



St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh
WORSHIPPING AT HOME
Mothering Sunday – 22nd March 2020
What does it mean to be a family?

While we are not able to worship together, please use these Worship and Prayer resources at home. We will be producing similar resources each week – if you would like them delivered to your home, please contact Roy on 01483 800655. If you have access to the internet, there are more resources and an Audio version of the sermon to be found on the Church Website and Church FaceBook page.

If you would like to hear live worship, many church websites are live streaming (we may try to get that up and running by Holy Week) or on television and radio, there are lots of opportunities! I especially commend to you, 8.10am on Radio 4 this Sunday, when the Archbishop of Canterbury will be Presiding at Holy Communion from Lambeth Palace!

COLLECTS FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY:

God of compassion,
whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth,
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living
that in joy and in sorrow
we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us

all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BIBLE READINGS:

Exodus 2.1-10

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

John 19.25b-27

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON (from The Rector):

When Harold Wilson was Prime Minister of Britain in the 1960s and 70s, he once famously said, *'A week in politics is a long time'*!

Today, I'm thinking, *'A week in the Church in England is a long time'*!

Last Sunday, our worship was pretty much as normal, apart from reduced numbers, different ways of receiving Communion and sharing the Peace! In a week, the life of our worship (along with the life of our Nation) has changed beyond belief, and those of you who are joining me at home, either listening to the audio version of this sermon, or reading it to yourself, will realise that these are unprecedented times, not just in our generation, but in the whole history of the Christian Church! But here we are, and we have had to do a lot of radical 'out of the box' thinking this week, in order to deliver worship in the only way we can – pre-packed, takeaway, and for home consumption only!

If everything had been as normal, it was planned that today's sermon, on Mothering Sunday, would be the third in a series which I was to preach at all three of our services! There is a sense in which it still is that, although inevitably, some of the content is going to be different.

The theme was, and is 'What does it mean to be a family?'

Every time my daughters come home for the weekend, I know it is going to cost me money! For a start, they (and whatever entourage they have brought with them) are going to eat Kate and I out of house and home – there are always lots of treats (crisps, biscuits, chocolate), not to mention the Gin and Tonic and the wine! In addition to that, they are nearly always given something to take home, and invariably there is some sort of bank transfer that takes place! So why does this happen, particularly in the light of the fact that neither of them actually needs any of it, as both of them earn more money than I do?

Well, of course, it has to do with this whole concept of what it means to be a family! Family, is a place where extraordinary things happen, not out of duty, but quite simply because we want to do it!

In our two Bible readings, we heard of a Mother who was prepared to go to such great lengths, to save her child's life, and we heard of Jesus own Mother, standing at the foot of the cross, watching as her own dear child was being crucified for the life of the world!

Perhaps these examples, are extremes? From me, a Father 'spoiling' his grown-up children, from Moses' Mother fiercely protecting her child's life, and from Mary, watching, in deep sorrow, knowing that her dying Son is giving of himself for the greater good of life eternal for all who embrace it!

But together, they paint a picture of the sort of love which God has for us – the sort of fierce, protective love a mother has for her child, only more so.

And I was going to talk about that sort of love in the context of ‘family’, and in relation to the way we respond to each other and our local Church in the way we resource it financially! We mustn’t lose sight of that need, but for now there are even more pressing things to consider, about how we respond, as individuals, and as a Church, to what is happening to us in these times!

During this week I have been both disgusted and heartened by some things that have happened in our community! Disgusted, to hear the stories of people pushing elderly and vulnerable folk out of the way to get at the new supply of toilet rolls that arrived in Sainsburys one day, but heartened by hearing all the stories of ‘community spirit’ as people step up to the ark in order to help those who are in need, isolated and vulnerable!

As a Church, both collective and individual, we must associate with this latter group – we must be the ones who teach the world what it really means to be family, by showing the sort of loving service which goes beyond the norm!

So, what is family? There is no simple answer to this question, as we need to take into account that, in addition to the standard British family comprising Mother, Father and 2.4 children (Oh, how I always feel so sorry for that poor little .4!) There are childless families, one-parent families, broken families, families that have been torn apart by bereavement and families where there is such a lack of love, that it is hard to think of them as families at all! But they are all families!

So Mothering Sunday is, of course, a special day for giving thanks for our Mums, for those of us who are lucky enough to be able to do that, and it is also a day to remember Mums who are no longer with us. But in doing that, we need to also to remember that whole mix, which I’ve just described, and take on board that there are those for whom the whole concept of motherhood (and family for that matter) is a painful one! But in doing all of that, I believe that it is vital that we don’t lose sight of the joy of what family life at its best can be, and to celebrate it from a Christian perspective.

Because God's love for us goes beyond the normal concepts which we can understand – in the words of Isaac Watts’ great hymn:

*‘ love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!’*

It is a love which was prepared to go all the way to Crucifixion for the life of the world!

God bless you all, as you keep the faith through these strange and confusing times!

PRAYERS:

Prayers about the Coronavirus outbreak

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.**

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake. **Amen.**

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For those who are ill

Merciful God,
we entrust to your tender care
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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.**

From one who is ill or isolated

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing can separate me
from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For the Christian community

We are not people of fear:
we are people of courage.
We are not people who protect our own safety:
we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.
We are not people of greed:
we are people of generosity.
We are your people God,
giving and loving,
wherever we are,
whatever it costs
For as long as it takes
wherever you call us. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession for The Church, The World and The Parish:

Church and Christian Ministry:

- For the Diocesan Communications Team at this Challenging Time (especially for Wendy Sleight and Kate Darwent who are working round the clock to keep parishes informed with the latest information)
- For our Rector and Ministry Team, working to help us all to stay in touch at this time

National and World Affairs:

- For all affected by Coronavirus, and for our Government and Health Workers and Officials
- All whose domestic arrangements have been put in disarray by the Coronavirus

Community and Family:

- For those who live in Homewood, The Copse and Ridgeway Close
- For St John's Ambulance and Badgers
- For all businesses whose viability is threatened by matters beyond their control

Sick and those in Need:

- For all who have been forced to self-isolate (and we are especially asked to pray for Tim, Jen, Mable and Katie)
- All who have lost loved ones by the Coronavirus (especially Simon, Janet and their family)
- For Ann Armstrong, Robin Burnett, Gerard Croft, Sue DeanusTina Halliwell, Tony Kenison, Libby O'Brien, Brian Pettyfer, Jean and Tim Quallington, Frankie Salvador, Marion Tomkins, Angela Wild, Henry Young (and those with long-term needs)

Departed:

- Barry Bowker, Brian Smithers

NOTICES

MOTHERS UNION are being highlighted on **BBC One TODAY (22nd March) at 1.15pm Songs of Praise**. MU Worthing branch have the privilege of hosting Katherine Jenkins as they make up emergency bags.

RUNNER BEANS: Would you like me to grow a pot of Runner Bean Plants for you to plant in your garden? Ten plants for £3.00, six plants £2.30, ready mid to late May. Orders to Win Bracking 275573. All proceeds to the Rectory Fête

CHURCH SPRING CLEANING, Saturday 4th April.

You won't be surprised to hear that the Spring-Cleaning Day on 4th April is cancelled. There will be no services in church, but the church will be open for private prayer. Cleaners will be able to clean on their own if they are able and wish to, depending on self-isolation restrictions. I suggest that everyone wears gloves when cleaning. Thank you once again to you all for the wonderful work you do. Please contact me if you have any concerns on 548824. Celia Jenkins

COMMUNITY MEALS: If you are over 70 years, live in the Village and are worried/concerned about your meals you can apply to Rowleys to have a hot cooked meal delivered to your door. Speak to Gary or Tina on 277155 and they will help. Their office is open 9am to 2.30pm

CORONAVIRUS – GDPR: If you have not completed a GDPR contact form we will be unable to contact you at all, so if this is you, please complete one as a matter of urgency. You will find them at the back of church and on the website.

Withdrawal of Recycling: Sadly, due to the health implications of continuing to receive packaging from nut products Elise will no longer be offering any recycling of crisp/biscuit packets but would like to thank you for your support, we have saved thousands from landfill since September. If you would like to carry on recycling, you can take all crisp, biscuit and other foil wrappers to The Good Earth Shop next to Barclay's Bank and they are happy to recycle them all for you.

Please send notices for next week to Margie Nursey at 1, Elm Cottages, Smithwood Common (273693) notices@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk by **7pm on Wednesday**