**Palm Sunday and Holy Week: 10th – 16th April 2022**

**Greetings from Eileen**

Dear friends,

A picture containing vegetable

Description automatically generatedHoly Week seems to be a time of contradictions: of greatest and deepest emotional highs and lows; of hopes and fears; of rejection and the ultimate act of rescue for our redemption. This was the week when God’s love for us was completely given, poured out in the life of Jesus; when God’s love was spurned, spat at, spiked and speared. And as the week ended, low in the grave he lay, Jesus our Saviour.

On Wednesday, the whole of Gainford C of E Primary School gathered for their Easter Service in St Mary’s Church for the first time in 2 years, joined by their parents and family members, governors, and teachers. Never mind that it was twice as lengthy as previous school services in church and the technology monitor had forgotten how to operate the CD player, but the children displayed illustrations, sang songs and hymns, read out their journals and prayers they had written that described the entire story of Jesus’ death and resurrection. With their teachers, the children had learnt and understood the story of God’s love on Good Friday and Easter better than I had heard in all the years I have been here. How such young ones could understand sorrow as Jesus being with us all in our grief, sadness, trials, and loss, because he had been hung on the cross, quite floored me. They also made and lit a candle for their prayers for the people of Ukraine.

This Palm Sunday at our Communion Services, our congregations will be invited to read participatively Luke’s Gospel narrative of Jesus’ Passion story: <http://www.oremus.org/liturgy/lhwe/luke.html#luke23>

If you are unable to attend one of our services, I invite you to click on the weblink and make a little time to read it, taking on the role of one of those there and journey with Jesus in those last days and hours of his life.

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| **HOLY WEEK** | **St Andrew’s, Winston** | **St Mary’s, Gainford** | **Bishop Auckland** |
| **Palm Sunday** 10th April | 9.30am Palm Liturgy with Communion | 10.45am Palm Liturgy with Communion |  |
| 3.30pm MESSY FAMILY CHURCH |  |
| **Maundy Thursday** 14th April |  | 7pm Holy Communion with the Washing of Feet and Stripping of the Altar |  |
| **Good Friday** | 9.30am Act of Worship (led by The Bishop’s Chaplain) | 10.45am Churches Together Service with Procession of the Cross (led by Fr Thomas Mason and Rev’d Canon Tim Ollier) | **12 noon and 3pm**  **The Passion Play\*\***  FREE tickets, please book:  passionplaybishopauckland.org |

**\*\****If you wish to book tickets as a group of 6 or more or to reserve a space for wheelchairs, please email* [*tickets@passionplaybishopauckland.org*](mailto:tickets@passionplaybishopauckland.org) *Geoff Taylor is coordinating a mini-bus for the 3pm performance departing from Gainford. Please contact Geoff on:* Geoffandsue379@gmail.com

Last Sunday, Passiontide was celebrated at Choral Evensong at St Mary’s, Gainford: https://youtu.be/sABpiMcO1wY

God is with us. Christ crucified draw you to himself to find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope.

*Rev’d Canon Eileen Harrop*

**NOTICES**

**Please pray for our NEW SERVICE FOR ALL THE FAMILY – MESSY CHURCH** – **Palm Sunday 10th April 2022 at 3.30pm**, which includes a light tea at the end, hosted at St Mary’s Church, Gainford, **Messy Church welcomes** **families from both our parishes** and beyond. Spread the word to your neighbours and friends. Give it a go!

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| **The Collect for Palm Sunday**  True and humble king,  hailed by the crowd as Messiah:  grant us the faith to know you and love you,  that we may be found beside you  on the way of the cross,  which is the path of glory.  Amen | **Post Communion Prayer**  Lord Jesus Christ,  you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,  and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:  give us the mind to follow you  and to proclaim you as Lord and King,  to the glory of God the Father.  Amen |
| **The Collect for Maundy Thursday**  God our Father,  your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end  and drank the cup prepared for him:  may we who share his table  watch with him through the night of suffering  and be faithful.  Amen | **Post Communion Prayer**  Lord Jesus Christ,  we thank you that in this wonderful sacrament  you have given us the memorial of your passion:  grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries  of your body and blood  that we may know within ourselves  and show forth in our lives  the fruit of your redemption,  for you are alive and reign, now and for ever.  Amen |

***Good Friday Collect is as printed in the service sheets***

**The Palm Gospel: Luke 19:28-40**

**28**After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

**29**When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, **30**saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. **31**If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” **32**So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. **33**As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” **34**They said, “The Lord needs it.” **35**Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. **36**As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. **37**As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, **38**saying,

“Blessed is the king  
    who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
    and glory in the highest heaven!”

**39**Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” **40**He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

**2 Items for our Holy Week Reflection** in place of last Sunday’s Sermon

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| **How does the thief on the cross fit into our theology?**  No baptism, no communion, no confirmation, no speaking in tongues, no mission trip, no volunteer service, and no church clothes. He couldn’t even bend his knees to pray. He didn’t say a particular sinner’s prayer and among other things, he was a thief.  Jesus didn’t take away his pain, heal his body, or smite the scoffers. Yet this was a thief who walked into heaven the same hour as Jesus simply by believing.  He had nothing to more to offer other than his belief that Jesus was who he said he was. Nothing from brilliant theologians. No ego or arrogance. No shiny lights, skinny jeans, or crafty words. No special machines, doughnuts to share, or coffee to welcome.  Just a naked dying man on a cross unable to even fold his hands to pray. |

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| **"He answered him to never a word." (Matthew 27:14)**  He had never been slow of speech when He could bless the sons of men, but He would not say a single word for Himself. "Never man spake like this Man," and never man was silent like Him. Was this singular silence the index of His perfect self-sacrifice? Did it show that He would not utter a word to stay the slaughter of His sacred person, which He had dedicated as an offering for us? Had He so entirely surrendered Himself that He would not interfere in His own behalf, even in the minutest degree, but be bound and slain an unstruggling, uncomplaining victim?  Was this silence a type of the defenselessness of sin? Nothing can be said in palliation or excuse of human guilt; and, therefore, He who bore its whole weight stood speechless before His judge.  Is not patient silence the best reply to a gainsaying world? Calm endurance answers some questions infinitely more conclusively than the loftiest eloquence. The best apologists for Christianity in the early days were its martyrs. The anvil breaks a host of hammers by quietly bearing their blows. Did not the silent Lamb of God furnish us with a grand example of wisdom? Where every word was occasion for new blasphemy, it was the line of duty to afford no fuel for the flame of sin. The ambiguous and the false, the unworthy and mean, will ere long overthrow and confute themselves, and therefore the true can afford to be quiet, and finds silence to be its wisdom.  Evidently our Lord, by His silence, furnished a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy. A long defence of Himself would have been contrary to Isaiah's prediction. "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." By His quiet He conclusively proved Himself to be the true Lamb of God. As such we salute Him this morning. Be with us, Jesus, and in the silence of our heart, let us hear the voice of Thy love.  Charles Spurgeon |