

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



This week's news
for St George's, Tuffley
with St Margaret's, Whaddon
27 March to 2 April 2020

Worshipping together at home

on Sunday 29 March (Passion Sunday)

Dearly loved worshipping family

Our church buildings are now closed for public worship and for private prayer. I hope we'll all discover the joy of praying and worshipping at home, alongside one another. I'm delighted that current technology enables many of us to do this easily. And that we're currently able to deliver to those who have no other access to our materials.

Communion at Home video

Thanks to Hans, we can all enjoy taking part in our own church family Eucharist, available via video on our website and on YouTube:

for St M at <https://youtu.be/iIjojVT7dDo>, and

for St G at <https://youtu.be/mcT6Hgr5w>

It's also on DVD; if you'd like a copy please ring Hans.

I invite you to 'pause' the video at the appropriate time, then use your Sunday Readings sheet to follow Prayer for the Day, the readings and the sermon. Do also pray your own intercessions; you may like to refer to the prayer points below. Then just 'resume' for the Peace and the Eucharistic prayer.

Hymn suggestions:

Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs,
their soul is Christ's abode...

Seek ye first the kingdom of God

And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto you
Allelu, alleluia...

Make me a channel of Your peace

Where there is hatred, let me bring Your love
Where there is injury, Your pardon Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in You...

Guide me O thou great redeemer

Pilgrim through this barren land
I am weak but thou art mighty
Hold me with thy powerful hand
Bread of heaven _ Feed me now and evermore...

Today is a season of repentance for the Anglican Communion:

We start with silent confession of personal failures of unity.

A responsive confession

For being quick to see the sins of others,
and slow to repent of our own,
forgive us, Lord.

For clinging to remembered hurts,
and brushing off gestures of kindness,
forgive us, Lord.

For the divisions among us
that damage our mission to the world,
forgive us, Lord.

For the work we have not done
because we refused to do it together,
forgive us, Lord.

A

For these and all our sins, O God,
we weep in sorrow
and ask for your forgiveness,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IN MEMORIAM:

Roger Aylward, Carol Johnson, Marion Lane RIP

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH:

Brian Lane, Frances Rollinson, Thelma Hewins,
Paul Waite, Vivian Clarke, Reginald Mason,
Gerald Boots, Muriel O' Donoghue, Lionel Davis,
Margaret Temple, Betty Lewis-Walker,
Steven Ricketts, Sybil Parker, Mary Watters,
Pauline Dee, Henry Barnes, Roy Hunter,
Robert Townsend.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Marlene Thomas 30th, & David & Kim Westcott celebrate a wedding anniversary on 27th

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The 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) and Grange (Baptist).

For Church Video DVDs: Hans Rackham 528939

Do let me know how you get on, and how we can make the materials better next week.

God bless you and keep you safe and well.
Bruce

Keeping in Touch

Please keep thinking with compassion for your neighbours each side. Be creative in showing them you care.

Keep your wider family and friends in mind. Pick up the phone and just for a chat.

You may like to use the voluntary 'street ambassadors' card from the Council – pick up a copy from the local shops or from vicarage porch.

Keep supplying the Foodbank with items. You can drop them off at vicarage porch.

Though the church office is closed, Glenda is available on her working days via email and will answer phone messages.

Understanding the Coronavirus

If you haven't yet seen Stuart Mitchell's eye-opening message, please do! You can find it: on our website <http://www.glos-stg-stm.org.uk/>, and at: <https://youtu.be/em8GVIGHIIM>. If you need it on DVD, please ring Hans.

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

Home Deliveries

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

April magazine is now available. Pick up your copy at vicarage porch (or ask someone to collect it for you).

LENT GIVING: this year's project is to upgrade the Toilets at St George's (target £1000, by Easter). Contributions in boxes at back of church, or to treasurer. Many thanks!

Annual Parish Church Meetings are now postponed.

VERSE FOR THE WEEK:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt 5:8)

THIS WEEK LET US KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS:

- All who have died from the coronavirus, and their loved ones
- All who are ill with the virus, and their carers
- All our NHS staff
- All families with children at home from school
- Everyone whose livelihood is under threat
- All who are anxious
- All we love, our friends and neighbours
- Our neighbours in east Africa enduring war, drought, locusts, and famine

For meditation / reflection through the week:

"If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7)

Dear God,

All authority is Yours, but You have given authority to leaders to protect and guide us. Please give all our leaders the great wisdom, discernment, strength, and resolve they need. And keep them healthy, safe, and rested so that they can continue to guide us through this troubling time.

Help our government to know what needs to be done to stop the virus and stabilize our economy.

Help our spiritual leaders to model and share the hope we have in You, sustaining us in all adversity.

Help our medical leaders to discover how to stop the virus. Strengthen their resolve and honour their hard work in creating a treatment for COVID-19.

Help our local civic leaders with inspiration, courage, joy, and strength to meet the needs of their communities.

And help us all to display courage, hope, generosity, and kindness.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

*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*

A new way of living

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



PRAYER FOR TODAY

God of love, passionate and strong, tender and careful: guide us and the leaders of all nations into your ways of justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Ezekiel 37 A Valley of Dry Bones

37 The LORD took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the LORD to a valley filled with bones. ... They were scattered everywhere across the ground and were completely dried out. ³ Then he asked me, "Son of man, can these bones become living people again?" "O Sovereign LORD," I replied, "you alone know the answer to that."

⁴ Then he said to me, "Speak a prophetic message to these bones and say, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the LORD! Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again! ⁶ I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

⁷ So I spoke this message, just as he told me. Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley. The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as complete skeletons. ⁸ Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them.

⁹ Then he said to me, "Speak a prophetic message to the winds, son of man. Speak a prophetic message and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again.'"

¹⁰ So I spoke the message as he commanded me, and breath came into their bodies. They all came to life and stood upon their feet a great army.

¹¹ Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, 'We have become old, dry bones all hope is gone. Our nation is finished.'

¹² Therefore, prophesy to them and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the LORD. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live again and return home to your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done what I said. Yes, the LORD has spoken!'"

May we see new life and new hope in a world of suffering and fear. Amen

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.

² Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my supplications!

³ If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;

⁶ my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

⁷ O Israel, hope in the LORD!

For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.

⁸ It is he who will redeem Israel from all our iniquities.

Father, we commend to your faithful love all who are crying from the depths; help us to watch and pray through our time of darkness, in sure hope of the dawn of your forgiveness and redemption; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Matthew 5 The Beatitudes

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³ 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Dear Lord Jesus, when our road is hard, may we focus on the needs of others and may we build up the life your Kingdom. Amen

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.'

⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ... 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹² The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ...

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ...²¹ Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' ²³ Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴ Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.'

²⁵ Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' ²⁷ She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

³³ When Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ...

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Lord Jesus, we know how you were moved to deep pity by the situation you found. May we never be blunted by the suffering around us, knowing that you brought new life out of your compassion. Amen

What a week. For many of us Ps 130 will say it all. "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord hear my voice!"

We are in deep, uncharted and frightening waters. Yet amid his own anguish, the psalmist knew that we must never cease to trust in God's word and to wait on him. Morning and new hope will come out of this dark night.

New hope, just as in Ezekiel's vision of new life from the dry bones. New life, that we see in John's detailed account of the raising of Lazarus. But read again how Jesus himself was moved to profoundest sorrow at his friend's death, and at the grief it caused others. Before he could bring new life out of that situation, he was, like the psalmist, in deepest anguish.

But with that vision of new life in mind, let's look afresh at the Beatitudes. So familiar, and so fundamental to Christianity. Can we accept what these words mean for us? Let's be clear, Jesus didn't say "Blessed are those who manage to keep out of life's pitfalls". He didn't say "Blessed are those with a secure job and successful grandchildren".

What Jesus called "blessed" makes little sense to some people, and it was always so. And yet these words are the key to the life that is worth living. Jesus tells us that new life in God's kingdom is about accepting our need of God, and about living for others. It is not about me and my well being.

My prayer is that this great health crisis may enable more people to realise that there is new life in living for others. From a healthy attitude to the needs of others will come greater calm, greater peace of mind, and a greater sense of community.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God".

Dear Father, help us to trust in you and to place our hope in the new life of your kingdom. Amen