

Dear all,

Oulton Broad Team Ministry
The Parishes of St. Mark with
St. Luke and St. Michael.

I hope that you're all well and that you feel the nearness of God in these days. This

letter is written in that strange, in-between time; the time that's in-between the Cross and the Resurrection. It's an unusual time, a liminal moment ...a bit like this time of 'lockdown'. How long will it last? What will happen next? Will we come through this ok? We continue to watch and wait...



As we dwell on the events of Holy Week, we do that with the benefit of hindsight. We know '*It's Friday, but Sunday's coming.*' The first followers of Jesus, however, did NOT know that. They were afraid, despairing, devastated and feeling lost. There are many who are feeling the same in our nation today. Covid-19 is taking lives, destroying livelihoods, creating fear, anxiety and loss. Perhaps you too are feeling some of that devastation.

It's tempting to rush past this uncomfortable moment. But, to do that is to fail to validate the depths of the difficult feelings. As we pause between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, we acknowledge that there is pain in life, that there are questions, and that there are times when it takes our all

to hold on to our faith and hope in God ...but that's what we need to try and do because, although *it's Friday, Sunday WILL come*. In time, we WILL see God's deliverance. In Jesus, the end of the story is great and glorious. As Julian of Norwich is famous for saying, "*All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.*" Thanks be to God.

We are still seeking to maintain contact with all of you at least once a week ...by email, text message, post and phone calls. However, if you'd value a little more contact than that, please email us at stmarks.oultombroad@gmail.com or phone the Parish Office on 01502 514774. The answerphone is being checked most days during the week, although it may take a little time to get back to you as the office is not 'staffed' in the usual way.

In addition, do let us know if there's anything that you'd appreciate prayer for. You can do this by leaving a message at the Parish Office, or by calling Debbie Allsop. If you don't know Debbie, she's the Churchwarden at St. Michael's, and also a Lay Reader. Debbie is committing herself to a day of prayer and fasting each Monday during the lockdown, and is happy to receive prayer requests on that day. You can contact Debbie by phoning 01502 538573 or by emailing (alan_debbie@hotmail.co.uk). Thank you Debbie.

And, now, some new news... **You can now join the Sunday Morning Gatherings by phone!**

If you don't have access to the Internet but would like to be able to listen to the Sunday Morning Online Gathering, all you need to do is call the following number: **0203 481 5240** When prompted, you'll then need to enter the following Meeting ID: **588 877 574** and press the # key on your phone keypad when instructed to do so. This will cost you the same as a national call. Therefore, if your phone call package includes free UK national calls on the weekends, it won't cost you anything to listen in. You won't be able to see the

people that are connecting by video, but you'll be able to hear everything that's going on. We hope that this will mean that many more people will be able to join us on Sunday mornings at 10.30am. Please call the Office on 514774 if you have any questions on how to do this. For others, joining the Sunday online gathering with video, the meeting ID of 588 877 574 remains unchanged. The Clergy are celebrating Holy Communion each Wednesday morning at 1030am. In the week ahead this will be live on the St. Mark's page on Facebook. Do join us if you can. Future Wednesdays will also include the phone-in option.

Here's a challenge for any children that will be joining us for the Online Worship Gathering on Easter Sunday. Boil an egg and then put an Easter design on it. There'll be an opportunity for you to show us all your lovely art work. If you haven't got an egg to boil, perhaps you could do your design on paper. We look forward to seeing it!

Don't forget that, from next week, there'll be a joint home group starting. Rachel will be leading us, and everyone is welcome to take part. This study series is based on the book of Daniel, which is great to dig into during challenging times. On Mondays, starting April 15th, there'll be material available with Bible passages to read, a key verse to reflect upon and questions to think about. On Wednesday evenings, at 7pm, there'll be a Zoom gathering for all who'd like to discuss the material with others, and pray about the issues raised. You can join that gathering by video link or by phone. The meeting ID will be: 533 181 156 with no password required. If you're joining by phone, you should call 0330 088 5830 and be ready to enter the meeting ID, followed by the # button. **Please let Rachel know if you wish to join this 'Home Group' by emailing racheljhayden@outlook.com or by leaving a message on St. Mark's Office answerphone (514774).**

A Prayer, written by Tony Hilder from St. Luke's. Give us grace, Almighty Father, to address you with all our hearts as well as our lips. You are everywhere, from you no secrets are hidden. Teach us to fix our minds on you reverently and with love, so that our prayers are acceptable to you now and always, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We pray today for those suffering from loneliness because of the isolation requirements, give them Lord the knowledge of the love and peace prayer can bring. We pray also for those anxious about the situation surrounding us at present, Lord give them guidance about the correct information they should follow and not that which causes more stress and, the confidence to talk to you Lord about their concerns. We also pray for those who find that isolation is stressful and those suffering from mental problems may they bring to you Lord through prayer all their concerns and find the peace comfort, love and hope that you can bring. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen

Once again, thank you to Tony for taking the time to write and send these prayers. Jill Hunting has also written some words to share with everyone. These will be sent by email, along with other attachments for the week ahead, or we can forward printed copies to you by request.

A message from the Staff Team of our Parishes, Clergy, Lay Minister, Readers and Wardens:

We want to thank you for all your support, love and encouragement at this difficult time. We really appreciate your calls and messages. None of us expected Easter to be this way but from the awfulness of Good Friday we remember the angel's words at the empty tomb *"I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here HE HAS RISEN!"* (Matt23:3). We will eventually emerge from

the tragedies, fear and isolation so let us thank God for the Resurrection Life which encourages us. We know many of you are maintaining fellowship strength through phone calls, and our Zoom events. This and your prayers are a great help to us all. Be assured of our continued united team efforts. May God Bless you and keep you strong. **Happy Easter!**

All shall be well,
And all shall be
Well, and
All manner of things
Shall be well

Julian of Norwich