



# St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh

## WORSHIPPING AT HOME

### Mothering Sunday

### Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**WELCOME . . . .** to our Worshipping at Home resources for this week.

**COVID-19 – LATEST . . . .** the Church will continue to be open for live worship at 11am on Sundays, now with the addition of Tuesday 12noon Communion and Thursday morning Lent reflections. As lockdown rules are gradually eased, and whilst infection rates continue to fall, it is our feeling that people may now start to think about cautiously returning to church. All social distancing and quick dispersal rules will remain in place.

**THIS WEEK . . . .** (*Events in red will be online events*)

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March – Mothering Sunday:**

10am: **(Zoom):** Church at Home.

11.15am: **(Zoom):** SEA Church (for young people)

*(the Zoom joining code for both of these is*

*ID: 148-785-166, Password: Church)*

11am: Holy Communion (CW). **In Church and Livestreamed**

**Tuesday 16 March**

12noon: Holy Communion BCP

**Thursday 18 March**

10am: Thought for Lent Week 4 **In Church and Live-streamed**

**Sunday 21st March – Lent 5:**

**10am: (Zoom): Church at Home.**

**11.15am: (Zoom): SEA Church (for young people)**

***(the Zoom joining code for both of these is***

***ID: 148-785-166, Password: Church)***

**11am: Holy Communion (CW). In Church and Livestreamed**

## **MOTHERING SUNDAY**

### **COLLECTS:**

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.

*(or)*

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.

### **FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 1: 20-28.**

In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD."

The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and remain there forever; I will offer him as a nazirite for all time." Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only—may

the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh; and the child was young. Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me the petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD.” She left him there for the LORD.

**GOSPEL READING: *Luke 2: 33-35.***

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

**SERMON (written by Rev Rutton Vicajee)**

I haven’t been in this church very long, so I don’t know what you normally do for Mothering Sunday. In my previous churches, for many years, we had an all-age family service full of “nice” things. We gave mothers, and indeed all women present, a daffodil or some sweets, or a posy, or something the kids created, because it’s a “nice” thing to do. The thinking ones amongst us hopefully were celebrating the nurture and care and the unconditional love we receive from mothers, as we distribute these gifts. And then we all go back to ignoring them, and treating them like slaves, for the other 364 days of the year!

And so, my conclusion is, if you asked for a straw poll of who is in favour of motherhood and apple pie, I think you might be wasting your time looking for opponents.

And that's fine, it's good to believe in goodness, but I also think it is fair to challenge this perfect picture of motherhood and social harmony. Because so often, it bears no relationship whatsoever to our own personal experiences.

A wise preacher from this church, called Martin, said this to me recently. "On Mothering Sunday, in services and talks, I try to remember, and I try to remind others to remember, those who no longer have a mother around, including me. Also, those who never knew their mothers. Those who had a love-hate relationship with them. And those who had a hate-hate relationship. Those who found it hugely difficult being a mother, those who find it difficult having children, (as in our passage) and those mothers of children who might tragically have died, either pre- or post-natal."

One of the most challenging and difficult sights I saw during lockdown was on a walk around my local churchyard, near where I live, in Aldershot. There is a children's grave section, and at least one of those graves has been turned into a quadruple-plot playground-style shrine for the child who has died, complete with Astro-turf, bench, shiny balloons, inflatable unicorns, miniature castle, and all the rest of it. And you might say "Well, what's wrong with that, let people grieve in their own way". Or you might say, "He laughs at wounds that never felt a scratch." And I accept that. But I am also fearful that the parents of the child in the grave *in the next plot* might find this overflowing display difficult to deal with. And so, if you're thinking to yourself, well, there he goes again, the unvarnished truth about life according to Eeyore, otherwise known as "why don't you lighten up a bit", if you are thinking that, then I'm afraid we're not quite out of the woods yet. Because the Bible also presents the difficult and unfurnished truth about motherhood.

The curse of childlessness in this case. No IVF treatment available in the local Iraqi pre-natal clinic for Sarai, in Genesis.

And in exactly the same way, Hannah has the same problem in our passage. No pregnancy. When her bitter rival seems to shell them out like peas. And the jealousy and hatred and mental scarring that this causes this poor woman is described, as she is mercilessly attacked and mobbed by her fellow-wife.

And now, here we have the husband standing by, making things so very much better, by explaining to Hannah that *he personally* is already the solution, because he is worth more than 10 sons! When he has a 50% probability of being the problem in the first place!

I'd like to see what my wife would have said at the start of our marriage, if I had explained to her that we weren't going to have any children because I'm worth at least ten of them!

But back to the pain of being a fractured Mother – or not one at all. Well, of course, God is there, in the darkness, in the hopelessness, even when it feels He really isn't, and even when your soul is being torn apart by grief.

And in this particular story, there is at least the beginnings of a happy ending, because God answers out of the darkness. And Hannah has a son. But instead of stocking up in Mesopotamia Mothercare, and booking an advance place in the local synagogue school, and saving up for a 4x4 family chariot, like normal people, she decides instead to give up her son into the service of the church. The son she's been praying for, the son she's been longing for, the only son she has. And I'm sure you may be kind enough to agree with me that that sounds familiar.

Abraham of course, was also called to give up his only son. But Hannah goes one further, and does it voluntarily. And the chocolate teapot husband? Well, he seems to have a habit of just agreeing with the last speaker, so not much opposition or advice to be had there.

It's possible, of course, that Hannah feels she is creating the new Archbishop of Samaria by her sacrifice. And in a way she is. But this is not a traditional church role. Her son will become an angry, complex,

tortured, autocratic prophet and national leader. He will play the role of judge, jury and executioner, an exactor of bloody vengeance, a chooser of unsuitable Kings. The crowd will often turn on him when the fair winds of success change. And eventually, after death, he is reduced to acting the part of a tortured, angry ghost.

That's the story of Samuel. Forget those sanitised sermons you've heard about Samuel being called by God in the night, and Eli saying, "Well listen to God the third time in your dreams my son, and all will be well."

That's all very pleasant. But this Samuel is real, and red in tooth and claw, in the service of God.

And just in case you're saying, "Well, there he goes again, painting it black! Surely things get better by the New Testament? If you are thinking that, then apologies, but I think we're back to the motherhood and apple pie problem. Because I'm afraid that's not what our gospel passage says. Simeon says that Jesus will be not much different. His mother also will have to give him up to public ministry. In a very similar way to Samuel, he will be misunderstood, hated, abused, and exploited, as well as loved. He will live a life of poverty, with no place to call home, with no stable family relationships. He will die a martyr's death, betrayed by one of his closest friends, and bitterly dividing everyone – church, state and people - in their reaction to His incredible message. And he will break His Mother's heart when He dies. All this, Simeon sees in his prophecy. Can you see the contrast I am painting? Giving daffodils to mothers on Mother's Day is great, and a good thing to do, and I'm not knocking it. I LOVE daffodils – who doesn't? But the Bible paints a more realistic picture of motherhood and the difficulty of giving birth to someone truly exceptional, and then losing them.

So, what do we do with all of that? What is the Jesus take on all this? Jesus' attitude to His Mother and His family is well-documented in the Gospels. And it's refreshing. And it is healing. And it is transformative.

Because faith in Christ gives us a whole new set of deep, loving, relationships in the family of God.

Jesus is no advocate of the perfect blood family. He is more interested in adoption. God adopting us all, through salvation, through faith, into sons and daughters of the divine family. And into powerful friendship and fellowship with each other.

This Mothering Sunday, let us all start to travel with Jesus, from pain of fractured families, through to blessing, through to transformed and transcendent relationships with each other.

What a journey.

Amen.

### **POST COMMUNION PRAYER:**

Loving God, as a mother feeds her children at the breast you feed us in this sacrament with the food and drink of eternal life: help us who have tasted your goodness to grow in grace within the household of faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **SEASONAL PROVISION FOR LENT**

#### ***Invitation to Confession***

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.  
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,  
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

#### ***Introduction to the Peace***

Since we are justified by faith,  
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has given us access to his grace.

### ***Extended Preface for use with Eucharistic Prayers A, B and E***

It is indeed right and good  
to give you thanks and praise,  
almighty God and everlasting Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.  
For in these forty days  
you lead us into the desert of repentance  
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline  
we may grow in grace  
and learn to be your people once again.  
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service  
you bring us back to your generous heart.  
Through study of your holy word  
you open our eyes to your presence in the world  
and free our hands to welcome others  
into the radiant splendour of your love.  
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast  
with joyful hearts and minds  
we bless you for your mercy  
and join with saints and angels  
for ever praising you and *saying*:

### ***Blessing***

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,  
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;  
and the blessing . . . .

## **WEEKLY PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:**

### **Church and Christian Ministry:**

- For our Ecumenical Partners, for the Bishop of Guildford's Interfaith Adviser, Revd Phil Simpson, and for the inter-faith team in their

work with the different faith communities that they may have understanding and love in all their relationships.

- In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer - Iglesia Anglicana de Chile.
- In our own Church, for our Vergers, Sue and Colin.

### **National and World Affairs:**

- For Justice and compassion in the hearts of the world's leaders.
- For Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.
- For those whose role it is to deliver Covid vaccinations around the world, especially the staff and volunteers working in our Village Hall.

### **Community and Family:**

- For those who live in Taylors Crescent.
- For all those working in the Justice and Legal profession.

### **The Sick and those in Need:**

- Stella Goldsmith, Barbara Haine, George Hill, Helen and David, Philip Jones, Amy and Dennis Loveless, Libby O'Brien, Brian Pettyfer, Jean Quallington, Jean Sandow, Bert and Eileen Steed, Maureen Steele, Dennis and Rosemary Talbot, Marion Tomkins, Darcy Wigfield, Angela Wild, Henry Young and Nicholas. *(and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Amanda and Hugh, Tim Bailey, Michael Burt, Sarah Godwin, Jan and Mark Knott, Sally Rivett, Sue Simper, Jacky Williams, Alli, Judy Bolt, Sue and Dennis Evans, Sami Bennewith, Lizzy Laverty)*

### **The Departed:**

- All we have known and loved, and especially Canon Tony Chanter, John Combs and Valerie Pitt. *(and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: John Davies)*

## WEEKLY NOTICES:

**THOUGHT FOR LENT (Thursday Mornings)**. These Live-streamed Lent reflections will last approximately 30 minutes, will discuss Christ's Seven Last Words on the Cross and include hymns, readings and prayers for the season. The remaining sessions are:

18th March. 10am – Revd Tim Clifford Hill ***“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*** and ***“I Thirst”***

25th March. 10am – The Rector ***“It is finished”*** and ***“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit”***

**PEW FOR SALE** One of the pews at the back of the tower area is available for sale for a donation to the St Nicolas' building fund. A faculty has been granted for this purpose. Enquiries to the Church Warden, Mike Roberts

**VOLUNTEER SECRETARY WANTED** A volunteer Secretary is needed for the Cranleigh Community Fund. There are just 3 meetings a year and the position entails approximately 2 hours involvement per month. For further information contact Joy on 01483 273960 or Email [jmfaith@icloud.com](mailto:jmfaith@icloud.com)

**THE ARTS SOCIETY CRANLEIGH** is providing talks to members **via zoom at 2.00 pm** on the fourth Wednesday of the month, until July, as due to covid-19 these cannot take place in the Cranleigh Arts Centre as usual. Non-members can take part by contacting the Membership Secretary in advance at [www.theartsocietycranleigh.org](http://www.theartsocietycranleigh.org). It is hoped that as from September talks can be resumed in the Arts Centre with our normal afternoon and evening talks.

**March 24<sup>th</sup> 2021:** Timothy Walker - The Subtle Science & Exact Art of Colour in English Garden Design – why gardening can rank as a fine art.

**April 28<sup>th</sup> 2021:** Ian Swankie – Great Railway Stations.

**May 26<sup>th</sup> 2021:** Peter Medhurst - The Genius of Beethoven

**June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021:** Anna Moszynska – Modern British Sculpture

[TRAIDCRAFT](#) has The Real Easter Eggs, milk and plain chocolate and Divine Eggs as well as Easter Cards. Order them from me and I will be happy to deliver. Many thanks to the Ladies who, following the Womens Day of Prayer, have sent me contributions to Traidcraft Exchange. This is now a stand-alone charity supporting and educating people in producing fairtrade goods as well as being a campaigning voice for the poorest in the world. Their Double up Campaign for this spring is for the Regenerators in Tanzania and Bangladesh - Together, they are taking a stand against climate change. With basic climate friendly technology, and knowledge and skills about how to adapt to erratic weather patterns through things like growing new crops and investing in beehives or fisheries, communities will be able to earn more from the hard work they already do. So the money you have donated, over £100, will be doubled by the Government to help this cause . Thank you all very much  
Sue Knight 01483 275032

**JOIN YOUR FRIENDS FOR COFFEE AFTER 11AM SERVICE EACH WEEK . . . .**

Are you missing meeting up with friends over coffee after Church? We are pleased to be making it a regular feature to meet on Zoom when the 11am Service ends, for a chat and a catch up! The scheduled Zoom Meeting will be open from 11.45 onwards. **Meeting ID: 830 2040 3902 and the Passcode: 'Coffee'**

**MIDWEEK MORNING PRAYER . . . .** Members of the Ministry Team say Morning Prayer each Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8am. We have returned to meeting in Church, but we continue to Zoom as

well. If anybody else would like to join us, the Zoom codes are: **Meeting ID: 546 358 461 Passcode: 'MP'**

## **KEEP IN TOUCH:**

**Rector - Revd Canon Roy Woodhams**

*(Day off: Monday)*

Tel: 01483 800655. Email: [roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk](mailto:roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk)

**Curate - Revd Tim Clifford Hill**

*(Day off: Monday and furloughed Saturday)*

Tel: 01483 276267. Email: [tim@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk](mailto:tim@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk)

**Part time Curate - Revd Rutton Viccajee**

*(Works Wednesday, Friday, Sunday)*

Tel: 01252 910212. Email: [rutton@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk](mailto:rutton@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk)

**Administrator - Nicola Craven-Smith**

*(Works Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.30-2.30)*

Tel: 01483 273620. Email: [nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk](mailto:nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk)

**Young People's Minister - Gabrielle Clarke**

*(Currently only working Monday, Thursday and Sunday)*

Tel: 07427 748408. Email: [gabrielle@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk](mailto:gabrielle@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk)

**Church Website:** [www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk](http://www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk)

and on **Facebook**.