If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you. (Romans 8:11 NRSV)

This letter is an updated version of the one delivered to some households at the weekend.

6th April 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

LIVING HOLY WEEK

Yesterday was Palm Sunday, the beginning of the most wonderful week in the whole calendar! Our enforced confinement to our homes gives us new opportunities to draw near to God, whether you are alone in the house or trying to work from home and look after children. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews reminded his readers, who were undergoing their own trials, “He [God] has said, ’I will never leave you or forsake you’” (Heb 13:5b).

At the end of last week we were able to distribute a Palm Cross to a number of households, which were blessed earlier in the week (to watch this, go to our Holy Week page on the church website). If you didn’t get one, you can make one – click here or go to the Holy Week page to find the instructions to download. Put it somewhere in your home where you and any other members of the household will see it. When you see it, you could use this prayer (adapted from one in Latin by Richard of Chichester):

Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have won for me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. O most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, Day by day. Amen.

On our Holy Week page under Good Friday, you will find Emma Hodge’s Good Friday meditation, based on the crucifixion scene in the East windows of the church, with photos from the windows. It will be particularly appropriate to use on Good Friday, if you set aside an hour or so. Or you could use one of the 7 reflections on each day of Holy Week, starting on Palm Sunday.

The April newsletter, is available on the website - a bumper edition (20 pages) containing further material for reading and prayer and activities with children. It includes a simple reflective exercise (p4) using a favourite hymn. You could do this with one of the Holy Week hymns, a selection of which you’ll also find on the Holy Week page.
Services

If you missed the live-streamed Parish Communion service on Palm Sunday, you can still watch it at [www.facebook.com/StMichaelsSandhurst](http://www.facebook.com/StMichaelsSandhurst). Our Palm Sunday Music and Meditation service has been created as a Youtube playlist, including choir anthems, hymns and readings by members of our church. You can watch it any time [here](http://www.facebook.com/StMichaelsSandhurst), and download the order of service [here](http://www.facebook.com/StMichaelsSandhurst).

There will also be a Communion Service on Maundy Thursday at 8 pm, and of course at 9.30 am on Easter Sunday, and a Family Service at 11.15 am on Good Friday on Zoom. You can watch these after the event, but it’s good to be worshipping at the same time with others, so put these on your calendar (paper or electronic). The website will also give details of other live-streamed services from the Diocese of Oxford or the Church of England.

Pastoral Care

Technology is a wonderful way of keeping in touch, even if your technical knowhow only extends to using the telephone! Please use the opportunity to reach out to others, whether by a phone call or on social media, and have a chat.

If you need anything and don’t already have someone shopping for you, please call Steph Martin in the first instance, who will do her best to organise for one of our willing volunteers to get in touch with you.

Prayer

Please continue to pray for our Government, the civil servants who are trying to enable our social security and health systems to meet the growing needs of people whose work has been suspended or stopped as well as the sick, and of course for our health service and all the patients they are trying to care for in difficult circumstances. And don’t forget people in other parts of the world who are living under war conditions (Yemen, Syria), locust swarms (East Africa) or other natural disasters, and those in developing countries with inadequate public health services that will be totally overwhelmed by the COVID-19 virus. Pray for our charities Tearfund, CMS, Compassion, Retrak/Hope for Justice and Barnabas Fund who all work with disadvantaged communities throughout the world.

May you know the peace, the joy and the love of God’s presence with you this Holy Week.

With every blessing,

*John*
Rev John Castle  Rector

*A Prayer for the current situation from the Church of England website:*

> Keep us, good Lord,  
> under the shadow of your mercy.  
> Sustain and support the anxious,  
> be with those who care for the sick,  
> 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.