

Dear all,

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

Welcome to the THIRD newsletter for members of the congregations of

St. Michael's, St. Luke's and St. Mark's, which we're sending out whilst regular Sunday Worship remains suspended. I hope that you're all well and finding the help and strength to get through these challenging days. We continue to seek to be in touch with you all every week, by phone, using this newsletter, and in other ways. Please know that you can contact St. Mark's Parish Office, whichever congregation you are part of (01502 514774 / stmarks.oultombroad@gmail.com), if there's anything that you need assistance with. The answerphone is being checked most days.



As we approach Holy Week, I was thinking this morning about the isolation that Jesus experienced. The disciples in the garden of Gethsemane couldn't keep awake and, after his arrest, they all fled. And then there is that cry from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", recorded in Matthew 27:46, an echo of the Psalmist's words in Psalm 22.

In these days of social distancing and lockdown, we all know a bit more about being alone, more distanced from friends and family. It's hard. And Jesus knew what it was to be alone—to be completely isolated—and to be in that situation at the worst of all times. And, what is staggering to me, is the fact that he endured loneliness and isolation, so that WE need NEVER be alone. His sacrifice means that all who call upon him can know the truth of his promises to all followers, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mt 28:20) When isolation is taking its toll let's try and take a quiet moment and prayerfully seek the one who promises to never leave. He is there to be found; have a look at Jer. 29:13.

Sadly, we're not able to distribute Palm Crosses for Sunday, but perhaps you'd like to have a go at making your own? Here are some instructions, in photo and written format:



Cut a long strip of thicker paper, approximately 0.5-1" in width and close to 12" or more in length. / Take the strip and fold it in the middle to form an inverted right angle, an upside down L. / Now take the vertical strip and fold that up. / Turn that reverse

L over to form a 7 and then fold the vertical end over again. / Then take the horizontal end and fold it over.

Now when you look in the back you will notice you have made a small square pocket of sorts. / Take the horizontal arm and slide it through the pocket from the back, all the way to the end and gently tug at it to ensure it's firm. / Now slide half the horizontal end to form one arm of the cross. / Take the other end and fold it in to form the second arm of the cross. (Make sure both arms are of equal length) / Now turn the cross over and take the vertical end of the cross and gently slip it through the pocket slit from the back. Leave as much of it on top as you would like and adjust the remaining through the slit to form the foot of the cross. / If you've survived that craft challenge, you should now have a paper Palm Cross!

For those who are able to access the Internet, you can join our Sunday online gathering on Zoom by entering the following meeting ID: 588 877 574. This week, there is a children's colouring sheet which the children can work on and show the rest of us before we close. If you have any technical problems with Zoom please call or email the Office for help. In addition to the Sunday Gathering, we'll be having a 'Zoom' through Holy Week. There will be short reflections led by members of the Staff Team at 7.30pm each evening, Monday to Thursday, and at 3pm on Good Friday. The meeting ID for all of these will be: 552 853 8801. This is also the meeting ID for Holy Communion, celebrated at 10.30am each Wednesday morning.

If you can't access the Internet, you might like to receive copies of 'The Sunday Link' and 'Live the Word'. These are bible sheets which support the Lectionary readings for each Sunday. These are available to us all because St. Michael's have a subscription. If you receive email they will be attached, but if you would like a paper copy, please call St. Mark's Parish Office, and we'll arrange for those to be posted to you.

FROM RACHEL HAYDEN: From 13th April a weekly Bible Study will be available. You can receive this each Monday until July via email, or if necessary, by post. For those who wish to take part, we will also be having a 'Zoom Home Group' on Wednesday evenings at 7pm. This will be an opportunity to discuss the passage and pray together. The first of these will be on Wednesday 15th April. The book of Daniel is a great one to study in these challenging times. Daniel, living in exile, faced mainly difficulties but discovered that he was in God's powerful and protecting hands. The events of chapters 1-6 will encourage us to be committed to integrity and perseverance whatever circumstances we face. The visions of chapters 7-12 assure us that God works through history to fulfil His purposes. We can trust our Sovereign God for the future. Daniel reminds us that 'God is in control even when life is out of control.' Each week there will be a passage with questions to reflect on, a key verse, a thought to encourage you, some further Bible reading and a prayer. What do I need to do to take part? Email Rachel - racheljhayden@outlook.com OR If you don't have access to email ring the Church Office (01502 514774) Join 'Zoom through Daniel' beginning on Wednesday 15th April at 7pm use the following ID number: I533 181 156. Love to all, Rachel

Tony Hilder, from St. Luke's has written another prayer for us to use during these days. Thanks again Tony!

God and Father of us all, hear the prayer we offer for our nation and the world in this time of sickness and apprehension. Forgive the misery we bring upon ourselves through disobeying the laws of our land and selfishly ignoring the needs of others.

Save us from self pity and give us strength guidance and peace. Strengthen all who are working for our Health Service and those who have volunteered to help. Unite us as a people guide us and help us to show by our actions the love of God.

We know that in times of stress some turn to you God may they continue to pray and join our Church at the end of this crisis. In your mercy and for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ here our prayer.

Amen. [Adapted from a prayer by Frank Colquhoun]

Romans 8:36-17—*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

You are very much in my thoughts and prayers, with love, Helen.