

For Palm Sunday 5th April

+ Dear Friends,

I'm writing to you because I know that you don't have a computer or struggle to access email and get connected as many of us are doing. When we 'meet' on Sunday you will not be forgotten and I know some of you are joining in worship on radio or TV.

It has been a hard week for many and we know that there will be hard days ahead. We will all suffer and share in the pain of unanticipated loss in some way. We will be bereaved of so much we have taken for granted, not least those who we have loved, but in the midst of all of this we must acknowledge fear and anguish. When we do that before God, we do so as an act of faith casting our eyes beyond this temporal experience to the eternal reality promised.

We are among those who are in many ways privileged, but we know that we too are all vulnerable. I'm sure friends are calling, sit outside if you can, maybe find a special spot where you choose to sit with God for a while – not that he's not with you wherever you are in your home – read a psalm and tell God just how you're feeling.

This month we have three prayer pointers:

- For the health and welfare of frontline NHS staff dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic
 - there are some NHS staff in our church family
- For a growing awareness of the needs of others and for a readiness to provide support and encouragement where possible
 - you could pray over the telephone
- That we may use the increased amount of free time to develop and enrich our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ
 - remember those who are just as busy or even busier.

The little picture over is a glimpse of what Zoom church looks like on a Sunday, though we are able to make a big picture if who ever is speaking which makes it easier to see who's "up front"...



Palm Sunday

Hosanna to the Son of David

Jesus tells the parable of a man of noble birth, who while entrusting his servants with different amounts of his capital goes away to a distant place to establish his kingly authority.

We notice that actions of the nobleman, how he entrusts his capital to his servants and asks them to get to work with it as he will be away for some time. We notice too that most of the subjects of his kingdom want nothing to do with him; they certainly do not want to be subject to his rule.

The Disciples and the Jewish crowd do not expect that Jesus will need to leave them in

order to establish his authority as king. They are expecting his kingdom to be inaugurated there and then. Even though they appeared to have been listening to Jesus the penny has yet to drop. They do not get that Jesus' kingdom, the kingdom of God is an altogether different kind of kingdom from that of the earthly kingdoms around them.

The people are familiar with the Romans brutal penal system but have no expectation that that would play any part in the kingdom which Jesus had been speaking about.

The parable makes clear that the man of noble worth will leave in order to be made king and that he will return just like those who went off to Rome to have their authority conferred by the Caesar. When he does return, the story tells us, he will seek account from all those servants of his entrusted with representing him while he's been away.

The outcome of the parable is the just reward for those who have faithfully acted in the nobleman's name, in spite of the antagonism towards him and them for doing so, and the people's rejection of his kingship.

With this story fresh in their minds, Jesus then leaves Jericho going via Bethphage and



Bethany to Jerusalem.

We know about the donkey, the waving of palm branches; how the crowds acclaimed Jesus as king on their own terms and just how fickle they were as they rejected him just a few days later. But do we hold in our minds the story of the man of noble birth going away to be made king?



We believe...

We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

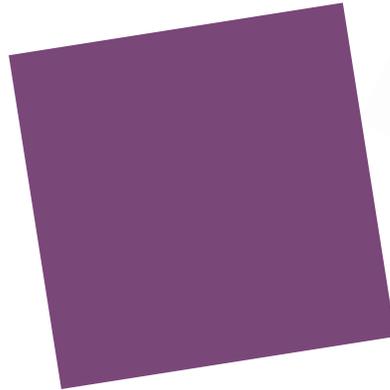
We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Words to remember...we are:

**Forgiven and holy people of God,
who in Christ may stand in righteousness before our Father in heaven
who by the Holy Spirit, receive assurance of faith,
and confirmation of the image of Christ in us;
that we may have perfect freedom and peace;
and hear again the song of our Father's love. Amen**



+ Hot crossed buns

One a penny, two a penny..

Traditionally eaten on Good Friday to commemorate the Crucifixion, hot crossed buns found an enemy in Elizabeth I, who, in 1592, finding too much Popery in their popularity, banned their consumption except on specific holidays. The embargo was eventually lifted and, by the 1700s, sweet, spicy, fruit buns were sold on the streets of towns and cities with the familiar cry 'one a penny, two a penny' (a penny bought you a large bun or two small ones).

They were first recorded in the 1773 Poor Robin's Almanack, which seems rather late considering that, in the 14th century, a monk in St Albans is said to have distributed them among the needy.

Looking even further back, some have claimed that loaves marked with a cross found at Herculaneum are the original precursors to hot cross buns. It's technically possible that this was a commemorative act – Christ has been nailed to a cross half a century earlier after all, and some claim that there were Christians in Pompeii by AD79 – but it's likely they were incised in this way to make them easier to break apart.

Whatever the truth of it, we know for certain that crossed buns were eaten by the Saxons to honour Eostre, celebrated in April, whose name, according to the Venerable Bede, is the origin of the word Easter.

