to open physical books of condolence for handwritten messages to be left. Instead, we have been asked to leave digital condolences at either the Church of England website or the Buckingham Palace website. Please find links below. Should you not have access to a computer or family and friends who can help you to leave such a message, please call Caroline McAulay in our Benefice office on (01962) 880845 who will post your message for you.

I have already posted the following message on behalf of our Benefice:

On behalf of the five parishes of The Downs Benefice in rural Hampshire, this comes with our condolences and prayers for Her Majesty the Queen and her family on the sad news of the death of her beloved husband and consort, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh. We pray his death during Easter week will bring comfort and consolation to them all as Prince Philip rises in glory to meet the Lord he has served so faithfully throughout his life face to face. Reverend Jacqueline Machin, Rector.

The Church of England has today issued a prayer for the nation, printed below. I join with you in praying for our beloved Queen, her family, our Community, our Country and our Commonwealth at this sad time. As people of faith, though we are naturally sad to lose such a faithful and devoted soul as Prince Philip, we will indeed rejoice that his reward for a life of faithful service to others is the assurance of his being alive in the eternal glory of God, for which he was made.

Yours, in the assurance of the risen Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice



A Prayer on the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

God of our lives,
we give thanks for the life of Prince Philip,
for his love of our country,
and for his devotion to duty.
We entrust him now to your love and mercy,
through our Redeemer Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Links to Official Digital Books of Condolence for HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

Buckingham Palace website: www.royal.uk

Church of England website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/remembering-his-royal-highness-prince-philip>

Service Schedule

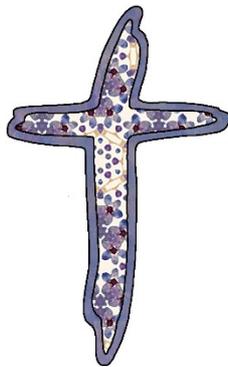
Having had the joy of being able to open our churches for in-person services for Easter Sunday, we are now planning to start holding services on a regular basis. We intend initially to hold two services per week, one of Holy Communion and one of Morning Worship, at 10am on Sunday morning, across the Benefice and alternate the Churches where these services will be held as below. Our website www.downsbenefice.org also has the most up-to-date service and other information and is updated daily.

Until the Government lifts the various Coronavirus restrictions, we will be following the proscribed 'Road Map' and will continue to ask everyone attending to book their seats in advance via the Benefice Office (01962 880 845 / office@downsbenefice.org.uk) ; maintain social distancing and wear masks.

NB: Service schedules will need to be revised to accommodate services in our Benefice on the day of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh's funeral.

Our services for the rest of this month will be:

Sunday	18 th April	10am	Crawley	Morning Worship
Sunday	18 th April	10am	Wherwell	Holy Communion
Sunday	25 th April	10am	Chilbolton	Morning Worship
Sunday	25 th April	10am	Littleton	Holy Communion



Collect for The Second Sunday of Easter

Almighty Father,
You have given your only Son to die for our sins
and to rise again for our justification:
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness
that we may always serve You
I pureness of living and truth;
through the merits of Your Son Jesus Christ our lord,
Who is alive and reigns with You,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and for ever.
Amen.



John 20: 19-31 - Jesus Appears to the Disciples

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt. But believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.