

St Paul's Church

Dear all,

We are now coming up to the fourth Sunday of Lent and edging ever closer to one of the most significant times of the year in the church calendar, Holy Week and Easter. Below are details of what is going on with services in this period so that you have plenty of notice, and I will say more about the season nearer the time although I wanted to pick out one thing in particular.

On the Thursday of Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, myself, and Rev Anthea will head off down to Canterbury Cathedral in the morning for a special service called a Chrism Eucharist. The Archbishop, Justin Welby, is usually in attendance and it is an opportunity for clergy from the diocese to gather. This will be Rev Anthea's first Chrism Eucharist and I'm sure she will find it very special. I love it because there is a wonderful sense of collegiality, and it is very moving to renew your ordination vows 'en masse' – I always come away with a renewed sense of calling to the priesthood.



However, as Sarah keeps telling me, this is not all about me! Hmm. Actually, it really isn't because at that service there are oils that are blessed by the Archbishop, or Bishop, during the course of the proceedings. We bring the oils back to the parish to be used, by those duly authorized, for anointing baptism candidates or during prayer for healing.



Anointing with oil has a great biblical history that stretches back to some of the earliest times of the Old Testament period with symbolism connected to holiness, blessing, cleansing, prosperity, stability, at death and was used particularly when new Kings were chosen. In the New Testament period it becomes connected with healing and in Christian tradition with the presence of God as Holy Spirit, hence its use in baptism.

There are differing views concerning the use of oil, but anointing is still very much at the heart of the Church of England. In our contemporary society this all may sound rather disconnected from the 'real' world we live in, and yet I disagree – personally I think there is something enriching and deeply personal about the connection between our lives and God when anointing those being baptized or those who wish to be anointed during prayer for healing - this is an act of reverence that 'matters' and has eternal significance. Reverence seems to be a lost commodity to many in this world today and I admit to not being the best 'Reverend' when it comes to reverence, but Lent, and Maundy Thursday, might just be an opportunity to re-capture something of that.

Rev Chris

p.s. Please note that there will be no update next week so the next one will be in a fortnight.

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

All services are in church, zoom is available for some services.

SUNDAY 27th MARCH - MOTHERING SUNDAY

10 am Holy Baptism with All-Age Communion (Isla Williams) - Rev Chris

SUNDAY 3rd APRIL

10 am Café Service - Gwyn

SUNDAY 10th APRIL - PALM SUNDAY

10 am All-Age Communion - Rev Chris (Zoom)

THURSDAY 14th APRIL - MAUNDY THURSDAY

7 pm 'Stations of the Cross' with simple act of Communion and stripping of the altar -
Rev Robin & Rev Anthea

FRIDAY 15th APRIL - GOOD FRIDAY

2 pm An Hour at the Cross - Rev Chris

3-6pm Church open for Prayer & Reflection

SUNDAY 17th APRIL - EASTER SUNDAY

10 am Holy Communion - Ven Andrew & Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 24th APRIL

10 am Holy Communion - Rev Chris

EVENTS

FRIDAY 8th APRIL

7 pm Art Exhibition (small hall)

THURSDAY 14th APRIL

2.30 pm MOTHERS' UNION - Easter Bonnets & hot cross buns (small hall)

THURSDAY 21st APRIL

2.30 pm FELLOWSHIP - Queen's Birthday Tea & Reminiscence Session (small hall)

EASTER FLOWERS AT ST PAUL'S

Easter is an appropriate time to remember a loved one, relative or friend who has died. If you would like to contribute in this way, please complete a slip and place it with your donation in the envelope provided which you will find at the back of church.

PRAYER RESOURCE

week beginning Sunday, 27th March 2022

'This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name"' (Matthew 6: 9)

This week we give thanks for:

- All who show us a true mother's love, and reflect on what that support has meant to us over the years.
- Our homes and gardens: being grateful to have a small patch of garden to walk around, to listen to the birds and to be aware of activity around; pray for all without that luxury.

Please pray for:

- Peace and justice in Ukraine, and for God's love to be manifest everywhere there is great need; pray that all leaders of nations are guided into the ways of peace and mercy.
- Women around the world who boldly stand up against injustice in God's name, often at great personal cost; pray they continue to be empowered by the Holy Spirit as they speak God's words of truth.
- Us all to take special care for the vulnerable and those who are in need, and to love our neighbours as ourselves.
- The valuable work of the Mothers' Union throughout the world.
- Our Church family: all who are housebound, lonely or struggling with ill-health; and for Joan, Gilly, Barbara, Hazel, Edith, Peter, Sheila, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Tony and Maureen; and in our wider church, for Ruth, Joan and Helen.
- Everyone we meet this week, and that we see all people as your children and share your love with them.

You may like to use this prayer during the week:

God of peace, amidst uncertainty, draw us to your side.

Amidst the busyness, lead us to a place of stillness.

Amidst the chaos, fix our eyes on you. Amen.