

The Parish Voice

Faith Resources for Holy Week and Easter



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Chris writes...

*Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.
“Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked
Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.
The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

Matthew 26.40-41



Jesus' time spent in the Garden of Gethsemane seems rather apt for us at the moment. Knowing, that soon the soldiers would come to arrest him, he goes to a garden called Gethsemane with his friends and asks them to keep watch whilst he prays to God to help Him. But His friends are tired, their flesh is weak, and they fall asleep. In the darkness of the night, Jesus must have felt very alone. That sense of loneliness must have only built during the night and the next day; he is arrested, deserted by even his closest disciples and then, on the cross, he cries out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Those words, cried out in pain, give a visceral sense of how forlorn and isolated He must have felt in his dying moments.

But even in the darkness of abandonment, Jesus entrusts himself to God's care. When his disciples fall asleep, he still says to God his Father, 'Thy will be done'. When he watches Peter deny him, he still stands firm and refuses to answer the charges Pilate sets before him. And in the last moments before his death on the cross, he still makes time to show love and care for his mother and the beloved disciple, asking them to look after each other in the weeks, months and years to follow.

Loneliness is something that is likely to be on all our minds at the moment; where we have been required to self-isolate, practise social-distancing and stay away from all our natural communities, such as Church, school and work. And this will be, perhaps, particularly true this Easter. Instead of coming together to journey through Holy Week, culminating in our celebration of Christ's glorious resurrection, we must walk the path to the cross in our homes, by ourselves or with just a few members of our households. This is not what any of us had been expecting, and it requires us to think deeply about what it means to *be* church when we can't *be in* church.

Which is why you will discover that this is a very different issue of Parish Voice. Instead of your usual mix of articles and reports, you will discover reflections and resources pertaining to Holy Week. These have been written by members of the Ministry Team and are there for you to use each day, from Palm Sunday to Easter

Sunday, to help you to fully enter into the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. Although doing so might not ease all the loneliness and isolation you might be feeling, we hope that this is one way of continuing to feel part of a connected community, the body of Christ. These materials will be supplemented by a range of worship materials and videos, which will be available on our website.

Across the church community, we have also worked on a Parish Telephone Network, as well as social media and What's App groups, so that members of St John's can stay connected during this healthcare crisis – if you haven't been connected in this way and would like to be, please do let us know! James and myself remain very much available via phone and email, and please do contact us if you need any kind of support, whether pastoral or practical.

These will not be an easy few weeks and months, but I hope that each and every one of you will know that God is with you, upholding and strengthening you, in all the trials that are to come. For our God is a God who says;

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1.9

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From the editors:

We'd both like to start by thanking James, Chris, John and Lucy for producing the very extensive set of resources that are the basis of the magazine this time—and for all that they and other members of the church community are doing to help everyone feel connected and supported. As Chris indicates above, this is indeed a very different Parish Voice, and of course circumstances continue to change and to affect what it seems best to do. Without therefore making promises about future publication dates, let us say that we very much hope to have the next issue ready to send you all around mid-May, for Ascension and Pentecost time. With the Parish Office closed, we're sending the magazine out in the main by email, and this is likely to continue while social distancing lasts.

If you have anything you'd like to contribute to next time, please do continue to send it to us at stjohnnevangelistmag@gmail.com, by the beginning of May if possible. Anything that might be interesting or helpful to others at this time will be most warmly welcomed! And in the meantime, everyone, keep well and keep safe!

Liz and Paula

Daily Reflections and Activities for Holy Week Palm Sunday



Reflection on Matthew 21.1-11

"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.'"

Matthew 21. 8-9

If we had been able to meet together this Palm Sunday, we would have followed a traditional format, starting with the Liturgy of the Palms, then processing around the church together, singing with palms aloft. Then the service would have changed temperament, moving to the Liturgy of the Passion, where we hear the whole story of the Passion of Jesus, usually enacted out by members of the congregation.

The passage above reminds us that, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt, the

crowds remembered the prophecy of Zechariah; that their king will come to them, triumphant and victorious, and yet also humble and riding on a donkey. Remembering this, the cries go up and the air is filled with cheering and praise and the words of Psalm 118; the psalm which they always sing near the end of a pilgrimage. Waving palms, the crowds cry out 'Hosanna', 'Save us'. But this overwhelming joy at the start of Holy Week is quick to fade. Within days the people who shouted 'Hosanna' become the same people who cry 'Crucify'. We see how quickly a crowd can turn.

Perhaps though, this is a very human response. It makes me remember the times I have started a new hobby and I have waxed lyrical to anyone who would listen about it. The initial enthusiasm is all-consuming, but then, just as quickly as it started, it fades away; perhaps just losing momentum, or perhaps due to some minor stumbling block along the way. Sadly, our faith can be like this too. But the amazing thing about the gospel is that, even if our faith does ebb and flow, God sticks by us.

Reflect: At the start of this Holy Week, reflect on the times you have been full of a joy and enthusiasm which have died away all too quickly. How might you sustain the initial eagerness?

Saving God, as we remember with joy that triumphant procession; give us the faith to follow you on your journey to the cross. Amen.

Family Reflection at the start of Holy Week – 7 days to go!

When Jesus came into the great city of Jerusalem, the crowd was excited and restless. Many had heard of Jesus' teaching and miracles. They longed for a leader who would help them drive the Romans from their land.

As Jesus rode through the city gates on a young donkey the people cheered and praised God. They waved palm branches and shouted "Hosannah! Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"

As they began to throw their cloaks and palm leaves onto the ground to pave the way for Jesus, their hearts were full of expectation and hope.
What are you hoping for today?

Family Scavenger Hunt - Jesus Rides into Jerusalem

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, lots of people were very excited to see him and waved branches of palm leaves like flags to welcome him.

Look round the house - Can you find something green? A lego tree?

Go outside - Can you find a leaf that you could wave?

Other Activities

- Play 'Pin the Tail on the Donkey'
- Make a Donkey (or a donkey mask) using whatever craft materials you can find in the house.
- Design your own flag to wave.
- Sing a Palm Sunday song (e.g. We Have a King who Rides a Donkey).

Monday of Holy Week



*Anointing of Christ's Feet, James Tissot
(c. 1890)*

Reflection on the Anointing at Bethany - John 12.1-11

"Jesus said 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me'"

John 12.7-8

Six days before the Passover, Jesus comes to Bethany, where a dinner is given in his honour. With his life progressively more under threat, he chooses not to panic or hide away, but to take time to enjoy a meal there with his friends. During the meal, Mary takes a pound of costly perfume, anoints Jesus' feet with it and then wipes them with her hair. It is an act of profound over-extravagance.

I wonder how you feel about watching displays of emotion. I suspect that for many of us, Mary's actions are the sort of thing that, if we had been there, we might have found deeply embarrassing. I

can imagine the other guests round the table turning away; shocked, possibly not knowing where to look. But instead of being embarrassed, I wonder if we can be inspired by Mary's confidence. In her act, she was able to be extravagant and generous; not being held back by the opinions of others. Giving this gift to Jesus, she was able to show him all her thanks and all her love for him. And let's not forget that she had plenty of reason to be thankful; for Jesus had raised her beloved brother, Lazarus, from the dead.

The poet and priest, Malcolm Guite writes about this passage; "I love this intense and beautiful moment in the Gospels. The God of the Cosmos enters as a vulnerable man into all the particular fragility of our human friendships and intimacy. I love the way Jesus responds to Mary's beautiful, useless gesture and recognises it as something that is always worthwhile, something that will live forever, for all the carping and criticism of Judas, then and now."

Reflect: Think about a time you have reacted with horror and embarrassment at a social impropriety (either your own or someone else's). What was it that embarrassed you?

Loving God, your goodness is without measure and you always welcome us to sit and rest with you. Help us this week to show our thankfulness and our love for you, by giving you the most precious gift of all, our time and attention. Amen

Family Reflection for the Monday of Holy Week – 6 days to go!

The gospel reading for today focusses on the story of Mary, one of Lazarus' sisters, and how she took a jar of expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus' feet. We can imagine that the room was filled with the smell of rich perfume. Today is a good day to think about how you are getting ready for Holy Week. Are you ready for the mystery and miracle of Easter Day?

Just before the events of Holy Week, Jesus told a story about five wise and five foolish girls (you can read it in Matthew 25:1-13). Lent, and particularly Holy Week, is all about getting ready to remember the great events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. But Jesus knows that more often than not we are not ready for God and what God is about to do. What more could you do to get ready this week?

Perhaps one idea is, as you continue to read together the stories of Holy Week, you could use your senses imaginatively to explore the story – what can you see, hear, smell, taste and touch? The story of the Anointing at Bethany might be a great place to start this!

Family Scavenger Hunt - Jesus is Anointed

When Mary poured the perfume on Jesus' feet, the smell must have been very beautiful. Look round the house – Can you find your favourite smell; a soap, a hand cream, or maybe a certain food?

Go outside - Can you find a beautifully smelling flower or plant?

Other Activities

- Find some hand cream and maybe offer those you live with a hand-massage.
- If you have the ingredients, try to make a bath bomb! If not, why not have a bath with your favourite bubble bath?
- Mary gave Jesus the most precious gift that she could think of. What gift could you give Jesus today?

Tuesday of Holy Week



Reflection on John 12.20-36

Today's reading begins with what seems like a very simple request – one perhaps we would all like to ask: 'Sir, we want to meet Jesus.' The Greeks asking this certainly had no idea what an extraordinary answer they were going to receive.

It begins what for me is one of the most extraordinary and powerful passages in the Bible, part of what are known as the Farewell Discourses. We can read this prediction of Jesus' death with the benefit of hindsight – we know what Jesus is referring to – we know what was to come for him – but to the disciples and presumably even more for the Greeks, Jesus's responses would have been baffling, overwhelming and for many, terrifying.

Both the crowd and the disciples are confused by some of the statements

Jesus comes out with. They all have an image of the Messiah in their minds from their knowledge of Scripture, from everything they would have been taught from childhood. The Messiah for them is a strong leader, a great warrior coming to bring justice and so does not fit with what they have seen of Jesus in his ministry.

Jesus is telling us that to see him clearly, and to follow him, elements of ourselves need to die – those false, unworthy parts of ourselves, so not an actual death – we need to set aside all those aspects of our lives that prevent us seeing Jesus. These might include fear, attachments and obsessions with material things. Giving these up may be painful but if we manage it, we will see a new life and a new way of being ahead of us. Jesus's glorification culminates with the Cross – it is only through Jesus's death can we find abundant life.

Lent and Holy Week are for many a time to shed ourselves of some of these things – maybe some of the luxuries and cares of this world - in order to learn how to bring Jesus more into our lives. We have to be careful though, not to be fixated on the window (death) that Jesus gives us to see him for what he truly is, and instead see *through* the window to the transformative possibilities beyond. In these terrible, confusing and troubling times, could this mean that we do not

fixate too much on Covid-19 and death, but instead look to the positives that we can achieve because of it? Let's use this time to become better neighbours, better friends, better Christians (we are truly learning that being a Christian is more about the way we live our lives than just going to church every Sunday!).

'Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour?'

(v 27)

*This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes.
Try, as best as you can, not to let
The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.
If you remain generous,
Time will come good;
And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning.*

John O'Donohue

Family Reflection for the Tuesday of Holy Week – 5 days to go!

In the reading today, Jesus predicts his death and says:

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only one seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds

Think about the journey of a seed; it travels down alone into the dark, cool earth, where it waits, resting, until it is time to grow. When it is time to grow, that seed breaks open, pushing new life up through the soil, to the world beyond. Only through being buried in the dark and then being broken open, is the seed able to grow into the plant. Not only that, but as tiny as the seed is, it has all the information needed within it to make the fully grown plant - even if that plant is a huge tree!

The disciples would have been very sad when they heard that Jesus speaking about his death, but Jesus knew that through his death, he would bring us life.

Family Scavenger Hunt -

Take some time to think about seeds and plants.

Inside: What seeds and grains can you find inside your home?

Outside: Can you find any seeds or seed pods around the garden?

Other Activities

Plant some seeds

In many cultures the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week are set aside to clean your house in preparation for Easter celebrations. How will you get your house ready today?

In the full reading, the crowd nearby hear a sound like thunder. The sound of thunder can be awesome or frightening, depending on your mood. Distant rumbles, accompanied by the sound of falling rain, can even be comforting! Find some music, or natural sounds like rain and thunder, to listen to. How does it make you feel?

Wednesday of Holy Week



Reflection on John 13.21-32

On the Wednesday of Holy Week, we read of Jesus sharing a meal with his disciples. Jesus tells them that one of them will betray him. We can imagine the room at that moment, as everyone looks round at each other, trying to work out who it will be.

No one wants to speak up first, lest they be accused. Then Simon Peter prompts the disciple who is sitting next to Jesus, the one whom Jesus loves, to speak up. "Lord, who is it?" he says, asking the question they are all afraid to ask. Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." We can wonder why Jesus did this. Perhaps he knew that, if he accused Judas to his face, the other disciples might have stepped in and tried to stop him from doing what he needed to do.

There are often moments in our lives when we try to stop bad things from happening and, when they do happen,

we can find it hard to forgive – both those who have caused the hurt and ourselves from not preventing it. But we have in our hearts the example of Jesus, still willing to wash Judas' feet and to share bread and wine with him, despite his betrayal.

Today, make some space to think about those times when you have been betrayed, treated unjustly, talked about, or been made the subject of gossip. Think about the people that have caused you pain and reflect on the ways that you might be able to make peace with the situation.

"Judas, Peter" by Luci Shaw

because we are all
betrayers, taking
silver and eating
body and blood and asking
(guilty) is it I and hearing
him say yes
it would be simple for us all
to rush out
and hang ourselves
but if we find grace
to cry and wait
after the voice of morning
has crowed in our ears
clearly enough
to break our hearts
he will be there
to ask us each again
do you love me?

God of mercy, we acknowledge that we are all sinners. We turn from the wrong that we have thought and said and done, and are mindful of all that we have failed to do. For the sake of Jesus, who died for us, forgive us all that is past, and help us to live each day in the light of Christ our Lord. Amen.

Family Reflection for the Wednesday of Holy Week – 4 days to go!

Everybody needs a second chance.
In our gospel reading for today, we see that despite Judas' betrayal of Jesus, Jesus was able to sit alongside him, wash his feet and break bread with him. I wonder if we would find it that easy to share a meal with someone who has hurt us!



Another man to whom Jesus gives a second chance is Zacchaeus, the little man who climbed a tree to see Jesus. You can read his story in Luke 19: 1-10.

I wonder what Zacchaeus was doing in the last days of Jesus' life; he had only recently met with Jesus and had been dramatically changed. In fact, this tax collector had been so amazed by Jesus that he said in verse 8:

'I will now pay back *four* times as much to everyone I have ever cheated.'

What other gospel stories can think of when Jesus forgives someone?
How did Jesus change their lives?

Family Scavenger Hunt

Later in the story of Holy Week, Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Whilst he is there, Judas arrives, bringing with him soldiers. He kisses Jesus, so they know who to arrest.

Inside: Find some lego and make a garden. You could also find some silver coins, to remember that Judas was paid 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus.

Outside: Next time you go for a walk, look at all the lovely gardens. Which one would you choose to pray in?

Other Activities

Take a dirty penny. Using a piece of cotton wool, or an ear bud, clean the penny with tomato ketchup (alternatively, pop the penny in coke, but this will take longer). What happens to it? As you look at the clean penny, think about a time you needed to be forgiven and a time you needed to forgive someone else.

Say the Lord's prayer, focussing particularly on the line: '*forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us*'.

Maundy Thursday



Reflection on John 13.1-17, 31b-35

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another... as I have loved you.' (John 13.34, 14)

'For if I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet...

On Maundy Thursday, we enter into the heart of our salvation. And we begin, with Christians throughout the world, the celebration of Easter, the paschal mystery of the dying and rising of Christ: at the heart of our human history. And as we do this, we remember the significance of the Last Supper: the last meal of Jesus, with his disciples, on the night before he died, which was also the Passover meal. There is a profound link here between the ancient Jewish

Passover festival and the action of God in Jesus, the new Passover lamb.

So we remember tonight how Jesus, in fulfilment of prophecy, identified himself with the Passover lamb, and became the new sacrifice, whose blood takes away the sins of the world, and whose self-offering draws us - once and for all - into life; heaven and earth reunited, through his saving death and passion, and the way of life made open to all.

But as if all that wasn't enough, we also remember something else, another action of Jesus, as recorded in John, but summing up the whole of his ministry, the washing of his disciples' feet. A dramatic sign of Christ's love for his disciples, and for all, together with his command - Latin 'mandatum', from which we get Maundy Thursday - that we wash one another's feet.

So in the absence of our usual foot-washing, let me meditate on the theme of love: at the heart of our Easter faith. The cruciform love of Jesus, freely offered to us, in which we're invited to share.

God is love. God, as Trinity, invites us in to share in his circle of love. And Jesus reveals the nature of God's love, and in his suffering and death that love is poured out for all the world. We are created out of love, we are invited into a relationship with God in love, and - however much we fail - to learn to

reflect that love in our heart, in our thoughts, our words and actions. And, one day, we will be judged by love.

But what does this mean, as we prepare to mark the Easter mystery, for each one of us, for St John's and our world? Mother Theresa said, *'We can do no great things, only small things with great love.'*

Of course we all fail, and God is pure forgiveness; but we are invited today, to remember after Jesus that it's all about loving. For, in the end, we have a choice, of either being absorbed with self-love or the costly journey of learning to love others, abiding in the love of Christ... The choice between washing one another's feet, or accumulating the world's privileges unto ourselves - which can only, in the end, lead to the negation of that love, for which we were created. For we were created for love, we are

saved by love, and we are invited, over our lifetime, to learn to grow into the fullness of that love. And on Maundy Thursday we glimpse what love really means, as in Christ we pledge to grow into that love, as the fullness of all that we are and strive to be. A love which leads us into the heart of the mystery of Christ, and into bearing Christ to one another – washing one another's feet. So as we meditate on the love which was revealed in the Upper Room, and which led Jesus to the Cross, may God make us more loving, more Christ-like, and more open to the mystery of his loving purposes for each one of us.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you: give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and forever. Amen.

Family Reflection for the Thursday of Holy Week – 3 days to go!

Today is known as Maundy Thursday. Today we remember the Last Supper. Read about it in Mark 14: 22-26. It was at this meal or soon afterwards that Peter swore he would never reject Jesus and when Jesus told him that he would deny him three times before the cock crowed (verse 30).

All of us let Jesus down at some time but Jesus still loves us and faced death for us.

They say that both good and bad things come in threes. Later Jesus was to remake his friendship with Peter with three questions that cancelled out the three denials (John 21: 15-19). How many expressions using three or stories with three in the title can you think of?

Family Scavenger Hunt – Maundy Thursday

On Maundy Thursday, we remember Jesus meeting his friends for a meal. There should have been a servant to wash their dusty feet when they arrived, but Jesus did it himself. Even though he was a king, he acted like a servant. He showed that we should look after each other and not think we are too important to help.

Inside: Find something to represent a king. A crown? Something purple? Some jewels?

Outside: Can you see any footprints? Can you make footprints in sand? In a puddle?

At the end of the meal, Jesus shared some bread and a cup of wine between them and asked them to always remember this night.

Inside: Find something that has a good memory for you. A photo of a holiday? An old school hoodie? A favourite souvenir? Talk about the time it reminds you of.

Outside: Can find a place you have good memories of?

Other Activities

Typically on Maundy Thursday, James and Chris would wash feet during the service. What can you wash today? Could you clean some dirty shoes? Or wash the car?

Churches often eat together on Maundy Thursday. On the website, you will find a template for an 'Agape Meal' which includes readings from the Last Supper. Try reading through the liturgy as you eat your evening meal.

Talk about a time you shared a meal with friends. You might like to plan the menu for a special meal, or draw a plate picture of your favourite foods.

Jesus shared his love with his disciples on this day, how might you show your love to someone today?

Good Friday



Reflection on John 18.1 – 19.37

Today is Good Friday and the passion narrative in our Gospel reading takes us through the whole of Jesus' arrest, his trial, his crucifixion on the cross and ultimately, his death.

I remember, when my children were younger, they often asked me to skip the reading of the crucifixion; it was too painful, too sad, they wanted to skip to Easter Day and its joyful message of resurrection and new life. It was an understandable request. In our own lives too, we are sometimes tempted to avoid the hard bits, the sad bits, the deeply distressing bits. We, understandably, want to avoid pain (both to ourselves and those we love) and so we look for

short-cuts, for ways we can skip to the happy ending. Sometimes we avoid taking chances and striking out in new ways, because we know that it will be hard to begin with.

But the truth is, it is often through our suffering and vulnerability that we allow ourselves to grow. It is through being broken open, that we discover undiscovered paths to new life, and through getting up from the ground that we discover how strong we can be. Jesus knew what was going to happen to Him. Before He got on the donkey and rode into Jerusalem, He knew that the trajectory was suffering and death. The power of the Holy Week story was that He continued to journey on, despite knowing the risks.

Thankfully most of us are not walking on paths with as much suffering as Jesus; but we will each come to times of hardship, when life is difficult, and when we want to fast-forward to a better time. This time of social distancing and self-isolation will seem like that to some of you. But at those times, it is our courage and resilience which will be tested. Theodore Roosevelt once said "Courage is not having the strength to go on; it is going on when you don't have the strength." Because of Jesus' suffering on the cross, we know that we have a God who understands precisely what pain is and who will give us the strength to journey through difficult times. Through

Jesus' passion, we can each declare "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4.13).

Lord, who died on the cross and rescued the souls you have been sent to save, join us fast to you in your death so we may be joined with you in your kingdom. Teach us that nothing in life or death can separate us from you.

Amen

(Prayer from the Stations of the Cross by the Friends of Julian of Norwich)

Family Reflection for Good Friday Family Scavenger Hunt – Good Friday

– 2 days to go!

Today is the day of days.

Today is the day when Jesus took Life down into the darkest depths of Death. Today is Good Friday.

Read about what happened in Mark 15: 20-41.

Jesus was crucified between two criminals. One mocked him; the other one put his trust in Jesus even at the hour of death.

Today is the day for making a decision about what you think of Jesus. Will it be a 'yes' or a 'no'? Will you be for or against?

Jesus never gave back evil for evil. Evil was robbed of all its power by the Cross. Traditional icons (religious pictures) of the Cross show two people standing either side. Can you find out who they are?

Jesus was put to death on the cross and at first his friends were very sad. But a few days later they found this was not the end of the story and Jesus had come back to life! Now the cross is a symbol of new hope.

Inside: Try to find something cross shaped in your house.

Outside: If you go on an exercise walk today, look for crosses whilst outside; maybe on buildings, or in windows.

Other Activities

- Jesus is offered sour-wine on the cross, taste some vinegar to remember this.
- Can you make a cross? You could use Lego or Playdoh or sticks and string.
- Create an Easter garden; perhaps in an old tray or flower pot. Look for ideas by searching 'Easter Garden' online.

Holy Saturday



Reflection on John 19.38 - end - The Burial of Jesus

Today is Holy Saturday, the end of Holy Week; a time of special quietness between the death of Jesus on the cross on Good Friday and the day of His Glorious Resurrection tomorrow as the sun rises on Easter Sunday. Although we have been robbed of the opportunity to share Holy Week in church, most of us still have the opportunity to remember our Lord in our own homes. In many churches the Paschal Candle is lit on the night of Holy Saturday. Tonight, if you are able, it would be a sign of His presence in your home and to passers-by, if you too were to light a candle and place it in your window.

Remembering his burial our reading today comes from the Gospel of John. Here John, the beloved disciple, describes the taking down of the body of Jesus from the cross. Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus, had been given permission to do this and

was joined by Nicodemus. Both men were devout Jews who had hidden their following of Jesus for fear of criticism from the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council. They brought with them 75 pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes and they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in a shroud and placed it in a tomb never used before. Then they left it, since the Sabbath was close at hand, closing the opening with a stone.

It is significant, that our Lord's Crucifixion narrative contains details of his burial. Many great leaders in history have had their death recorded but few have almost equal detail of their burial. But for Christians, and those who are reading the Gospel for the first time, these details affirm that there is no doubt that Jesus had died. He hadn't just fainted as some who dismissed the resurrection claimed; he had died on the cross and was placed in the tomb. Charles Wesley in his famous hymn puts it very clearly 'Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?'

And so as we contemplate the end of a Holy Week very different to our normal experience, and look to the celebration of his rising, let us be thankful as the hymn proclaims, that our Lord did indeed die for us but that this moment, this special moment would soon be followed by his glorious resurrection!

Heavenly Father, today we remember that the death of your Son was not a charade, but a reality and that in death, He experienced the ultimate penalty for our sin. Help us to grasp that it opened the door for us to experience real life and that faced with such a mystery we cry: "Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" Amen

Family Reflection for the Saturday of Holy Week – 1 day to go!

Today everything has gone quiet, as we await the greatest event in the whole history of time.

Jesus lies buried in a garden tomb. One man dared to go and ask for the body, and it is in his family grave that Jesus is laid. That man was Joseph of Arimathea, and he was then helped by Nicodemus, another secret disciple, who had once come to Jesus by night.

Read about Joseph and Nicodemus in John 19.38 – end.

Burying Jesus took some courage. Not everyone knew they were secret believers. Do your friends know you believe in Jesus?

In preparation for tomorrow get ready a special candle, just as we would in church. If you are up late, you could light it at night, otherwise light it (or relight it) as soon as you are awake, to mark the Day of Resurrection and the end of your Easter countdown.

Family Scavenger Hunt - Jesus is buried

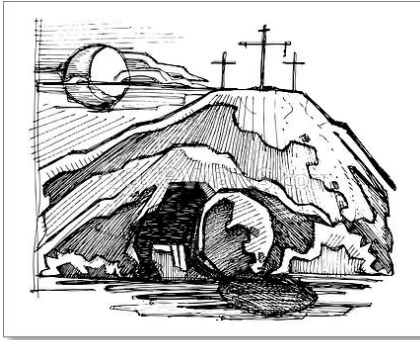
When Jesus was buried, he was wrapped in linen cloths, and a variety of herbs, spices and perfumes were used.

Can you find any spices in your kitchen e.g. cloves, cinnamon or cardamom?

Other Activities

- Create an edible Easter Garden (look for pictures by searching 'Easter Garden Biscuit' online)
- Talk about times you were sad
- Many people come to church late on Saturday evening, for the Easter Vigil. Often, a fire is lit outside and the Paschal Candle is lit from it. **IF YOU CAN DO THIS SAFELY AS A FAMILY**, you might like to light your own fire tonight and sing songs round it. If not, perhaps just light a candle.

Easter Sunday



bwc42440252 Barewalls

Reflection on Matthew 28. 1- 10

'He commanded us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead... everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.'

(Acts 10.42-43)

How do we discover life, true life, where there seems to be only struggle & decay? What Easter tells us is that there is a journey to be made – both in this life & eternally – from death to life, from despair to hope, from fear to trust and from darkness to light, whatever the challenges we face.

It's as if there is, for all of us, a giant chasm to be crossed: a grand canyon or

divide at the centre of our consciousness... a chasm between heaven and earth. And such is the importance of this interior journey, that one could argue that it makes no sense for human beings to map the outer reaches of the universe or travel the world wide web, if we are unable to make the most fundamental journey of all: the journey to true selfhood, true resurrection, and into a living experience of the presence of God.... And yet this, our gospel proclaims, is precisely what is made possible by the Passover - literally, the passing over - of Jesus, from death to life, on that 1st Easter, of which Mary Magdalen has a privileged place as the first human witness.

For Easter celebrates the death & resurrection – the passing over from death to life – of Jesus of Nazareth, 'powerful in word and deed', who was seized and crucified by his enemies, during the ancient Passover feast in Jerusalem. And on Easter morning, the 1st day of the new creation, Jesus rose from the dead, appearing to Mary Magdalen and his other disciples & assuring them of God's presence with them. And so Easter became the new Passover, the new means by which God would bring new life to his people everywhere, through the life & death & resurrection of Jesus, his incarnate Son. Here is the new way, enabled by God, for each of us to cross that great chasm and journey from death to life, from fear

to trust, from sin to new life, forgiveness & reconciliation. There really is no more important journey, for any of us, in life than this.

From the earliest days of the church, people recognised God's hand in what had happened to Jesus. And his followers taught of the risen Lord Jesus himself, interpreting his death & resurrection in the light of that earlier Passover, the ancient Exodus. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross now offered all people an escape from death and a true route to freedom. Jesus, the new Moses, would lead his people, the church, through desert trials to his heavenly kingdom. He would be with them always.

And we plumb the depths of that Easter mystery (God's loving presence with us), this new life, through the Passover of our own Baptism, through believing in the resurrection, & day-by-day in prayer, and whenever we celebrate the eucharist. What we celebrate today – as we meditate on the good news experienced & proclaimed by Mary Magdalen – changes everything, including ourselves, as we dare to discover the length and breadth and height and depth of God's love, which surpasses all understanding.

*God of glory, by the raising of your Son,
you have broken the chains of death
and hell: fill your church with faith and
hope; for a new day has dawned, and
the way of life stands open, through our
Saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.*

Family Reflection for Easter Day

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. They must have worried about how they would roll the stone away, but as they arrived an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled it back. They must have been very afraid, but the angel told them not to be. Whilst on their way to tell the disciples, the risen Jesus met with them.

I wonder how Mary Magdalene must have felt that first Easter morning. As you read through the story, talk about her different feelings, from sadness to fear, to confusion, to joy.

Family Scavenger Hunt – Jesus is Risen

Early on the Sunday morning some women—some of Jesus’s friends—went to the tomb. But they found the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty! Mary spoke to someone who she thought was the gardener.

Inside: At Easter we remember that the old things have passed away and that

God is doing a new thing. How many new things can you find in your home?

Outside: Can you find a stone or small pebble to remember the stone across the tomb that was rolled away?

Other Activities

- Hold an Easter Service at home – if you’re awake you could do this at dawn! Or you could watch a service online.
- Have an Easter Egg Hunt
Decorate some eggs - either real eggs or draw and colour pictures of eggs. You could look for Pysanky egg templates online.
- Sing any songs you know with ‘Alleluia’ in them.
- Share an Easter greeting with someone on a video call/by posting them a card?

Daily Reflections for Holy Week were written and compiled by James, Chris, John and Lucy.

Easter Message from James Shakespeare, Priest in Charge

'Happy to Help'

Dear Friends,

I wish you & your loved ones God's blessings as we prepare to celebrate Easter. This year we do so in unprecedented conditions, our churches closed physically, public worship suspended, and our economy on hold.

Our hearts go out to those working in the NHS, to carers, community volunteers, and family members either experiencing underlying health conditions, or suffering from COVID-19.

Our Christian community at St John's remains alive and active, albeit from inside our homes. Alongside following public health guidelines, there is so much that we can do... pray, study, develop our hobbies, keep in contact by phone, and connect online. For those not online, Parish Voice has come to you by post. Whatever our reaction to this trying situation - whether it be anxiety and worry, or an ability to adapt more easily - may we all know the reality of Easter, of Jesus Christ our Saviour, risen from the dead, and his victory over suffering, sin and death.

As the apostle Peter writes, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable... kept in heaven for you.' (1 Peter 1.3)

Many of you are keeping in touch with one another by phone, which is good news and a good initiative of mutual support. Keep it up! If you're not receiving any calls, and would like to be linked up with another parishioner, please let me know: phone me on tel. 01223 241815.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain our 'Happy to Help' scheme, operating within Queen Edith's Ward, as well as the facility of requesting food deliveries within St John's itself. Thankfully we have strong relationships with our local community and statutory partners, as a result of which we delivered a fortnight ago, the 'Happy to Help' leaflets, with my contact details, and encouraging neighbours to look out for each other, most especially the vulnerable.

This scheme is now extended, and the Queen Edith's Forum is recruiting volunteers, and establishing a dedicated phone line, so anyone can request help. At the time of writing the number hasn't yet been published, but you can either

phone me, or visit their website; for further details: <https://queen-ediths.info/>

Furthermore if anyone from our St John's congregation hasn't been able to access help from this scheme, or from other avenues of support developing – local street-level social media groups, County Council and NHS responders – then please do contact me: on jshakespeare@btinternet.com or tel. 01223 241815. With a few dedicated St John's colleagues, between us we would be glad to assist, and to make a delivery for you; if you live outside the parish, I will liaise with other clergy. Please do contact me. If you're not on our St John's e-list, please do also sign-up, as this is an

invaluable means of communication: email Tricia James on randpjay2@btinternet.com.

For those online, we hope you find our Holy Week and Easter online videos useful, 'Church at Home': <https://www.stjohntheevangelistcambridge.org/church-at-home/>, as well as these excellent resources published in 'Parish Voice'. Thank you to the editorial team, Liz and Paula.

With Easter greetings – *James & Family*



LENTEN GIVING

The charities chosen for our Lenten giving this year are *A Rocha UK* and the *Bethesda Project, Burundi*. Once we're 'back to normal', we will be encouraging support for these charities.

Plant Sale

Although the plant sale cannot take place in its usual form, Roger and Katie are growing lots of plants and vegetables to sell. Further information will be circulated once a plan has been worked out.

Memories in a Garden (Gethsemane)

It was quiet and still in the garden,
A Paschal moon hung in the sky,
A slight breeze rustled the silvery leaves
Of the old tree standing nearby.

It recalled that night so long ago,
A night of haunting agony,
A solitary figure bowed down to the ground
While his companions slept close by.

Many new trees have grown up around
Since that night so long ago,
Many have knelt on that hallowed ground
And sought to enter His presence there.

But only the old olive tree
Sheltering the awesome reality
Knew the cost of unspoken fears
And saw the blood, the sweat and the tears.

*In the Garden of Gethsemane guarded with love
by the Franciscans, there are still eight venerable olive trees,
witnesses of the painful agony of the Redeemer.
Their leaves are esteemed by pious pilgrims and faithful Christians
as precious souvenirs.*

Beryl Johnson

Our Church Mission Society Link Mission Partners

Some of you will remember Kylie Duncan's visit to St John's in 2010 before she left to work in NE India under the auspices of the CMS and with the support of several parishes, including ours. Her remit was to work with local communities to raise the awareness of human trafficking and its dangers. When asked how long she envisaged staying there she replied she was in it for the long term and when the question continued to be asked her answer was 'For ten years then I'll review and see'. In July she will have been there for ten years. She is now Kylie Bahadur, having met her husband Bhim through her work and become the mother of Joshua and Daniel.

In 2019, having trained local teams to continue their calling in the NE, Kylie and Bhim relocated to NW India to carry out similar work there. There they have become aware human degradation on a grand scale as the state they now work in is the source, corridor, transit and destination for human trafficking. Witchcraft abounds as do activities connected with it; ritual abuse, sexual abuse, human trafficking and human sacrifice. Domestic violence is a cause of great concern, as is bride trafficking. It has become clear to them that such activities are linked to all levels of society.

Previously Kylie and Bhim combined their anti-trafficking work with evangelism but in their new location

Our call

To help release people from the horrors of being trafficked and to motivate and mobilise the church for social action

Our roles

Working with a team of local people who raise awareness in schools, churches and community projects on human trafficking and the issues related to it.

there is less opportunity for preaching as they work with established faith organisations and Kylie is also involved with home schooling and life with a small baby. Bhim returns from time to time to NE India, where child protection is currently the main focus, to attend regional meetings of colleagues there and to train potential Christian leaders. There is a personal matter which is of great concern to them. India has passed a law to create a National Register of Citizens, and current citizens must prove that their family was enrolled in the 1951 Census when India gained its independence. Bhim is Nepali, his father having settled in India many years ago, and therefore will have difficulty proving his Indian citizenship, even though he has an Indian passport. They ask us to pray for wisdom as they work out what to do regarding the registration process, and to pray that Bhim will not lose his citizenship; if this happened Kylie and the children would lose their visas.

Katie

Retreating to Advance

‘You’re going on a retreat? That will be (pause) interesting.’ It will as well as being surprising, restful, glorious, and challenging. But why not go on holiday for a change or a rest? A retreat is time spent with God, that’s why. It sounds daunting but like lots of things – tax returns, cooking dinner for eight, walking the Pennine Way, travelling alone – it’s fine once you’ve started. But what do you do on a retreat? Pray on your knees all the time? Sleep (not much) in long cold dormitories? Eat horrible old-fashioned school dinner stodge (rock hard liver stew anyone)? There are retreats like that out there and a dear friend tells hilarious (if you weren’t there!) stories about her experiences. She ran away on Day Three, sick of scrubbing floors, starving and sleep deprived.

Fortunately, that’s not my experience. I’ve been to two very different retreat houses recently, one deep in English countryside, the other in Southern Spain. Both are lovely quiet places, with en suite rooms which you only share if you choose to, one even has a bar and a swimming pool. Their excellent food is homecooked from locally sourced ingredients. And both places are run by people who really care about their guests and offer them a rhythm of prayer and silence. Ah, yes, silence! Not all retreats are silent - a great relief to me as I live on my own and don’t need more silence - but friends who live in large households and have demanding jobs treasure visits to a silent space. It’s about what suits you.

What do you do on a retreat? Lots of things. Nothing. Something in between. I usually take books, knitting, writing, colouring (I know, but it is very soothing when frazzled), my walking shoes and general outdoor clothing. Some retreats, known as Guided Retreats, have a theme so I’ve read Colossians and warmed (slightly) to St Paul, investigated how I was coping with bereavement (very painfully, thank you for asking) and celebrated Epiphany, but I know of retreats that use photography, painting, writing, walking; the list is as varied as we are.

But the big question: what do you learn about or from God? And the answer, as it is so often, is That Depends. I’ve learned that He has a great sense of humour, that He likes to join me when I’m doing stuff – walking, knitting, writing, even nothing - so I can find Him more easily in my everyday life and I’ve made some great friends. But most important of all I’ve started to learn just how much I am loved, treasured, by Him, whatever I do. I’ve learned to sit in His love and savour His company. Yes, sometimes the only way to advance is to retreat.

Retreat houses I’ve visited are Penhurst in Sussex <https://www.penhurst.org.uk> and The Palm Grove Community in Spain <https://www.palmgrovecommunity.com>. I’ve heard good things about The Green House in Dorset <https://www.the-greenhouse.org> but haven’t been there.

Jane



Traidcraft during lockdown

Before the church was closed I brought the stock home and am busily fulfilling orders from here. I have a good supply of most things and continue to order regularly from the Traidcraft warehouse where pickers and packers are working hard to keep goods moving. If you require anything please phone or email me and I can arrange collection from my doorstep or delivery to yours. My contact details are given below.

Big Brew Thank You

Denise at Traidcraft Exchange writes: I can't thank you enough for hosting a brilliant Big Brew this year, and for your generous gift of £230.00! Thank you too for purchasing raffle tickets which have been entered into our draw. I hope you had a lovely time celebrating with your community at St John's. Every penny you raised will support vulnerable farmers, workers and artisans around the world to get a better deal from trade. People like Thabiti, a coffee farmer from Tanzania, who can now start looking forward to a fairer return on the hard work he does every day. Thabiti owns a small plot of land where



Thabiti and his wife Rachel

he grows coffee, bananas, maize and beans. He has a disability in his legs, and with no support for disabled people locally, his disability limits the amount of work he can do on his farm. With three young children to support, earning enough income has always been a huge worry.

"Sometimes we fail to make profit," he says. "I hold my stick in one hand and the plants in the other, so it's very difficult without paying for help." But thanks to the support of people like you, Thabiti recently joined a Traidcraft Exchange group with other disabled farmers in the area, which has really changed things for him.

"Being part of the group gives me comfort and really good consolation. I meet with others with disabilities and they're my friends, we accept each other, we accept our disabilities. I value Traidcraft Exchange."

Since joining the group Thabiti has undertaken training in practical skills such as book-keeping. He has also

learned about the many ways that disabled people are stigmatised at family, community and even government level, and how being supported to earn a better living can help tackle this. *"I think this will help us stamp out discrimination,"* he says. Thank you, for giving people like Thabiti the power to transform their families' lives through trade.

In further support of small coffee farmers who are losing their livelihood because of the low coffee prices on the commodity market, Traidcraft has signed

up to the Coffee Transparency Pledge, indicating on every 227gr packet of their Transparency Coffee that they have paid £1.32 directly to the growers who harvested the beans in this new coffee. This is in contrast to the average price paid on the New York Coffee Exchange for a similar amount of coffee: non-Organic coffee is about 53p; non-Organic Fairtrade coffee 71p and Organic and Fairtrade coffee 84p. We have Transparency Coffee in stock.

Katie Knapton Tel 212089
katieknapton@talktalk.net

FOOD BANK

Please remember to continue giving to the Food Bank, especially at this uncertain time when more families are likely to be in great need of assistance. Our own Food Bank Box is not available but items can be placed in supermarket collection boxes. The current needs are for

Noodles	Pasta sauces	Tinned pasta	Long-life sponges
Tea bags	Pulses	Stock cubes	Soap
Washing-up liquid		Toilet rolls	Laundry Powder
Nappies sizes 2,3,4		Hand Sanitiser	
Cooking oil (500 ml preferred, max 1 litre).			Anti-bacterial surface spray
Bags for life			

Financial donations are always welcomed: for information about giving please refer to the website

<https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk/>

Strength and waiting (Tuesday Bible Group)

*Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest,
O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord,
and my judgment is passed over from my
God?*

*Hast thou not known? Hast thou not
heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord,
the Creator of the ends of the earth,
fainteth not, neither is weary? There is
no searching of his understanding.
He giveth power to the faint and to them
that have no might he increaseth
strength.*

*Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
and the young men shall utterly fall:
But they that wait upon the Lord shall
renew their strength; they shall mount
up with wings as eagles: they shall run,
and not be weary; and they shall walk,
and not faint.*

Isaiah 40 vv 27-31

Tuesday Bible Group has gone online! Last week we had our first new-style session, when we were asked all to sit down and consider a passage with the help of a guide-sheet Chris sent out in advance – and then maybe to email the group with our responses. Over the past few weeks we've been looking at Isaiah 40, the chapter that begins 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God,' and we were due to study the last few verses (above) – a passage that seems

extraordinarily appropriate for us all in these times.

The guide-sheet asked us to consider, first, what it was like to feel tired, exhausted and needing to recharge our batteries – what made us feel better? My answer to this was 'lying in the sun' – I can feel the energy build up and return and it's amazing how much more capable just being physically rested makes you feel. Once when I was eighteen I went on holiday to one of the Greek islands where there was nothing to do except be on the beach, so we ended up just lying in the sun for three weeks - and at the end I was astonished by how super-charged energetic I felt, and by the way that that energy itself felt thrilling – a physical buzz right through me.

So energy makes me/us feel better. Energy and thrill go with power - energy brings with it a sense of hope, can-do, affirmation etc - so to go a bit further on 'What makes you feel better when you are tired, exhausted and need to recharge your batteries?' I would say also a sense of purpose, a sense that there is something you can do that will make a desirable difference, be appreciated, improve things in some way. That purpose is empowering, and feeling capable always makes one feel better. (cf What makes you feel worse? the opposite - a sense of pointlessness, powerlessness, nothing

being capable of improvement, particularly not by you, etc etc...) So our state of mind can restore physical energy. And energy goes way beyond the sort of energy that heats homes – it makes possible growth and movement. If we believe that the life force is part of God ('in him was life...') then God is energy too.

What's interesting I think is the idea of mental/spiritual energy and how vital it is to us. If we need physical energy for physical strength, then we need mental energy for mental strength - one aspect of which is resilience – and unlike physical energy (our capacity for which diminishes as we grow older), mental energy can last as long as we do. It seems to me that the Isaiah passage is talking at any rate partly about states of mind - v27 begins with Jacob/Israel being berated for complaining that God is ignoring him/forgetting about him ('Why sayest thou... My way is hid from the Lord...?') ie for giving up and thinking everything is hopeless etc etc etc. And what it says is that God's energy/ (spiritual) strength never runs out - he fainteth not, neither is weary - and that even when the youths/young men (who have most physical energy) faint and utterly fall, he, God, will be a source of renewed and increased (mental/ spiritual) strength. That mental strength from God gives us the spiritual energy and power that is as thrilling and exhilarating as mounting up with wings

like eagles and that makes us able to cope when it is challenged.

The guide sheet went on, drawing on Paula Gooder's 'A Way through the Wilderness,' Chapter 5, to talk about the wilderness of being lost, exhausted and alone, and to focus on the waiting we are all doing at home at the moment. Chris wrote:

'As we wait in the wilderness in this time of social-distancing and self-isolation... it could become really easy for us all to start wondering what God is doing to fix things. But if we just wait around passively, we might find we miss the very ways God is comforting us, guiding us and acting in our lives.'

Paula Gooder writes: "Waiting can easily be seen as passing the time away between one event and another. It can become dead time with no great purpose to it other than that we wait for something to happen. This does not seem to be what Isaiah means here. The whole of Isaiah 40 has been around the active expectation of God's presence, which will come and transform us." '

We were asked to consider the difference between 'waiting around' and 'active waiting' – what might characterize each state? And how can we use the next few weeks of waiting well, and use them as 'waiting for' God?

I thought this was such a helpful focus. If, as Paula Gooder says, some waiting is 'dead time with no great purpose to it' (= 'waiting around'), then if we want to have alive-time we must look for a *purposefulness*. Waiting around to me suggests someone listless, irritable, unsatisfied, unresponsive (almost all of them negatives, I've just realised, and turned in on the self); active waiting suggests on-going preparation, alertness, openness, maybe a sense of quiet excitement, of looking ahead to whatever's coming (even if we don't know exactly what it is). This by contrast is looking outside the self, while purpose goes with action and with doing - it's positive.

How do we wait for God now? That's up to each of us, of course, and probably there are as many ways of doing this as there are individual people... but it would be a bit cowardly not to at least try to answer! To start with, I am trying to focus on the good things I see this crisis bringing out in people and in our society - the way internet self-help hasn't just mushroomed, it's produced an absolute explosion of new groups (like our Bible group or the Queen Edith's Community Forum) and ideas/communication - so many concert halls, Royal Opera House etc putting recordings and/or live performances online free, initiatives to help the vulnerable and elderly in particular, little gestures that brighten someone's day - the other day one of the small supermarkets near me was giving away bunches of flowers that were still unsold after Mother's Day. And people have time for much longer phone calls at the minute... real talks, not just a quick 'how are you?' All this seems to me good - goodness in action. Of course I panic sometimes - but I know nothing good comes of that. We can't see the future - we have imaginations that run riot in the satanic realms of fear and terror - but we *can* see, and rejoice in, the human capacity to keep going nonetheless and to find ways and

Sometimes when we're waiting for God to speak, he's waiting for us to listen

Martha Bolton

Waiting for God is not laziness.

Waiting for God is not going to sleep.

Waiting for God is not the abandonment of effort.

G Campbell Morgan

All things come to him who waits -

Provided he knows what he is waiting for

Woodrow T Wilson

God waits like a beggar who stands motionless and silent before someone who will perhaps give him a piece of bread

Time is waiting

Time is God's waiting for our love.

Simone Weil

means. Focussing on the positive helps me keep some sort of balance. Keep calm and carry on! That takes effort ('Waiting for God is not the abandonment of effort') but that sort of effort (which in turn takes energy) seems to me a practical expression of faith in the future, which is faith in God.

I like the idea of active waiting, and of this in itself being a form of service. This is what Milton says, when he writes about how useless his blindness makes him feel. It isn't only by dashing about being very obviously busy that people

serve God – some do so just by being there, waiting, in case he has need of them:

*'Thousands at his bidding speed...o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait'.*

It turns waiting and the way we choose to wait into something positive we can do to serve God and help us all.

Liz

God of all comfort
where we are stuck, release us,
where we have given up hope, inspire us,
where we focus only on ourselves, help us to see the
needs of others;
transform us by your Spirit to be the people you have
called us to be,
spreading your love
and proclaiming your presence throughout the world.
We ask this through your son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The quotations, prayer and study ideas that we have been using are taken from Paula Gooder's A Way Through the Wilderness: Experiencing God's Help in Times of Crisis (Church House Publishing, London, 2009).

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Children's Church	
Mother & Toddler Group	Lesley Jenkins (Tel: 565974)

Uniformed Organisations

5th Cambridge Brownies	Shelly Palazzo (Tel: 07971 696626)
(Tuesday 6pm term time only)	
5th Cambridge Guides	Kristie Bewers (Tel: 510352)
(Tuesday 7:30pm term time only)	
28th Cambridge Beaver Scouts*	Denise Owen (Tel: 510357)
(Wednesday 6pm term time only)	
28th Cambridge Cub Scouts*	Jeremy Racher (Tel: 244085)
(Monday 6pm term time only)	
28th Cambridge Scouts*	Geoff Oliver (Tel: 413553)
(Tuesday 7:30pm term time only)	

*At HQ, Flamsteed Road

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