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Showing and Sharing God's Love

29 March 2020

Lent 5 – Passiontide begins

Welcome to church!

- It's just possible that you won't see anyone today. It's very likely that you won't see anyone else from our church family. But we are still a family. Let's remember that as we worship and pray in different places today – we can be together in the Spirit!
- Our website is updated regularly, and there is a page under News on things we are doing during the current pandemic – see <https://www.cofebishopstoke.com/coronavirus>
- If you normally give to the church during a Sunday or midweek service, you may like to save this, if possible, for when we are able to be together again.

Today's Readings

**Psalm 130
Ezekiel 37.1-14
John 11.1-45**

**'I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;
in his word is my hope.'**

Psalm 130.4

Contact: Revd Richard Wise on 8061 2192, email. rwise@talktalk.net

Revd Kat Mepham on 8129 0975, email. katmepham@sorefeet.org.uk

Prayer for this week

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Items for prayer...

- **the unwell** – Charlotte, Alison, Pam, Bob, Tracy, Maureen, Lois, Elaine, Simon, Christopher, William, Shane, Joan, Norma, Dorrie, Vic
- we commend Elizabeth Marks to God, and pray for her family and friends
- **our parish** – those who live in West Horton Lane, West Horton Close, Horton Way
- **our church groups** – everyone who comes to one of our groups (Alpha, Prayer Healing Fellowship, Tots & Tinies, Unshakeable, home groups) which cannot meet at the moment
- **coronavirus** – everyone affected by this in any way; our Government and the NHS; the isolated and vulnerable; children and young people unable to go to school or see friends; those in the Developing World; the life and witness of the church at this time (please see below for a prayer)

A prayer about coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

More prayers can be found at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer-resources>

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Sunday worship From now on we are offering two options for Sunday worship which you can do at home – traditional (like 9.15 am) and contemporary (like Church Together, with some of the 'zones'). These will be found each week at <https://www.cofebishopstoke.com/sunday-service> Those who are not on the internet should receive some resources in the post, but please contact Richard if you have been missed out for some reason and would like to receive them. Do continue to email your thoughts and responses to Richard, or post them on Facebook or Twitter on Sunday – it would be great to hear how this is going for you!

Coronavirus

- Please take care of yourself. If you think you may have the virus, stay at home and contact the NHS (e.g. on NHS 111) for advice.
- If you are diagnosed or hear of anyone in our church or community actually being diagnosed with the virus, please let Richard know.
- If you self-isolate, for whatever reason, please tell Richard, Ann Brown, Joan Cook, or someone from church who phones you.
- If you need help with shopping or a prescription, please let Richard know and he will put you in touch with someone who can help you.

Our church buildings Since the start of the lockdown earlier this week, lots of things have changed for people, and that includes the church. Sadly, church buildings can no longer be opened for prayer and reflection or used for any purpose. No one should enter St Mary's or St Paul's for any reason whatsoever. If you have any queries about this, please let Richard know.

Church of England guidance and resources for coronavirus These can all be accessed via this webpage: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches> Some may not be very relevant to you, but others may be of great help at this time. The sheets on mental health and wellbeing and Spiritual Communion may be particularly helpful. This page is added to regularly and updated whenever there is a significant change that affects us.

Cotton needed! Cherry is currently making face masks for carers, nursing homes and funeral directors. She has orders coming in fast but cannot buy material as shops are closed and getting it online is taking too long. If you have some cotton material which you could give to Cherry or you would like a pattern to make some masks yourself, please let Richard know.

Other ways of helping Thank you so much to those who have signed up to help others in practical ways like shopping. We have no idea what the demand might be, either from church members or others in our community. If you would like to offer to help with this, please let Richard know. It does take a few days to sort out as the church's Safeguarding cannot be compromised, and there is also some online training to do if you haven't already done that for something else in church.

You will probably be aware that others are doing similar things. Our communities need as much help as possible, and we are certainly not in competition! You may like to offer to help other trusted organisations such as the NHS <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS> or Volunteer Wessex <https://www.volunteerwessex.org/>. Wainwrights Chemist is also offering a delivery service for medications run by volunteers.

Live Lent daily reading, reflection and action If you haven't yet used LiveLent: Care for God's Creation, it can be accessed here: www.churchofengland.org/livelent. The Church of England is now planning similar daily readings for the Easter season.

Children's Society collecting boxes If you have one of these, please just keep it for the moment. We will sort them out when things are back to normal or simply leave them until next Mothering Sunday.