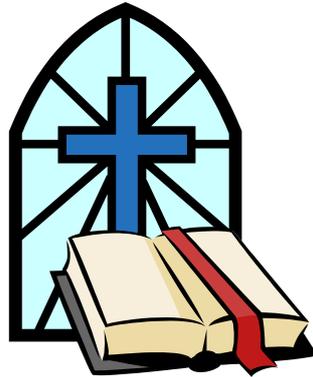


ST PETER'S AND HOLY TRINITY

Sunday 29th March 2020

Service of the Word in Passiontide



A very warm welcome to all those joining us in our virtual worship today.

Ordinarily we would be sharing a joint service together at St. Peter's Church today, so we are using St Peter's Service of the Word as our format for today's service. Members of both churches will be using this together this morning.

If possible use this service at 10am British Summertime (for those who have remembered the clocks went forward one hour earlier today!) so we are able to worship together.

Try saying the parts in bold aloud.

Opening Responses

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

And also with you

This is the day that the Lord has made

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Confession

Let us reflect on the week that has just passed.

Thank God for all the blessings you have received.

Consider the things which we have done, or not done, and even our thoughts which we now wish to say sorry to God for:

God shows his love for us

in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Let us then show our love for him

by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

cf Romans 5:8

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you. We are not worthy to be called your children. We turn to you again. Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins, and assure us of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading for today

Psalm 130 (Perhaps read it twice):

A song of ascents

- ¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;
- ² O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.
- ³ If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
- ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness, therefore you are feared
- ⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope.
- ⁶ My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.
- ⁷ Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love
And with him is full redemption.
- ⁸ He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

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Talk

See talk below from Heather. Reflect on what this might mean for us in the coming weeks and how we might respond to God's word.

Lord by your spirit – would you open your word to our hearts and our hearts to your word. Amen.

Psalm 130 is known as a Psalm of Ascent – otherwise known as 'Pilgrim Psalms'. They were sung by those who journeyed (or ascended) to the temple for the seasonal feasts or our equivalent of special seasonal services. All our Bible readings at this time, including this one, derive a whole new meaning in the context of the virus crisis we are in. For example as we are sadly unable to meet physically together in our traditional places of worship – pilgrimages of any sort may seem impossible. However, the good news is that pilgrimages or sacred

journeys of a different type **are** still possible. We can still 'journey' with God and even journey with one another – albeit remotely... as a pilgrimage can still be a continued journey of faith in order to deepen our relationship with God. Our faith journey can still grow and develop as worshipping God can happen anywhere....because God is everywhere.

So looking again at our reading...going to a 'holy' place may have reminded the author of this psalm of their own 'unholiness' as there is a lot of talk about sin and forgiveness. And so it does start out almost as a psalm (song) of lament or sadness. However, thankfully, the writer didn't just focus on their own sins but looked to the one who can make all things new. 'Sin' (things we do that hurt God or others) separate us from God and others. It causes hurt, fear, shame and isolation. We can easily fall into either extremes of self-deception and/or self-condemnation – neither of which work in the face of God's awesomeness, love and mercy. Yes in the context of an all knowing God...who "knows of what we are made....he remembers that we are but dust" (Psalm 103) we could be paralysed by our fallen nature with remembering all the things we have done wrong. Even our Psalmist today admits that "3 If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand". And yes we are to acknowledge what we have done....but we don't need to stay in that place, hold on to it or condemn ourselves for it – as we can take all things to God and offer ourselves to His mercy by saying sorry. We are again reminded in v4 that "with you there is forgiveness".... And so because of God's grace and mercy there is compassion and a new start – which in turn breaks down any barriers we have put up between ourselves and God or others. The cross is powerful enough to deal with **anything** we have done wrong as we were reminded of the words of the absolution last week from 1 John 1:8-9 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness."

The second part of our reading feels even more relevant to us today. Waiting for anything is hard when we don't usually have enough patience in an instant society to wait for many things. However, at the moment all we can do in our new context of life is to simply wait. We are having to hold on and pause as our own resources are proving to be inadequate. We are having to rely on others but in that we have SO much to be thankful for. In Verse 6 we are told about the watchmen waiting for the morning - not just once, but twice!! They would be on duty at the city walls and gates.. keeping watch overnight to defend their city and people from any overnight attacks by the enemy. The night watch was crucial as any attack would be so much more devastating if done covertly at night. They would stay up longing and waiting for the dawn - that they knew WOULD eventually come. This would mean their shift was over, their city was safe and they could go off duty, go home and rest. How many of us end up like the watchmen.... knowing how things often feel more

troublesome in the early hours of the morning if we can't sleep because of worry or fear. We need to instead then hold on tightly to the first part of verse 6 where we are called to "wait for the Lord" – where sometimes 'wait' can be translated as 'hope'. One commentator describes this Psalm as a cry in the dark....but that through God a light **will** shine. Just as many issues have a tendency to lurk and increase in the darkness and shadows – in this Psalm we are reminded of the forgiveness, freedom and assurances we are offered in the love and light of God. verse 7 reminds us ", for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption" – that certainly is an amazing promise to look for and hold on to in the shadows and uncertainties that we are all facing at the moment.

All these promises, however, isn't because of what we do but because of who God is. Neither is it dependent on our circumstances but because of what God does. I have never been naïve enough to think all of this is easy – even more so in our present situation....but I do take seriously the challenge to keep alert – looking to see where God is present and through all the things we are facing....know there will be a new dawn. We are encouraged then to keep grounded in His promises... remembering His character Trusting that God is for us and through Jesus He is Emmanuel God with us and through the Holy Spirit His presence is within us.

I have been both challenged and encouraged by the daily prayer readings and liturgy this week with some spot on readings, prayers and words (see the link if you want to join in) <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

And so I want to end with a prayer we have been saying all week which I think links powerfully to our reading today:

Merciful Lord,
absolve your people from their offences,
that through your bountiful goodness
we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins
which by our frailty we have committed;
for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Statement of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

A prayer of thanks for our giving to God

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.

Prayers

Collect for Today

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

**Faithful Creator, whose mercy never fails:
deepen our faithfulness to you and to your living Word,
who is Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

At this time of Passiontide let us support the church, our Archbishops, Bishops, our ministers, and the whole Christian fellowship throughout the world. Help them to deliver your word as we worship in isolation. Let us remember the sacrifice our Lord gave at Calvary and offer ourselves in prayer and in deed in whatever challenges lay ahead. Help us to keep our faith in these very difficult times and turn us towards you God if we turn away. We need your strength and grace more than ever, for you are the way, the truth, and the life.

Lord in your Mercy; **Hear Our Prayer**

We pray for all Governments in the world to be led by your guidance to make the very difficult decisions based upon the needs of the people they represent. Help them to direct the resources to the right areas and make balanced choices to protect all the most vulnerable of people.

Lord in your Mercy; **Hear Our Prayer**

Jesus, Lord of light give comfort to all those who are very fearful of current events, to those who are already find themselves without an income. We pray for all those in self-isolation, particularly those who are alone. Help everyone to find ways to connect to others and find consolation that each is not alone and you are there Lord, watching over them.

Lord in your Mercy; **Hear Our Prayer**

We pray for the NHS who are putting their lives at risk and working under a great pressure. We ask for your Holy Spirit to be amongst them, so that they can use their skills and gifts to benefit all whom they treat. Give them strength in all that they do every day to cope, both physically and mentally, with the demands of the job. Let us also consider the families of the NHS staff who are being affected in any way by the ongoing crisis.

Lord in your Mercy; **Hear Our Prayer**

God, we thank you for all of our key workers who are helping to provide the food we need, the medication and all of our social and care needs. Give them strength to meet and respond to the needs of each day, and help others to be kind and generous towards them.

Lord in your Mercy; **Hear Our Prayer**

Father God we pray for all who are sick with the virus; particularly those people who are in critical care facilities and those requiring life support. Our prayers are also with those who are currently ill from other diseases, and those who feel despondent that operations and treatments have been delayed due to the urgent requirement for beds and staff to support patients suffering with coronavirus.

We pray for all those we know to be sick in our parishes. May each know your closeness, comfort and healing during this time.

Lord in your Mercy; **Hear Our Prayer**

We ask you Lord to take into your care all those who have passed away from this life whether from the virus or any other cause. We pray for their families and friends, who are left grieving. Bring your spiritual comfort as they face each day without their loved ones with them anymore. Today we remember Rodger Todd who very sadly passed away this week. We pray for Beryl and all their family and friends at this time. We also remember Bill and his wife Margaret and all the family.

Lord in your Mercy; **Hear Our Prayer**

Prayerful reflections:

*Spend some time thanking God for what you have and have received.
Pray for yourself – be honest with God about your fears and feelings.*

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your son our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us so we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Closing Prayers

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Galatians 6:14

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 for ever. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Blessing

Christ crucified draw us to himself,
to find in him a sure ground for faith,
a firm support for hope,
and the assurance of sins forgiven;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be among us and remain with us always. Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. AMEN.

Notices

Coronavirus Guidance

Following Church of England advice there are no services of public worship at Holy Trinity or St Peter's Church for the foreseeable future. This sadly includes all baptisms and weddings- please hold in your prayers all those couples who are affected by this.

This includes cancelling the Easter morning service on the Hayes – as despite being able to space people out it would constitute public worship which we have been asked to suspend at this time.

The Church Premises are closed to everyone- please do not attempt to access them with any keys that you may have.

Lighting of Candle

Following the Archbishops of Canterbury and York's call to light a candle in a front window as a sign of solidarity and hope in the light of Christ that can never be extinguished, we know of a number of church members who did this. This seems such a good idea that we are planning on doing something similar in Holy Week. More details next week on that.

Food Bank

Obviously due the measures taken to deal with the coronavirus we are not able to continue with the bringing of items to Church or deliveries to the warehouse.

This is at a time when the Food Bank is going to be under huge pressure especially now the schools are closed.

Can we urge everyone to consider if they can instead give a donation of money?

Please visit their website- www.nuneaton.foodbank.org.uk and press on the Donate button at the top right of the page.

This is a really valuable way we can collectively as a Church show our love to the vulnerable people in our society. All items that were in church have been delivered by Wendy- many thanks to Wendy for all she has done in organising the food bank and doing the deliveries.

Scams - Be careful

Please be aware there is an increased number of scams doing the rounds trying to take advantage of these difficult times. Before clicking on links, giving out bank details etc... do check they are genuine as there are some very plausible and convincing scammers

St Peter's Church

If you are self-isolating you are not alone

If you need help during this time, please be encouraged to make contact with local Counsellor Daniel Gissane who is putting together a team of volunteers to support those in need, on 07771 340650.

Holy Trinity Church

Holy Trinity Church Magazine

In view of the coronavirus and that it cannot be printed as the Church Premises are closed, Sue is preparing a magazine for April which will be e-mailed. If you deliver and can get an e-mail address **without visiting the people** you deliver to, we can add that to the circulation list. Also those due to contribute items should continue to send them to Sue.

Hartshill Community Centre, Community Library and Café

Following Government Advice all of these are currently closed.

Church Cleaning at Holy Trinity

As the Church Premises are closed the cleaning rota is suspended. We did ask volunteers to help Hoover the carpet after church services and are grateful for those who came forward. We will establish a rota for that when Church Services resume.

Isolated but not alone- Hartshill Community Helping each other

In line with the Government appeal help is needed for those self-isolating and volunteers are needed.

During this time many elderly or ill people are self-isolating due to the spread of Covid-19 (coronavirus).

If you can offer any time to help out people on your street by picking up groceries, prescriptions, emergency supplies or offering a friendly phone call to ease loneliness, then please phone Olwyn on 07927141037.

Please also remember your local shops are well stocked.

For any more details on how to help or if you need help finding your local volunteer again call Olwyn.

Messages

We really want to encourage our church members (both Churches) to use this section to give messages of encouragement to others or items of reflection so we are going to kick that off.

Message from Heather

I don't know if you, like me, joined in with the public thanks and applause in the streets on Thursday night. I have to admit I was overwhelmed by the response I heard from my neighbours and the scenes I saw on TV...and I may have even shed a tear or two! It was so moving to see how people are recognising the sacrifices being made by the front line workers who are literally putting their lives on the line in order to try and save others. However, we must not forget all the others who are working so hard in difficult conditions to serve our communities and keep us all going ranging from teachers to shop workers, police and volunteers to

name but a few. Never more has the image of the body of Christ resonated with what we are seeing in action. I also received a letter from two amazingly kind people who have offered to help in a really practical way which was so humbling... not just for what they have given but for the kindness and thoughtfulness behind their way of helping. Other email messages and texts have been a real life line of encouragement for me....so let us take heed to follow the teachings we find in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 to "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up"... we are blessed to be a blessing....so let's bless others with God's love in action both where and when we can. With my thoughts, thanks and prayers. Heather.

Message from Sharon

Being someone who particularly experiences God through his amazing and beautiful creation, I have been enjoying reading the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book "Saying Yes to Life" by Ruth Valerio (which by the way many of you will laugh when you hear it's been given my Beagle Bonnie's teethmark treatment when I made the mistake of leaving it on my armchair as I rushed out to work recently! Luckily, she only chewed the front and back covers and pretty much every page's edges!)

Given the life changing instructions that we've received from the Government in the past week alone, I've been particularly struck this week at how the human-made sounds of our world have become much quieter as this week has progressed. There are very little vehicle sounds, construction and factory machinery whirring gradually decreasing or stopped, flight paths across the sky virtually empty and in its place the sound of bird song has become more prevalent when I've been blessed to sit in my garden in the sun with my book.

It made me think of the times when I've woken in the middle of the night to hear the song a little bird singing in the darkness whilst everyone sleeps. I don't believe it's a nightingale because they are not yet supposed to have arrived in the UK. I suspect, from research and its song, it is a little, and it seems tireless robin, singing through the night because the street lights enable him or her to continue to hunt for insects. I lie in bed, listening to its song, and think of this little ray of joy and hope singing through the deepest darkest hours and on through to greet the morning as the earliest rays of daylight break through. Our regular Morning Prayer liturgy tells us "The night has passed and the day lies open before us....." With God, every day is a new day and every new day provides new opportunity. ".....Let us pray with one heart and mind" for each new day gifted to us in this unprecedented time, always remembering that, for some, today is going to be a really tough one, and that today they need you to be light and hope for them in their darkest hours.

Message from Nick and Jan B-B

Following advice from our Doctors Surgery we have been in isolation for some 12 days. It has been an interesting experience but some positives have come from it. It is probably the first time in our married life that we

are having to rely on the help of others for the delivery of food and collection of medicines. We are so grateful to our friends in the Church who are helping and supporting us.

The other positive is we are having so much more contact with our family through all sorts of technology. What a blessing that is!

Jan has adopted a target of phoning someone each day to see how they are. She contacted 3 friends on Wednesday. If there is anyone you know who would welcome contact do let us know. Our home phone is 024 76395467.

Please pray in the coming week for:

Coronavirus Crisis

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support,
be with those who care for the sick, the anxious
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, as you know the whole world is trying to deal with the impact of the coronavirus. We pray for all countries and communities as they consider what steps they can take to care and support each other. We pray in particular for the elderly, vulnerable and isolated as they face the fear and consequences of catching the virus. We pray also for all leaders who are having to make difficult decisions to deal with the crisis and all those working in the health sector which is under such pressure anyway. Amen

Leaders and Clergy

Heather and Sharon in their ministries in Hartshill and Galley Common; Kate and Debbie our St Peter's churchwardens, Nick and Sally our lay readers and Holy Trinity's churchwardens; Ruth & Rob Kinderman in their youth work; Michael Brandsma in his ministry in Atherstone; and Bill Walton in his curacy.

Pray too for our Archbishops, Bishops and Bishops' Staff team as they lead the nation and diocese.

Pray for the government and local/national/international leaders as they make life changing and potentially life-saving decisions.

Those on our hearts at St Peter's

Lucy Whatmore, Lucy, Michael, Mark, Brian V and others known to us.

Those on our hearts at Holy Trinity

Rachel McCormack and Family; Mark Johnson; Maureen; Raymond Ball; Dorothy; Olive; Julie; Jan & Tony; Mark Pettit; Rebecca; Jane.

We particularly think of Olive (Wendy's Mum) who is 90 today. We pray for her on this special day, Wendy and Susan who are unable to visit her at the moment and all the staff who care for those at Bentley House. While doing that, hold in your prayers all those who are working in care homes and providing care at home, also the managers of those homes and care firms who are under severe pressure to protect both staff and residents.

Family and Friends of the Deceased

Rodger Todd – a faithful member of both Churches.

Bill – a faithful member of the Coffee Club.

For all those dealing with loss and bereavement caused by the Coronavirus nationally and internationally.



Prayer List

Please notify Nick B-B of the names of anyone for whom you would like prayer and any thanks for prayers answered.

NB. Please ensure that you have the person's permission first.

If you want to be added to the email prayer chain/group or have any prayers you want to put on the prayer chain please

email:- prayers.holytrinity@gmail.com

Any items to be included on the weekly notice sheet and messages please email Nick Blamire-Brown at njbb@hotmail.co.uk