



Welcome to the third bulletin of the Bredon Hill Group of Parishes
Please share it as far and wide as you can – thank you

5th April 2020 – Palm Sunday



View from inside the Vicarage

Hello and welcome to this week's edition of the Bulletin. This will be the third edition produced, and I hope that in these challenging times, it is offering communities of the Bredon Hill Group of Parishes, a helpful source of prayer and worship material. Regrettably, I do not have contact telephone numbers or emails for everyone around the Hill, so if you would like to receive a regular copy of the Bulletin, then please contact your churchwarden and let them know or ring me if you would like a chat or personal prayer.

I'm sure many of us on a Sunday are still feeling that sense of unreality, when we are not able to come together physically to worship in a church building, a rhythm we have been following most of our lives. Yet, this is what we are likely to be asked to do now for possibly several months. We must therefore find new ways of drawing together - to pray, to worship and to enter into that Fellowship of being the body of Christ and today's Church.

Now I don't know whether you have been able to view and participate in the increasing number of resources being put together by the Church of England, and churches across the Diocese, but last Sunday, I was able to take part in 4 very different church services – the Church of England's Daily Office, the 8.10am Radio 4 Sunday Worship, the 8.30am live stream of Holy Communion from Worcester Cathedral, and my first ever Zoom Café Church service with a church in Redditch. Others of you, I know, are finding their daily Bible Readings and Reflection Notes a true comfort and inspiration. All these expressions of Church are a wonderful demonstration of the rich and diverse ways in which we are able to engage in worship and stay connected with our wider Church family, so do find out and participate in the ones which suit you best.

This next week is possibly the most significant in the Churches yearly calendar, that of Holy Week; And normally we would be having services of Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday, Meditations

around the Cross or a Walk up Bredon Hill on Good Friday, and a special service of Holy Communion on Easter Sunday Morning. But this year we will not be able to do these things physically; and in seizing the opportunity to learn and try something different, I am going to email, and possibly even live stream, a service of The Cross at 12.00pm on Good Friday, and a service of Spiritual Holy Communion on Easter Sunday morning at 9.00am. We are also being encouraged to light a candle at dawn on Easter Sunday to celebrate the arrival of Easter, and then at 10.00am to join in a national initiative called "Sing Resurrection", where we are invited to go outside and sing the hymns "*Jesus Christ is Risen Today* and *Thine be the Glory*". Details of these will be published on the Churches websites, the Eckington and Defford and Besford Village Noticeboards, and they will also be sent to all churchwardens of the Bredon Hill Group in the next couple of days.

Also, during Holy Week, I will be saying the Office of Evening Prayer at 4.00pm every afternoon. The words of this service can be found on the Church of England website, or if you wish for a copy then please contact me and I will make sure you receive one. Therefore, if you wish to take part in any of these services, then at the appropriate time, find a quiet place, light a small candle and join in with me, as we journey and worship together in this most special of weeks.

Finally, I have been asked to acknowledge the amazing work being undertaken by many volunteer groups around our villages, as they seek to support and provide shopping to many who are isolated in their homes. A very big thank you goes out to them, and of course to all our NHS and key workers, as they go to extraordinary lengths to keep us going and help combat the impact of this terrible Virus. I know many of us clapped the NHS last Thursday evening by way of thanks, which was incredibly moving for those of us who took part; But this should equally apply to all our local heroes. Therefore, a huge thank you from us all.

May God bless you in the week ahead, as we journey with Christ towards the cross, awaiting in the sure knowledge and hope of His glorious Resurrection, and may the peace of Christ be with you always.

Allison

Reverend Allison Davies

Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group

Sunday 5th April – Palm Sunday

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Matthew 21: 1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-end

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever." Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD. The LORD is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you. O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Reflection for Palm Sunday

One of the last activities, I was able to carry out before we all went into our current lockdown position was to give to Eckington and Defford First schools some palm crosses. This was not something I had intended on doing for a couple of weeks but given the way the news of the spread of the virus was going, it seemed a good idea to do this early. I am so very glad I did this now! For today, is of course Palm Sunday, and normally, at this time of year, we would be looking forward in our churches, to some way of marking the triumphant entry by Jesus into Jerusalem. In many places this would be done by processing and waving palm crosses; And in Eckington, we had made initial enquiries about getting a donkey to lead a procession around the church. Thankfully, for the churchwardens, who would have had to clean the church afterwards, this was not to be! But now, of course, none of this will happen, although I like to think that maybe the schoolchildren will at least be able to look and wave their palm cross to celebrate today.

However, the original procession led by Jesus riding on a colt, was in its' very nature bittersweet. For in the shouts of the crowd welcoming and cheering Jesus as their king, crying "*Hosanna to the King of Kings*", we now live in the knowledge that within a matter of hours, these cries would soon turn to ones of disowning, denying, and ultimately, that of crying "*Crucify Him*".

Emotions of people can indeed change very quickly – one minute we can be filled with joy and excitement and the next, feeling anxious, fearful, lonely, uncertain of our future, questioning our faith and the reason for our very existence. I certainly am experiencing this as we journey through this time of isolation – one minute feeling everything will be alright, and the next, feeling anxious for my health and for those of all the people I love and care for.

A famous hymn written by H. H. Milman in the early nineteenth century, and frequently sung on Palm Sunday, ends with the verse, "*Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die; bow thy meek head to mortal pain, then take, O God, thy power, and reign*". Jesus, on Palm Sunday, knew that the emotions and moods of the crowds would quickly change, and that His journey ahead would not be an easy one; He knew that it would be one of physical pain and anguish, desertion and feeling completely isolated from friends and God.

Yet, He also knew that beyond this, there awaited a royal crown in the Kingdom of Heaven, the sure knowledge that the enemy of sin had been defeated and that there would be a restoration and newness of life with God for **all** who believed in Him. So, on Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem, acknowledging the shouts of the people as He resolutely journeyed towards His own Death and Resurrection.

Over the next few weeks we are called into a journey which will challenge our emotions as never before. It is likely to be a journey when we may well be faced with times of darkness and challenge, when we will be spending increased amounts of time with others in close proximity, which stretches our patience and our resolve, a time when we may be forced to walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death of those we know and love, and a time when we may question ourselves, our emotions and possibly even our faith. At such times, we need to follow Jesus' example and be resolute, patient and humble; Looking beyond the uncertainty, the fear and the pain, to a time when the light shines through the darkness, and healing and togetherness becomes our normal once again.

And so on this Sunday, if your family has a palm cross, then wave it in worship and praise to Christ our King; But even if you haven't got physical a palm cross to wave, let us join together in the knowledge that we are all linked and connected together through the love and hope of what the Cross stands for; An assurance that God loves us and will never leave us whatever and wherever our journey takes us. Then let us live in the knowledge that one day, we **will** all join with Jesus in that eternal Kingdom of Heaven and be entitled to be called prince and princesses of the King of Kings, and we will then be moved to shout aloud, "*Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!!*".

Amen

Collect for Good Friday – 10th April

Almighty Father, look with mercy on this your family for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed and given up into the hands of sinners and to suffer death upon the cross; who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Prayers

Please pray for the ill and isolated, hospital and medical research staff, all those working on the frontline and those who have died. We pray for all whose anniversary of death falls at this time and for all who have been bereaved.

If you would like a prayer for someone particularly on the next bulletin, please email us on the address below.

Prayers about the outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen**

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake. **Amen**

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,

but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

For those who are ill

Merciful God,
we entrust to your tender care
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

For hospital staff and medical researchers

Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

For one who is ill or isolated

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing can separate me
from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

For the Christian community

We are not people of fear:
we are people of courage.
We are not people who protect our own safety:
we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.
We are not people of greed:
we are people of generosity.
We are your people God,
giving and loving,
wherever we are,
whatever it costs
For as long as it takes
wherever you call us. **Amen**

Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference

Prayer diary – April from the Diocese of Worcester



Recent events have meant that many of our prayer diary entries are out of date. We will therefore be issuing monthly pdf updates. Download the [updated prayer diary for April 2020](#).

Updated prayers will also be available on our website 'prayer for the day' and our social media streams.

Digital resources from the Diocese of Worcester

What is currently available?

There are a range of new and existing Christian resources available for people to engage with at this difficult and challenging time in the life of the nation and the world:

- **Weekly service broadcasts** - these be made available each Sunday through [the Church's Facebook page](#).
- **Time to Pray app** - everything you need for Prayer During the Day, with variations according to the day of the week and the season of the Church's year. [Download for free](#).
- **Daytime prayer and Night prayer service audio** - building on the existing [daily prayer feed](#), this includes [daytime prayer and night prayer for each day](#). It will be available as a downloadable app in the coming weeks.
- **Live streaming services from churches** - AChurchNearYou.com now lists hundreds of churches offering livestreams of services from across the country. Churches need to add the 'Livestream' tag to their services and events that will be broadcast. Remember to add into the description how people can watch this. You add a link to the platform you're using to stream, such as your Facebook Page or YouTube Channel. [Find out more about live streaming services and events](#).
- **Increasing the number of training webinars** - to help churches stream sermons, events and make the most of digital platforms. [Sign up for free](#).
- **#LiveLent: Care for God's Creation** - the Church of England's Lent campaign for 2020. With weekly themes shaped around the first Genesis account of creation, it explores the urgent need for humans to value and protect the abundance God has created. This daily audio content is available via the app and daily emails. [Sign up for free](#).
- **The BBC's Daily Service and Sunday Worship** - radio programmes will be using some of the [themes from #LiveLent as part of their broadcasts](#).
- **Prayer for the day** - each day the Church of England [publishes audio and text of the Prayer for the Day](#).
- **Smart speakers** – daily prayer and #LiveLent audio content can be [accessed via our smart speaker apps](#).
- **Mental health reflections** – [13 daily reflections](#) that seek to provide hope, reassurance and comfort. We have also [published five tips](#) to help tackle loneliness and isolation.

Daily Bible Readings for Monday 6th – Saturday 11th April

Monday 6 th April	Isaiah 42: 1-9 John 12: 1-11
Tuesday 7 th April	Isaiah 49: 1-7 John 12: 20-36
Wednesday 8 th April	Isaiah 50: 4-9a John 13: 21-32
Thursday 9 th April	Exodus 12: 1-4 (5-10) 11-14 John 13: 1-17, 31b-35
Friday 10 th April	Isaiah 52: 13 – end of 53 John 18: 1 – end of 19
Saturday 11 th April	Job 14: 1-14 Matthew 27: 57-end

Pershore Foodbank



Due to the coronavirus, our churches have had to suspend the collection of food items for the Foodbank. However, we would still encourage you to donate, by giving money in lieu of food gifts. Therefore, if you can help, please send directly to:

Pershore Foodbank
Sort code 20-98-61
Account number 50714356

Thank you

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