



Sunday 5th April - Palm Sunday

Welcome!

Dear friends of Christ Church,

Welcome to this week's bulletin. We hope that you are finding it useful in keeping you in contact with our community in Christ Church in this most difficult time. We welcome contributions from anyone who has a message to give, be it serious or maybe a little humorous. We all need to be able to smile in the face of challenge.

This bulletin will be emailed out to those on our email list. As always, material for inclusion should be emailed by Tuesday evenings to Jude Bishop at notices@christchurchbath.org

Please forward this bulletin to anyone to whom you think it would be of interest. We will print a few paper copies and post them to those who are not on email.

We're still following government guidelines by not showing on-line services from inside church and hopefully you are managing to join in from your living room. A reminder of how you can do this is [here](#), and for the moment we will do that from the tiny chapel Colin and Lore have created at home. To make it more of a Christ Church community we would love you to send photos of yourself and these can put up in the chapel as a visible sign that we are all worshipping together. They can come by email to Lore, lore.chumbley@me.com or by post to Christ Church.

Also, do please email or post or text prayer requests and we will try to include them week by week. But be aware that the service will be online and so be careful of the confidentiality of friends and loved ones

The April Link should be up on the website soon and you can find it and past copies [here](#). Any articles for next month should be emailed to Alex at alexs@christchurchbath.org.

Letter from the priest-in-charge

Dear friends

As we move into a Holy Week which will be unlike any Holy Week we have experienced before, I find myself thinking of the Upper Room in Jerusalem where the last supper and Pentecost took place. Our services this Holy week will be in an 'upper room', a small, relatively safe place and, inevitably, they will be subdued. Only those of you who can access [Facebook](#) will be able to 'attend' and then only in a virtual sense. But even if you can't see and hear the services I hope you can find comfort in knowing that the people's work of worship (which is what 'liturgy' means) will be carrying on through Holy Week culminating in the celebration of the Resurrection.

On the evenings of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy week, Mark will lead us in compline with sung responses including the ancient, beautiful words:

*'Keep me as the apple of an eye
Hide me under the shadow of your wing.'*

On Maundy Thursday we remember the Last Supper in the Upper Room. It was a carefully planned place of privacy and relative safety at a time when the authorities were looking to arrest Jesus. The sense of unease and underlying danger which pervades our lives at the moment, may serve to remind us that Jesus and the disciples lived precariously with no fixed base and in opposition to the authorities. As we follow the events of Holy Week from our own personal places of difficulty and discomfort, it may be encouraging to know we share something with those believers who lived through the first Holy Week.

On Good Friday between 12 noon and 2.30 we will post a series of images, poems and prayers on our face book page. Rebekah, Ling and Sarah Jones have prepared these. We would love you to post your reactions to them as you read and pray them. Then at 2.30pm we will bring all our prayers together in a Good Friday Liturgy.

There will be a blessing of the Paschal candle on the evening of Holy Saturday and, of course, the great celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday morning at 10 am. Even if you can't join us at our virtual service, open your windows or doors at 10 am on Easter Day and join Christ Church and Christians around the world singing first 'Jesus Christ is Risen Today' and then 'Thine be the Glory, risen conquering Son!'

God, who as Jesus reminds us, is God of the living, conquers death. That is the triumph of the resurrection. And God who is able to raise Jesus from the dead that will bring us through this global pandemic in whatever way he has planned for us. All we have to do is keep faith - with each other and with God.

Readings & Sermon for Thursday April 2 Eucharist

Genesis 17: 3-9

Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God.' God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.'

John 8: 51-end

Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.' The Jews said to him, 'Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, "Whoever keeps my word will never taste death." Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?' Jesus answered, 'If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, "He is our God," though you do not know him. But I know him; if I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word. Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.'

Then the Jews said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I AM.' So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

Sermon for Thursday April 2nd

There is something deeply significant to our sense of self about our name.

Is anyone else spending time wandering round the house talking to themselves by name? Maybe it's just me but in the silence and solitude it seems necessary to hear one's own name. Names matter. After Creation, Adam's first task was to give each animal a name. If you name something you have power over it. Teachers know that - and good teachers make an effort to learn their pupils' names swiftly. Changing our names is significant. Christians used to take a new name at baptism to signify their new life. Abraham had such an overwhelming experience of the presence of God that he changed his name from Abram meaning 'Great Father' to Abraham meaning 'Father of many.' Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter meaning 'rock.' And Jesus' Hebrew name 'Jeshua' given to him by the angel Gabriel is significant. It means, 'The one who saves.'

The name of God was believed to be so powerful, so loved and feared by the Israelites, that, in the end, it was never spoken aloud. But they knew the name, and they knew it meant 'I AM' or 'I AM what I AM' or, 'I will be what I will be.' The Didache, an early Christian liturgy from the first century says 'Where two or more speak of the Lord, he is present'. To name of God or even to speak together of God without naming, brought one into the presence of God.

In the Gospel reading, we hear of Jesus arguing in the temple with the priests and the scribes about eternal life. Jesus was talking about living life in the presence of God as he himself did. 'Whoever keeps my word

will never see death, he said,' meaning, I think, his message of love of God and love of neighbour. Whoever lives as he did, in the living presence of God, is already halfway to the kingdom of heaven and will never see death.'

And caught up in the argument he spoke the sacred name. 'Before Abraham was.' he said, 'I AM,' using the sacred name without embarrassment or ego because in truth, he and the Father are one. He alone could speak the name which invokes the presence. The temple officials reacted to this profound revelation not with astonishment & worship but with anger. They threatened to stone him and from then on, they plotted his death.

As we look towards the events of Holy week, we too have a name that is sacred, a name which, since our baptism each wear invisibly on our foreheads, and reverence in our hearts; the name at which every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Holy Week Services at Christ Church

All on Christ Church Bath facebook

- Monday: **8pm** Compline *a simple, contemplative service to end the day*
- Tuesday: **8pm** Compline
- Wednesday: **8pm** Compline
- Maundy Thursday: **7pm** Eucharist of the Last Supper
- Good Friday: **12-2.30pm** 'drop in' to our online prayer stations, followed at **2.30 pm** Good Friday liturgy
- Holy Saturday: **8pm** Short Easter Vigil & blessing of Paschal candle
- Easter Sunday: **10am** Eucharist of the Resurrection

East End Re-ordering Time and Talents Challenge is still alive and kicking

We'd still like to encourage you all to use the opportunity of having time on your hands and to take your mind off the current situation. We're not cancelling the Time and Talents challenge and in fact it continues through Lent and extends to the end of October to raise the remaining funds for the East end re-organisation. If you have time to craft or embroider or knit or paint or do beautiful calligraphy, or bake or use any of the almost infinite talents that Christ Church folk have, then this is the place to advertise your talents. Delivery will have to wait until government restrictions are limited.



Our Charity of the month during April is Open Doors, a charity focusing on the needs of persecuted Christians around the world, supplying Bibles, training clergy and giving practical help where needed. Their website address for online donations is www.opendoorsuk.com

If you don't have internet access their address is PO Box 6, Witney, Oxon, OX29 6WG, and their phone number (if in use) is 01993 460015

Social action in Bath

As you have probably heard by now, the **Compassionate Community Hub** is now operational across the whole of B&NES, with large numbers of volunteers who are being asked to provide support to people in need in their local areas.

If anyone needs support with buying food or medicines, and there is no local group that they can turn to, then they should send an email with the subject "Support" to compassion@3sq.org.uk and the team will pick up your query within 24 hours.

Alternatively, telephone the Compassionate Community hotline 0300 247 0050.

People wanting to register as a volunteer with Compassionate Community Hub should complete the form via this link: <http://bit.ly/communityvolunteersignup>.

Sustainable Food Partnership

3SG & the Sustainable Food Partnership have produced a list of local providers offering food to people across Bath and north east Somerset. You can find a comprehensive list [here](#)

Churches Together Candle of Hope

As our nation faces the unprecedented challenge of the coronavirus pandemic, Churches Together in England (CTE) is encouraging Christians across our nations to continue uniting in prayer, praying #PrayersOf-Hope in their homes at 7.00 pm each Sunday evening.

Following the overwhelming response which the National Call to Prayer and Action received on Mothering Sunday, CTE has prepared a candle poster for those who would like to place a permanent symbol in their front windows of Christ's light shining in the darkness. Visit the CTE website and print out a poster from [here](#)

This poster has been made available due to our awareness of the potential fire risk posed by lighting live candles, particularly on windowsills. We are keen to avoid adding any pressure to our emergency service personnel, particularly at this difficult time.

'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' (**John 1:5**)

Pilgrim Group Pauses to Clap

The Thursday evening 'Pilgrim' study group now meets online, studying St John's Gospel. We start at **7.30pm** on and for the last two weeks we have paused at one minute to eight, gone down to our front doors and joined with all those who are applauding the NHS, teachers, carers and those who are keeping our society functioning. We are from different areas of Bath, but we report back to each other that the applause is getting louder. In the streets of Bath even two hands clapping echo amongst the tall buildings and there is a huge amount of support. As we all keep that gesture going on Thursdays, let's also continue to place a lit candle in our windows at 7 pm on Sundays as a sign of Jesus, the Light of the World as explained above by Churches Together in England.

Finally, as you clap on Thursday nights, say this prayer:

Prayer for hospital staff and medical researchers

*Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*