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From the Vicarage

Friday 19 March

This coming tuesday, 23 March, is the first anniversary of the first national lockdown. It is an opportunity to reflect by joining a minute's silence at midday, or to stand outside at 8.00 p.m to shine a light to remember someone who's died, and show your support to people going through a bereavement.

These have been difficult days. And despite the hope of a brighter future it is right that we have the opportunity to lament, a key theme in these closing days of Lent, and as we move into Passiontide.

There has also been much in the news this week about the impact of decisions that the government did, or didn't make, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic a year ago. At the beginning of Passiontide we hear that Jesus too is to take a decision, one which will have an eternal impact for the world. Should he decide to ask for his Father to save him? No says Jesus, because 'it is for this reason that I have come to this hour', predicting his own death. As we travel through holy week may we come to

realise that it is in Christ crucified that we see the love of God who welcomes us, forgives us, and draws us in to a new kind of life - made possible because of that decision. If you want to see Jesus, see him first as the Saviour who went to the cross so that you might have life.

Holy Week and Easter

Palm Sunday	Blessing of Palms	St Mary's Churchyard	9.00 a.m
	Morning Worship	Online	10.00 a.m
Mon - Weds	Compline	Online	8.00 p.m
Maundy Thursday	Silent Eucharist	St Andrew's	8.00 p.m
Good Friday	Stations of the Cross	St Mary's	10.00 a.m
Holy Saturday	Lighting of the Easter fire and Paschal candle	St Andrew's	8.00 p.m
Easter Day	Morning Prayer	St Andrew's	9.00 a.m
	Holy Communion*	St Mary's	10.00 a.m
	Online Worship	Zoom	11.30 a.m

*Confirming that you wish to attend is advised given that social distancing rules still apply and reduce capacity. Please contact the Vicar.

Worship after Easter

The PCC's have decided that we will begin a gentle and gradual return to church services in our buildings after Easter. Our aim is to provide an interim period in which Holy Communion alternates within the benefice each Sunday, and Morning Prayer is offered in the other parish. We will also continue to offer some form of worship online for those people who do not feel they can safely return to church services just yet (meeting for virtual coffee from 11.00 a.m). During May we will consider what a revised

pattern of worship might look like. The pattern, shape and content of services will adapt as we become aware of revised guidance from the Church of England's recovery group. But provisionally for now it is likely to be as follows:

April 11	Morning Prayer @ 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion@ 10.00 a.m. Online @ 11.30 a.m.	St Mary's St Andrew's (Join from 11.00 a.m.)
18	Morning Prayer @ 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion@ 10.00 a.m. Online @ 11.30 a.m.	St Andrew's St Mary's (Join from 11.00 a.m.)
25	Morning Prayer @ 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion@ 10.00 a.m. Online @ 11.30 a.m.	St Mary's St Andrew's (Join from 11.00 a.m.)
May 2	Morning Prayer @ 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion@ 10.00 a.m. Online @ 11.30 a.m.	St Andrew's St Mary's (Join from 11.00 a.m.)
9	Morning Prayer @ 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion@ 10.00 a.m. Online @ 11.30 a.m.	St Mary's St Andrew's (Join from 11.00 a.m.)
16	Morning Prayer @ 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion@ 10.00 a.m. Online @ 11.30 a.m.	St Andrew's St Mary's (Join from 11.00 a.m.)
23	Morning Prayer @ 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion@ 10.00 a.m. Online @ 11.30 a.m.	St Mary's St Andrew's (Join from 11.00 a.m.)

30	Morning Prayer @ 9.00 a.m.	St Andrew's
	Holy Communion@ 10.00 a.m.	St Mary's
	Online @ 11.30 a.m.	(Join from 11.00 a.m.)

Sunday 21 March

Online Worship will be via Zoom @ 10.00 a.m using this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72337650077?pwd=bCtnbU4rWGdmRW45UUEvSms2UmRRUT09> (Meeting ID: 723 3765 0077 Password: 0Wg7Kw)

Please stay or join for virtual coffee after the service.

The Church of England's online service is @ 9.00 a.m. The service for Passion Sunday, the fifth Sunday in Lent comes from Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. The link is here: <https://youtu.be/8Y-DO8iVI2E>

Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4 is at 8.10 a.m. The link is here: A moment of remembrance led by the Archbishop of York marks the loss of over 120,000 lives as the nation prepares to mark the anniversary of lockdown. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000tck0>

Lent Group

Our Lent group has been following 'The Prayer Course' meeting at 2.00 p.m each Tuesday during March. We will have our final session before holy week and Easter, this coming Tuesday, and resume on 13 April. If you would like to join this group and haven't already done so please do contact me.

Worship and Prayer by telephone



A reminder of Daily Hope which is a telephone service offering music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. Sunday worship is available each week from 9.00 a.m. The line is free and available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044**.

Tuesday Morning Prayer

We meet each Tuesday @ 9.00 a.m for Morning Prayer and to pray particularly for those in need of prayer at this time. Use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82310905515?pwd=eGszaTUvdW5jcWlNLTU5YXFBT0trQT09> (Meeting ID: 823 1090 5515 Passcode: 237323)

Virtual Wednesday Coffee morning

The virtual coffee mornings are now being held weekly on Wednesday between 11.00 and 12.00 a.m. Please do come along if you can. You don't have to stay for the whole hour, but many people are continuing to value the opportunity to see and speak with each other, even if virtually at this time. The link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82945268510?pwd=R0U4VFI4Z1J6Ri9xNWlET0dZem5ZQT09> (Meeting ID: 829 4526 8510 Passcode: 855870)

Friday Compline

We meet for Compline (Night Prayer) each Friday @ 8.00 p.m. All are welcome to join us. Use this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73672170367?pwd=QnVKWTRpR3g5VWk0WUtCQ3hhNFRkQT09> (Meeting ID: 736 7217 0367 Password: 7YC29t)

Annual meeting of Parishioners (APM) & Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) 2021

Annual Meetings for St Andrew's will take place on Friday 23 April and for St Mary's on Saturday 8 May. You will find below links to nomination forms for the election of churchwardens at the APM, and PCC and Deanery Synod representatives at the APCM. If you would prefer a hard copy please let me know.

Please consider whether you would like to serve, either again or for the first time, in any of these capacities. There is a particular need for representation on the deanery Synod for St Mary's, especially important given the proposed changes within the Ampthill and Shefford Deanery, affecting the benefice. If you are willing to stand again, or for the first time, for any of these positions please obtain a proposer and seconder. Then print their names on the appropriate nomination form and return it to the PCC Secretary - for St Marys (Carolyn Taylor) or for St Andrews (Charles Clark).

Churchwarden

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Form-for-Nomination-of-Churchwardens.pdf>

PCC

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Form-for-Nomination-of-PCC-Members.pdf>

Deanery Synod representatives

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Form-for-Nomination-of-Deanery-Synod-members.pdf>

A Prayer

Loving God,
As we journey towards Easter,
help us to live as people of hope,
knowing that beyond the pain of the cross
lies the joy of resurrection.

Be with those who are struggling in mind, body or spirit,
and give courage to those who are
facing uncertainty and change ahead.

Help each of us to keep our eyes fixed on you,
that we may reflect your light to all whom we meet.

Amen

May God bless you and keep you as we seek to follow and journey toward
Holy Week.

Shaun