



THE MESSENGER

The weekly review of the Parish of

St Michael and All Angels

Watford

EASTER 2

Sunday 19 April 2020

“The Church building is closed, but the Church family continues”

As you are now all aware, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have announced the suspension of public worship in all Churches. The Government has also announced that all Places of Worship must close.

This means that there will be no more public worship at St Michael’s until further notice.

There is a message from Fr Geoff on the back page.

For your prayers this week:

Residents and staff in our care homes
NHS hospital staff including chaplains
Transport workers and refuse collectors
Police Officers and Community Support Officers
Fire and ambulance workers and paramedics
Food retail and delivery workers
GPs surgery staff and community nurses
Mental health sufferers and workers

The Ill and the Housebound: Especially Christopher Bilson, Janet Chandler, Audrey Dixon, Cynthia Dixon, Claire Dunning, Fr Robert Featherstone, Jemima Hill, Peter Hinchey, Boris Johnson, Mary Kearns, Keith Levinson, Craig McKay, Lisa Mills, Sylvia Obeng, Dorcas Ochola, Brian Rees, Michelle Rodford, Christina Simon, Adelaide Tonkin, Peter White; and all who care for them.

The Departed: Marion Craddock-Jones.

Collect

Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification:

grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth;

through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Acts 2.14a, 22–32

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles. On the day of Pentecost,

¹⁴ Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd,

²² ‘You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know –

²³ this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.

²⁴ But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

²⁵ For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;

²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.”

²⁹ Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

³⁰ Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne.

³¹ Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, “He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.”

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.’

SECOND READING I Peter 1.3–9

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven
5 for you,
6 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to
7 be revealed in the last time.
8 In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various
9 trials,
10 so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though
11 perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honour
12 when Jesus Christ is revealed.
13 Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see
14 him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,
15 for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

GOSPEL John 20.19–31

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

19 When it was evening on the first day of the week, and the doors of the house
20 where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood
21 among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’
22 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples
23 rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
24 Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send
25 you.’
26 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy
27 Spirit.
28 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any,
29 they are retained.’
30 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when
31 Jesus came.
32 So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them,
33 ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the
34 nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’
35 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them.
36 Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace
37 be with you.’
38 Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your
39 hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’
40 Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’
41 Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those
42 who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’
43 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not
44 written in this book.
45 But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the
46 Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Dear Friends,

During the coronavirus pandemic, most of the statistics we see are thoroughly depressing. I saw some today, however, that gave me some confidence in the resilience of human beings under pressure. The Office for National Statistics tell us that more than half of adults in the UK feel an increased sense of belonging with their neighbours, and around the same proportion said they had checked on a vulnerable neighbour in the last week. Although over 80% were worried about the effect covid-19 was having on their mental health, 76.9% were dealing with it by staying in touch with family and friends. The Kingdom of God is like yeast, leavening the whole lump of dough. God asks us to celebrate the spread of loving care in our communities, foster it, and try not to lose it afterwards.

Love and prayers

Fr Geoff

NOTICES

KNITTERS: The group that Dame Helen Hyde took to Rwanda in February was a great success. Our blankets were really appreciated. I saw some of the photos very briefly at choir just before the virus took hold and Carolyn would be happy to come and talk to us, at some point. I wondered if a Wed coffee morning slot would be appropriate after the church re-opens? It would be good if we could continue. Casting on 40 stitches and working blanket length strips would be good and less stitching up to be done. Other items are needed so please let me know if you can help. Many thanks again. Vicki (01923 229408).

WE ARE ASKED to put a lighted candle in our window at 7.00pm on Sundays as part of the National Call to Prayer