

Weekly Newsletter (56)

by and for the Christ Church and Pagham URC families

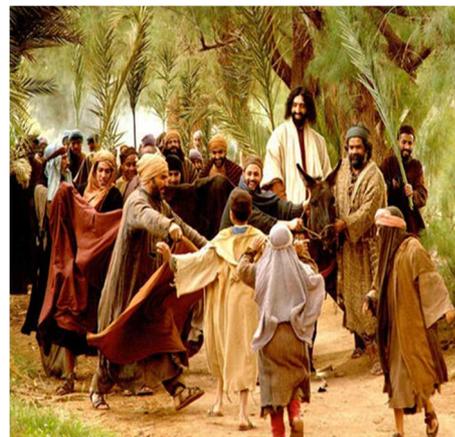
28th March 2021

Musings from the Manse

Dear Friends,

We have reached Palm Sunday – the second in lockdown – and so things cannot be as we would like them to be. No distribution of Palm Crosses, no celebratory singing with the crowd who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem on that day so long ago. But we can still do this in our own way and in our own space, and we can enter Holy Week still mindful of the great sacrifice that Jesus accomplished.

I don't know about you, but I tend to think in pictures, and so, when it comes to watching or reading the various resources that are available for the days of Holy Week, I try to put myself into the picture the words create. One person who has inspired me with this task is Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York. When he was Bishop of Reading he developed a series of meditations for his book called *'The Things He Carried'* (SPCK 2008)



In the introduction he writes: *'As I have written I have imagined myself at the cross. I have striven for a way of writing that is more meditative than analytical; more poetry than prose. Obviously, the scriptures are my primary inspiration; but in taking liberties with the letter of the text (and daring to suggest I can tell you how Jesus might have felt) I have tried to write something that will get inside the spirit of the story and offer a vessel for your own feelings and question. In order to understand the cross you need to stand under it. This has to be done with the imagination as well as the mind, with heart as well as head. I hope you will receive some small appreciation of just how much the cross weighs and, maybe, even pick it up yourself.'*

In turning to this book for the coming week, I felt I wanted to share some of the meditations with you too – so with this in mind I will be offering a half hour reflection:

Monday to Friday at 2 pm, on Zoom, for those who are able to join me online, or by telephone – please use the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85358885171?pwd=Ryt5VFZsMlZkb0Njc3NKTKVLWUdZUT09>

Meeting ID: 853 5888 5171 Passcode: 114880

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85358885171?pwd=Ryt5VFZsMlZkb0Njc3NKTKVLWUdZUT09>

For Monday's meditation	you will need a piece of wood.
For Tuesday's meditation	you will need a piece of holly, or something which is prickly.
For Wednesday's meditation	you will need something that is broken or impossible to mend – like the torn off petals of a flower.
For Thursday's meditation	you will need an empty basket.
For Friday's meditation	you will need a small wooden cross.

I always feel that it is a great shame for those who go directly from Palm Sunday to Easter Day – from one celebration to another – without encountering Jesus in the days of Holy Week. The narrative of the coming days is powerful and painful but, because we know how the story ends, it's easy to skip the difficult details and stay in our comfort zone of understanding.

May you encounter Jesus this week, however you choose to journey with him to the cross.

Yours in Christ, Helen <<<

Word for today Mark 11: 1-11

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So, they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,
'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord – the King of Israel!' John 12: 12,13

Meditation of Simon the Zealot

I think they've got it, finally understood who Jesus is, for look at the welcome they're giving him.
See the joy in their faces, the laughter in their eyes.

They're tearing down palm branches in their excitement, shouting themselves hoarse:

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

They surely realise at last that he's the Messiah - the one sent by God to redeem his people. Or do they?
For what is it they're calling him now: the King of Israel.

That would have been music to my ears not so long ago, for it's what I longed to see: a ruler coming to drive out the Romans, to restore our earthly fortunes, to establish a new era of plenty and prosperity – with our people at the centre – and God's kingdom here on earth.

But having walked and talked with Jesus, having heard his message and seen the difference he alone can bring, I realise now that what we need is a change – not to the regime or system – but to people's lives, to who and what we are. That's where he wants to reign: in humans hearts rather than on an earthly throne.

Have they understood that? Have **any** of us?

They're welcoming him with open arms, proclaiming their devotion, but if he fails to deliver what they want will their commitment hold, their allegiance stay true?

Will they still salute him as king if his kingdom's not of this world?

Time, I suppose, will tell.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

teach us what it means to honour you,
to enthrone you in our lives.

Help us to understand that true commitment involves more than declaring our loyalty,
however sincere that may be;
more than homage offered with our lips,
however eloquent it may sound.

Teach us to acclaim you from the heart
with lives consecrated to your service,
seeking your will and walking your way,
so that we may truly acknowledge you as Lord
and work meaningfully for the growth of your kingdom,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen.

adapted from 'A most amazing Man' by Nick Fawcett

Gathered for Prayer....

Gathered for Prayer will meet **only at 9am on Wednesday, 31st March**
normal service will resume the following week!
Here's the link....

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5742722693?pwd=R3BEQ3pPVOZJNndRWWVKeWdvand6QT09>

Meeting ID: 574 272 2693 Passcode: xsX5UM

Reminder for The Leprosy Mission's Easter appeal for Mozambique

Please consider whether you might donate, preferably through the website, if possible:

<https://www.leprosymission.org.uk/campaign/#/> or through Christ Church -

making it clear that it is for the Lent/Easter Offering.

Memorial/Celebration Service for Sigrid Disley

Following Sigrid's wishes there will be no funeral service but a service of celebration sometime in the summer (date to be notified) when we can fill the church again, which is what she would have wanted, as she loved the church and its family so much.. Debbie (Mabbitt) has suggested that, if anyone would like to put down a sentence about Sigrid - of how they remember her, or something she might have said or done - then she will be happy to collect them, and they could be put on the screen. Please send any thoughts or memories - either directly to Debbie if you have her contact details - or else reply to this email address (chichristchurch@gmail.com) and it will be forwarded to her.

For you early risers on Easter Sunday morning.....

This week I received this email from Major Matt Butler of the Salvation Army in Bognor Regis – he writes...

Dear Friends

I pray that you are well and are feeling blessed as we approach another disrupted Easter. I am drawn to consider how Easter itself disrupted the world, and the power of the cross & resurrection still disrupts lives today - Amen! I suspect that you all have plans for how your church communities will engage with the Easter story and experience and I pray that these will be powerful! I hope that you don't mind me sharing one idea which we are doing at The Salvation Army- you might want to join in and share with your own people.

We are taking the Easter theme of 'A hope that shines brightly - even in dark times'. As part of this, and as a way of encounter and reflection, we are encouraging our church to greet the sunrise and celebrate the Son rise.

Due to the restrictions, we are not planning a gathering in one place, but are encouraging our people to remain in their houses and look out the window, go into their garden, or find some open space where they can view the sunrise.

We have prepared some words of prayer and reflection which can be used to aid the experience. We are also encouraging our people to photograph the sunrise and then share the pictures on social media, adding the #tag #EasterSONrise.

Sunrise is forecast to be around 6.30am, so we are saying to aim for 6 am, (maybe earlier,) to capture the change from darkness into light as the sun rises. It is forecast to be dry too!

As a family we are going to the beach by Marine Gardens. (I'm not braving the paddleboard though!!)

*Be blessed
Matt*

If you are feeling keen and would like to witness the sun(son)rise on Easter morning, and would like the words of prayer and reflection to use at this time, please let me know I will email it to you. Some years back I stood on the top of Beacon Fell, near Longridge in Lancashire, and took a sunrise service; this year I plan a more down-to-earth witness - possibly from my bedroom window!!

Circuit Accreditation Service – Easter Sunday evening.



**Accreditation Service as a
Local Preacher For Malcolm Lindo**

Easter Sunday, 6pm, Live on YouTube

Search 'West Sussex Coast and Downs Circuit' on YouTube or
email us for a invitation: wscdmedia@gmail.com

West Sussex
(Coast and Downs)
Methodist Circuit