

Thursday 9th - Sunday 12th April 2020

Easter Triduum

WELCOME to our news sheet for the Easter period.

Our churches may not be open at this difficult time

but we continue to worship together in new ways and are always united in prayer.



So we begin the three days of the Easter Triduum in the strangest of times, not able to worship in our churches in these most significant of times in the church's year and perhaps fearing that Easter will pass us by this year. How painful it feels not to be able to look forward to our glorious celebration on Easter Day – the most joyful of times when everything is new and wonderful after the sorrow of Good Friday and the long journey through Lent that led us to the foot of the cross. Will we know the joy of Easter at all we wonder? And yet, this journey of Holy Week has perhaps been more intense than ever before, and rather than being 'virtual' Easter, maybe what we will experience is an Easter more 'real' than ever before. Despite our 'apartness' many are commenting how close we are drawing together as we find new ways to keep in touch and look after one another. Our Daily Podcasts have reached a wide audience, being passed up and down the country and around the world as well as within our own church family and town and village communities. Likewise our Sunday services are being shared in by a large congregation all brought together in

time even if not in space – in many ways there are amazing things happening and perhaps we should not be surprised given the good news of our faith that we are called to live out every day. In good times, it is easy to forget the power of God, in times such as these, we could not live without it. On Sunday we will say 'Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! May we know the power of this message and the joy of the resurrection and the promise of new life most especially in these times of darkness, and may we live this out, being bearers of the light of Christ to those who are struggling.



Holy Week

3 Special Services for 3 Special Days

Maundy Thursday at 7 pm

Good Friday at 2 pm

Holy Saturday at 8 pm

Join in if you can at these times, alternatively access via the links on the website (www.stmarystjohnunited.co.uk), Chelveston Archive (<http://church.chelveston.org.uk/services/>) and What's App Groups from earlier each day to suit you.

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday are the three Great Days leading up to **Easter Day** when the story of Jesus comes to its amazing climax.

On **Thursday**, Jesus and his friends celebrate the Jewish Festival of the Passover after which they go out to the olive groves of Gethsemane, where Jesus has often gone to pray. He knows that he is about to be betrayed and arrested and is terribly afraid of all that awaits. In the middle of the night, the Temple Guards come and take him. He is then interrogated by the High Priest, handed over to the Romans who beat him viciously before his 'trial' before Pilate the Roman Governor. Pilate is minded to release Jesus, but the Chief Priests and scribes stir up the crowd who scream for Jesus to be crucified.

On **Friday**, Jesus is forced to carry his cross through the streets of Jerusalem, before being nailed to the cross beam at noon. His friends abandon him, and only his mother Mary, his closest friend John, and some of the other women, remain to be with him until the end. At about 3 pm, he dies, and darkness covers the land. His body is taken down from the cross and buried in a stone tomb.

On **Saturday**, everyone is in shock and it is quiet. Then while it is still dark, before dawn on the Sunday, Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb, to anoint the body, which had been buried in haste, with the traditional burial spices. When she gets there, the stone is rolled away and the tomb is empty.....

The special services of **Maundy Thursday**, **Good Friday** and **Holy Saturday** help us enter into the twists and turns and drama of this story. This year, we perhaps know more than usual about the anxiety and confusion of the disciples, and the fear and isolation of Jesus. So listen along and join in as we journey together with Jesus through **The Great Week**.

MAUNDY THURSDAY – ‘From the Upper Room to Gethsemane’ with a Reflection by The Dean of Peterborough, The Very Revd Chris Dalliston.

GOOD FRIDAY – ‘Tenebrae – Facing the Shadows’ a moving meditation led by The Revd Canon Lesley McCormack.

HOLY SATURDAY – The Easter Vigil – a service of readings and music as we light the Easter Fire and anticipate the resurrection.

EASTER DAY – a Festival Service of Celebration led by our Ministry Team and others – join in if you can at 10 am – you will need an extra candle to light as we welcome the light of the risen Christ among us, and a bowl of water for when we renew our baptism promises – and perhaps some prosecco and Easter Eggs to share in together afterwards!

Orders of Service for all these services are available on the website and are being emailed round with this News sheet – if you know of anyone who can’t access things online, do please print off and pass on to others if you can, whilst still observing the safety guidelines. Please though do not put yourself and others at risk to do so.

NEW WAYS TO WORSHIP TOGETHER! While the buildings may be closed, our worship and ministry continues - we are finding new ways to be in touch with one another via phone, email, WhatsApp, Facebook and the Benefice Website. Our broadcasts have been shared across the world and up and down the UK, and even shared down the phonelines – keep up all the spreading of the word everyone!

PRAYING AT HOME DURING EASTER WEEK: The Ministry Team and our church family will continue to produce a Daily Podcast for Easter Week, as well as ongoing for Sundays and in the weeks following, all of which will all be posted on the website and WhatsApp Groups. A simple form of Daily Prayer is also available from the website – and can be delivered to homes for those who are not online. Many of us say Morning Prayer at 9 am, Evening Prayer at 5 pm and Night Prayer before bedtime. There are also many resources available from the Church of England website www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online.

Do check out our Benefice website: www.stmarystjohnunited.co.uk and Church Facebook pages, St Mary's, Higham Ferrers, st. john's church chelveston.

Bishop Donald has also been making a weekly Video message – again available on our website etc. In all this, we are still together as the church, we are still praying together and sharing in ‘spiritual communion’ and growing together in faith and trust. More than anything, as we continue on our journey into Eastertide in a different way to normal, we may well find ourselves drawing closer to God and one another than ever before.

OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ASKED FOR:

Baby Albert, John Arkell, Wallis Beard, Richard Bedells, Madge Boxall, Daniel Boxall, Tony Brown, Hazel Cragg, Pat Ellis, Henry Flynn, Angela Fulcher, Cynthia Hobson, Noreen Holmes, Leigh Kingdon, Tim McGuire, Sally Mayes, Annette Norman, Peter Paynton, Anna Sauntson, Elizabeth Swindley, Garth Ward, Sara Whatley, Margaret Whiteman.

Chelveston: Joan Amos, Ann Balantyne, Brittany Fowler, Sheila Hayes, Muriel Palmer, Diana Wright.

IN MEMORIAM: Geoff Headland, Phillip Clarke, Josh Youngman, Doreen Partridge, Carole Richardson.

YEAR'S MIND ANNIVERSARIES:

Henry Chichele (Archbishop), Jack Thomas, Richard Cherry, Lilian Espin, Arthur Birtchnell, George Britchford, Benjamin Ford, Percy Tobin, John Owen, Jim Jackson, Anthony Morris, William March, Edith Coker, Norah Essex, Luke Rowe, Herbert Baxter, Arthur Denton, Reginald Dunmore, Albert Flawn, Sylvia Gray, Percy Blackwell, Arthur King, Audrey Kirk, Margaret Airey, Annie White, Walter Palmer, James Robinson, Margaret Oswald, Lily Newman, Frances Wheatley, Vernon Silsby, George Fuller.

Please use this news sheet to help you pray for our churches and their mission during the week.

BENEFICE PRAYER GROUP – Daily Intentions for the coming week

AIM: To grow & develop our own faith & build good relationships with our local communities

Sun	In such difficult times we pray for a strengthening of our faith, for all who are struggling and for all aspects of the life of our communities affected across the world.
Mon	For our Government as they lead us in the Coronavirus crisis and find new ways to support those most vulnerable in our nation.
Tues	For all who are key workers and risk their wellbeing to care for others, especially all NHS workers and those on the front line..
Wed	For God's upholding in this Holy Week that we may know the Easter joy even in the darkness of the present times.
Thurs	For all who are lonely and fearful, and those with ongoing health concerns; for those finding the isolation especially challenging, and all who are ill or who have died as a result of Covid-19.
Fri	For the ongoing life of our churches, that we may continue to support one another and be signs of hope, demonstrating our commitment and faith to the Good News of Jesus Christ.
Sat	For our children and young people and all the families within our communities.

NOTICES

'KEEP THE LIGHT SHINING': Placing a lighted candle in our window has become a way of showing our solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished. Given the lighter evenings now, as we continue that this Sunday, perhaps 8 pm may be a better time to begin this as we 'keep the light shining' together. Many of us are also making, knotting, crocheting rainbows to place in our windows too which as well as the round of applause on Thursdays at 8 pm is continuing to show support for our NHS frontline workers and other key workers.

SAD NEWS: Our prayers are much needed for our Rural Dean, Revd Chris Youngman and his wife Liz. Tragically their youngest son, Josh, died aged 26 of complications from Covid-19, last Sunday. Chris is now on compassionate leave and our deepest sympathies, love and prayers are with all the family.

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 and all who mourn; that we may find comfort in knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

KEEPING IN TOUCH: we will continue to update the website and Facebook pages and send out communications by email and text. Phone calls will be a good way of us all supporting one another, especially where we are self-isolating at home. Please help where you can by passing on updates and messages and do let us know where people are in need of shopping or practical assistance - there are various groups getting going to help in these sort of ways and both churches are supporting this as well as through our church family links.

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS for both St Mary's and St John's will now take place later in the year but it would be helpful for any groups preparing reports to still produce them as soon as possible.

MOTHERS' UNION meetings are suspended until further notice. We will continue in prayer.

FOOD BANK: Whilst both churches are closed donations from St John's can be dropped off directly with Sara Owst. In Higham, if your daily walk comes anywhere near Meadow Walk they can safely be left on Jane Smeathers' doorstep at No 4, or speak to Michelle. If none of these work for you please use the donation points in local supermarkets. We anticipate that demand will increase dramatically in the coming weeks and we will need long life semi-skimmed milk, jam & preserves, tinned potatoes, tinned pasta & tinned fish, so if you're able to pick up extra items for the food bank on your weekly shopping trip we would be extremely grateful. Thank you so much for continuing to support the needy at this difficult time.

THE NEWS SHEET is now being emailed more widely, in addition to those on the electoral roll and the regular email list. If you know of anyone else who would like to receive it please let me know on jane@smeathers.com.

For all enquiries and requests for pastoral help:	
Revd. MICHELLE:	Tel: 01733 569147 / 07961 003352 or michelleacd@hotmail.co.uk
BRENDA Elldred (Reader):	07816 771702, brenda@elldred.co.uk
PASTORAL TEAM:	Lynne on 07800 636943, lynnempocock@netscape.net for St Mary's Brenda Elldred (as above) for St John's
PARISH OFFICE:	01933 741140 or stmarys.higham@gmail.com
BEDE HOUSE ENQUIRIES:	01933 741140 or thebedehouse@gmail.com
WEBSITE:	www.stmarystjohnunited.co.uk