

*Worshipping, Pioneering, Caring
'Growing God's Kingdom'*



This week's news
for St George's, Tuffley
with St Margaret's, Whaddon
20-27 March 2020

MOTHERING SUNDAY 22 MARCH

Dearly loved worshipping family

I'm very sad to say that, following Church of England guidance received this week, we will pause from all public worship services until further notice, to protect the most vulnerable during the Coronavirus threat.

Worship together at home

We can still share in the life of worship at home. Please find attached our **Sunday readings** for Mothering Sunday. This also includes some thoughts from Paula who would have preached on Sunday.

Daily prayer and Bible reading at home are wonderful disciplines for Christians to grow in the exercise of our faith. The Church of England recommends that through this period we read Psalm 23, the shepherd's song that speaks of suffering and facing enemies. And that we pray every day for the healing of those with the virus, and that we all be protected from fear.

There are plenty of opportunities to share in worship through the media. For example, through this period, the BBC will broadcast daily services on the radio, and a service on TV every Sunday.

Day of Prayer

This Sunday is also to be a National Day of Prayer and Action. We're all invited to light a candle at 7pm and place it in our window; to ring someone who is vulnerable and isolated; and to buy an extra item for the foodbank.

Serving the Community

Let's consider how we can all be attentive to our neighbours and particularly those who are poor and most vulnerable, offering care and practical support. Some may value practical help with shopping or other errands. Some may be struggling to feed their children. Some may want simply to talk and would greatly value a phone call. We're working alongside local councillor Steve Morgan on a scheme for

voluntary 'street ambassadors' – more information soon.

The Foodbank and other community groups may be particularly short of volunteers at the moment: if you might be able to help, do contact them. Also please bring items for the Foodbank to the vicarage porch.

The church office will be closed from this week, but Glenda will be available on her working days via email and answer phone messages (contact details below).

Understanding the Coronavirus

Stuart Mitchell understands viruses very well: he was senior technician in a team that created the first British vaccine against the Measles. Stuart has kindly recorded a short video message to help us understand the current virus better. You can find it on our website <http://www.glos-stg-stm.org.uk/>, or at: <https://youtu.be/em8GVIGHIIM>. For those not on internet, we will show it on Sunday continuously from 10.30am until 11.30am in the Softley Lounge.

Staying safe

To stay safe, we're all asked to avoid physical contact with other people, and to keep a distance of at least two metres.

To maintain good personal hygiene, we're all being encouraged to:

- **Catch it – sneeze into a tissue.**
- **Bin it – bin the tissue.**
- **Kill it – wash your hands.**
- **Do not touch your face unless you've washed your hands.**

The Archbishops also suggest that we try praying the Lord's Prayer each time we wash our hands, every day for seven days!

Churches open for private prayer

Our churches will be open this Sunday during normal service times, St Margaret's (9.00am until 10.00am) and St George's (10.30am until 11.30am), for private prayer. We invite anyone who wishes to come and to pray for Tuffley, the nation and the world; or simply to rest quietly in our Lord's presence. Come at any point during the opening times and stay as long as you wish. There is plenty of space, so we'll be able to maintain the necessary 'social distance' from each other.

Finally

Though our services are 'on hold' for a season, our life together is certainly not! I pray that during this challenging period we'll take the opportunity to rethink how we are as 'church', and how we can serve people in the community in a new way.

And as we do, "may we be granted the power to understand, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God." (from Ephesians, chapter 3)

God bless you. Bruce

PS I'm planning a weekly series of communications during this period. Please let me know what you would find most helpful.

If you've received this through your letterbox but you are on email, please send me your email address for future communications.

*Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen*

IN MEMORIAM:

Roger Aylward, Carol Johnson RIP

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH:

Ken Court, Michael Warner, Bob Tate, Raymond Betts, Gladys Wreghitt, Michael Hill, Lotti Goldstein, Peter Mitchell, David Rogers, Carla Wilson, Donald Barber, Phyllis Mitchell, Albert Woodcock, Brian Lane, Nigella Greening (priest), Jill Harrison, Barbara Russell, Margaret Durham, Frances Rollinson.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Ann Mayo 23rd, Mark Barber 24th, Mike Mumby 25th, David & Kim Westcott celebrate a wedding anniversary on 27th

VERSE FOR THE WEEK:

"Here is your son...Here is your mother" (Jesus on the cross, to John and Mary)

THIS WEEK LET US PRAY FOR:

- All families with children at home from school
- Everyone whose livelihood is under threat
- All who are anxious
- Ourselves and all we love, our friends and neighbours
- Our neighbours in east Africa enduring war, drought, locusts, and famine

Hope in Tuffley weekend with Bishop Robert and the Curates: We're very sorry to announce that this is now cancelled. Thank you all who've donated; unless you tell Bruce differently, we'll forward your donations to our 'mission' fund.

LENT GIVING: this year's project is to upgrade the Toilets at St George's (target £1,000.00 by Easter). Contributions in boxes at back of church, or to treasurer. Many thanks!

NOT YET BAPTISED OR CONFIRMED? There's a wonderful opportunity for us to affirm our faith publicly in this way, at a special service in the Cathedral on Easter Saturday evening. See Bruce for more details.

ELECTORAL ROLL: Each year we elect our churchwardens and our Parish Church Councils to serve us in leadership. To vote at our Annual Meeting (31 March St Margaret's; 19 April St George's), and to be eligible to serve in leadership, you need to be on our 'electoral roll'. Please complete a form at back of church and return it to Glenda or Margaret Barber (St George's) or Jill (St Margaret's)

CONTACTING US:

Vicar: Revd Bruce Clifford: 01452 520851

Email: vicar-bruce@outlook.com

Reader: Jonathan MacKechnie-Jarvis: 01452 502174

Pioneer: Helen McGeoch: 07729 615993

Email: tuffleypioneer@gmail.com

Website: www.glos-stg-stm.org.uk

Facebook: St. George's, Tuffley and St Margaret's Whaddon

Administrator: Glenda Stevens: 01452 307456

Email: stgeorgeschurch1@gmail.com

The Church Administration office is not open until further notice. Please contact the Church Administrator by email or leave a message on the office telephone and our Administrator will get back to you

We are part of the Church in Tuffley, working in partnership with English Martyrs Roman Catholic Church and Grange Baptist Church

Mothering Sunday

You may like to light a candle as you begin your worship at home.



PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Samuel 1 Samuel's dedication

²⁰ Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the LORD.' ²¹ Her husband Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, 'As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and remain there for ever; I will offer him as a nazirite for all time.' ²³ Elkanah said to her, 'Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only - may the LORD establish his word.' So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. ²⁴ When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh; and the child was young. ²⁵ Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, 'Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me the petition that I made to him. ²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD.' And she left her son there for the LORD.

Lord we continue to dedicate ourselves to You. Help us stay faithful to our promises, as you are always faithful to yours. Amen

Psalms 127 God's Blessings in the Home

¹ Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the LORD guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain.
² It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved.
³ Children are indeed a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.
⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.
⁵ Happy are the couple who have his quiver full of them. They shall not be put to shame, but victorious in the presence of their enemies.

*Lord, you bless us with many gifts.
As you provide for all our needs,
help us to build only what pleases you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

Colossians 3 The new life in Christ

¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Lord we are full of gratitude to you for clothing us with your love and peace and compassion. Help us always to wear these precious robes. Amen

John 19 Jesus on the cross

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Lord Jesus Christ, even at the extreme moment of your passion, you reached out I love to transform your family. Help us to live well, as we are part of your new family too. Amen

Sermon thoughts from Paula Rix

Today is Mothering Sunday and it's only right that we remember our mothers, thank them for all they have done for us and show that that we love and value them.
And yet this Mothering day probably isn't turning out quite the way you had imagined only a few weeks back. How do we honour our loved ones when it seems unsafe to physically be with them?
Of course there may be people who don't feel like celebrating. Maybe for them Mothering Sunday is a day of grief for the loss of loved ones, a day of regret for relationships that weren't quite as good as they might have been, or sadness that children never came. We must try to be sensitive to those who experience this day differently to us.

Yet once-upon-a-time, Mothering Sunday wasn't as much about mothers as about community. In particular it was about the community of faith that nurtured our own faith, - our own 'mother church'. It was a day to go and visit the church community in which we grew up.

For many of us it was our mother who first taught us our faith. Later many other people probably guided us along on our Christian journey. It's good to look back, remember them, and be thankful for their help. And we mustn't forget our church congregations who have supported us over the years.

Perhaps we might also like to think about how we, in our turn, can nurture and support others on their Christian journey?

In these days of coronavirus that might seem a difficult thing to do, just as it is might seem difficult to keep in close contact with our relatives when it's unsafe to physically visit them. But if something is important to us, - whether keeping in touch with relatives and friends, supporting our neighbours, or keeping our faith community in Tuffley alive - then we will find a way.

It will require prayer, imagination and a willingness to experiment, but if we want to, we will find new ways of being church here in Tuffley.