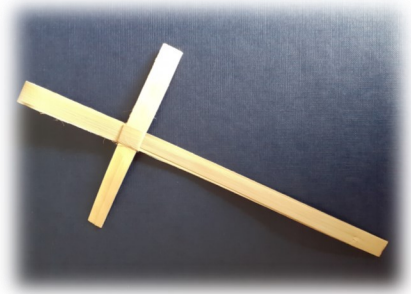


Virtual Church News

Sunday 5 April

Palm Sunday and Holy Week



A big welcome to Virtual Church News for Palm Sunday and Holy Week.

Hard copies will be circulated to those without access to email/social media. If you know of anyone without email who you think would benefit from a hard copy, please call Jacqui on 356993 or email Jacqui.piper@btinternet.com

A Reading for the Week:

Matthew 21 vv 6-9

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 those that followed were shouting [as he entered Jerusalem],

'Hosanna to the Son of David!'

'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'

'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Online Resources:

If you have access to Facebook, keep an eye on the Church of England page (or the Church of England Website) for some useful resources including:

- Sunday 5 April at 9am - 'Palm Sunday service led by the Bishop of Manchester.

<https://www.facebook.com/thechurchofengland>

Spring Harvest Home

Each Easter a number of our church members usually attend Spring Harvest, a Christian gathering where thousands of people from all denominations come together for bible teaching, worship etc. for all ages and abilities. This year, Spring Harvest is accessible to everyone though Spring Harvest Home from 13 - 17 April. Subscribe on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SpringHarvest> and see what Spring Harvest is all about!

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

Dear All,

Did you know that magpies are considered the most intelligent of non-mammals! They are one of the few creatures who can recognise themselves in a mirror, and also, they are known for stealing shiny things. Another fact about magpies is that when they mate, they mate for life, and for this reason, superstitious people believe it is bad luck to see one that is on its own; hence the popular nursery rhyme; 'One for sorrow, two for joy.....' Having worked in rural parishes in Lincolnshire, on several occasions, I encountered the very cruel 'Larsen traps,' that are put out by some farmers to catch magpies. One magpie is caught and placed in one of two connected cages. As it calls out, another magpie will come to support it, and is trapped in the other cage. One magpie is killed, and the other is left to call out again.

We are not solitary creatures. We need company, and being social animals, social distancing is hard for all of us. As Christians, we are facing enforced separation at Easter, for the first time since the plague.
...continued overleaf

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

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Even during WW2, Christians were allowed to meet, to celebrate Easter, but now, it is forbidden.

This Sunday, we cannot meet to celebrate Jesus's triumphal entry in Jerusalem. We cannot hold up palm crosses, as the residents of Jerusalem welcomed Jesus with palms, in the first century. We cannot shout, together; 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest, and we cannot sing together; 'All glory, laud and honor,' as the church has for many years before. Like magpies, we are social animals, and this community celebration is a part of who we are.

The story of Palm Sunday is simple for those who have never heard it before. Jesus has spent his three-year ministry reaching out to communities on the edge of Jewish life, often straying into gentile territory, because God loves everyone, whoever they are, and whatever they have done.

At the end of this time he heads for the central city of the Jewish faith (please remember that Jesus was born a Jew, and was crucified as the king of the Jews), Jerusalem, and the community of that city welcomed him, as he rode through the gates, sitting on a donkey. The donkey was important, a Jewish leader called Judas Maccabeus, and later, his brother Simon, entered Jerusalem in the same way, to defeat an occupying force known as the Seleucids. This time, the Jewish people expected the same kind of ruler, who was going to liberate them from Roman Rule.

Jesus was not the leader or the King they expected. Instead he was a humble, loving, forgiving king, who lives as we live, suffers as we suffer, and dies as we die. He represents a God, who in Jesus, is in solidarity with us in our human experience.

There have been many points in history, when Christians have been forbidden to meet together for worship and prayer. Still, this happens in many parts of the world. In many

cases, Christians, stand bravely against this prohibition. This is because, like magpies, we belong together as a community of faith. We belong together to worship God. In Holy Week, we belong together to celebrate the coming King. We belong together to share the bread and wine, as Christ shared his body with us on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday, we belong together at the foot of the cross, and finally to rise with the sun together, in celebration of the Resurrection, on Easter Sunday Morning.

This year we will not be together in the normal sense, and law requires that we do not meet. This year, however, in the name of Christ we will not be together. Staying apart is the most loving thing we can do because it protects ourselves and others from this virus. We should not resist the law, because like Christ is in solidarity with us, so we need to be in solidarity with those who are also alone at this time.

However difficult this may be in Holy week, we have faith that Christ still gives us food for our journey of faith, Christ still died for us, and Christ was still raised for us. Still there is the call that we invite Jesus to be King of our hearts.

God bless

Eric



Please contact me any time you need to.

My numbers are: 01234 852241/07805879537

Services for Holy Week/Easter

If you receive this by email or hard copy, please find details of Zoom services during Holy Week attached.

If you are viewing on Facebook and would like to participate in our Holy Week services, contact us for the log-in details.

- Palm Sunday: 11am Sunday Worship
- Mon/Tue/Wed: 6pm Evening Prayer
- Maundy Thursday: 6pm Holy Communion
- Good Friday: 11am Prayer at the Foot of the Cross
- Easter Sunday: 11am Holy Communion

Make your own (paper) Palm Cross

Step 1: Cut a strip of paper (the longer the better but a strip lengthways from a A4 piece of paper will make a small cross).

Step 2: Fold the strip in half to find the middle. Then bend the right end (B) straight up (diagonally) at the centre to form a right angle.

Step 3: Fold what is now the vertical strip (B) down behind the diagonal fold from step 2.

Step 4: Fold the vertical strip (B) forwards and up over at the front to make a 'square' at the back.

Step 5: Bring the left strip (A) forward and fold over the centre to the right.

Step 6: Fold the same strip (A) away from you and pull through inside the 'square' on the back (pull all the way through).

Step 7: Bend the top strip (B) forward and down, pulling through inside the centre 'square' to make the top part of the cross.

Step 8: Fold the left hand strip (A) backwards and through the 'square' to form the left part of the cross.

Step 9: Fold the right hand strip (A) forwards and tuck into the 'square' to complete the cross.



Please pray with me

King of love,
Who never abandons us,
or leaves us alone.
These are dark and difficult times,
When many of us feel isolated,
and filled with fear.
Guide us through the shadows
give us hope,
give us purpose,
and give us light,
So that we may reflect light and hope on others.
Be king of our hearts
Amen.



Church Services on the TV/Radio

If you don't have access to the internet, try tuning in to the following on Sunday 5th:

- 8.10am on BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship reflecting on walking with Jesus in suffering
- 10.45am on BBC 1 - Sunday Worship from Hereford Cathedral
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise from Glasgow.
- 3pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Magdalen College, Oxford

For the Children

The brilliant 4Front Theatre Group are doing a great Virtual Sunday School. Check it out on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMu2bG8L2dp7ywUZVa9uXDA>

Messy Church at Home - great ideas for 'doing' church at home with the family. For more info go to <https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resources/messy-church-home-ideas>

Time to Pray App

Access prayers and short readings for each day. Free to download from your usual app store.

Time
to Pray

Bedford Foodbank

Please don't forget that we support the Bedford Foodbank, who will need our donations now more than ever. Please consider making a financial donation. More information can be found at <https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk/>



Community Support Groups

Do you need support? We can help with shopping and companionship (via regular phone calls).

Can you volunteer to help? Let us know if you are DBS checked (for any organisation). It doesn't matter if you aren't, we still need your help, but safeguarding is important!

Biddenham:

If you need support, ring 01234 815393 (daytime only) or email help@biddenham.org.uk with your name/phone number/address.

If you can volunteer, please email help@biddenham.org.uk

Kempston:

If you need support or can volunteer to help, contact:

Rev Eric Lomax: 852241 or 07805 879537

Alison/Brenda Walker: 851597

Alan/Anita Lowe: 857212 or 07751 659695

Holy Week and Easter Services on Zoom

If you have not used Zoom before you can download the app from your usual app store from a computer, ipad or smartphone. If you then copy a link below into your browser, it will take you straight to the meeting. Alternatively just copy and paste a link into your browser and it will prompt you to download before taking you to the meeting. If the 'host' of the meeting has not yet joined the meeting you will see a holding message saying the host is in another meeting (or something similar). You will be connected once the host joins. If you have any problems, please do get in touch.

Palm Sunday 11am Sunday worship

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/421599416?pwd=cUF6MXUzdmZpSG9KanNEWnFQamtOQT09>

Meeting ID: 421 599 416

Password: 008472

Monday 6th April, 6pm Evening Prayer

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/706268598?pwd=eHQ3d0hoeXAwUIVVZ0WWRPU3pHdz09>

Meeting ID: 706 268 598

Password: 014737

Tuesday 7th April, 6pm Evening Prayer

Eric Lomax is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/218487189?pwd=a0hrcjIHKzlaK0xZN2RpeVpXOEQ4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 218 487 189

Password: 023718

Wednesday 8th April, 6pm Evening Prayer

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/747920155?pwd=YWRqNmRZUmhCWmx4bjBIMUEyeHdGQT09>

Meeting ID: 747 920 155

Password: 001232

Thursday 9th April, 6pm Holy Communion

(Please have some bread and wine ready!)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/447911674?pwd=bn51dTNjbTRxallyYXlrWm42K08wQT09>

Meeting ID: 447 911 674

Password: 021144

Good Friday, 11am Prayer at the foot of the Cross

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/696538616?pwd=WjR3dUkwY1pGci85VzdyUmJDQXd5dz09>

Meeting ID: 696 538 616

Password: 015965

Easter Sunday Morning, 11am Holy Communion

(Please have some bread and wine ready)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/886460049?pwd=VzU3RnJPZm1NdWhTaEVVZzhGTXQ1UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 460 049

Password: 008018