

5 April 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

I've seen pictures this week of the tourist attractions in London deserted, when in previous years they have been packed. And when I watch the television and see crowds or even studio audiences I find myself thinking that this isn't right. How quickly our views and perspectives change!

Crowds play a huge part on Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-11) when Jesus is welcomed by thousands as he enters Jerusalem on a donkey. They are hanging from the trees, laying cloaks for the donkey to work on. But many of the people will be in the same crowd a few days later who cry "Crucify him!" (Matthew 27:11-26) when Pilate asks what he should do with Jesus. Then the same people will be part of the crowd as Jesus walks through the streets on Good Friday on his way Golgotha (Matthew 27:31-33). And the crowd vanishes as he is nailed to the cross. How things change!

I don't need to tell you that we are living in a time of change – when familiar things and ways of doing things stop, our old certainties have to be abandoned and new patterns of living have to be discovered. It is hard

We look to things to hold on to. (Cheering the NHS on Thursdays at 8.00pm is now part of our new family routine and a chance to wave to neighbours.)

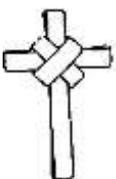
As things changed through Holy Week, as the crowd's cheers of welcome turned to cries of condemnation, one thing remained the same. God's love shown in and through Jesus travelled from his entrance into Jerusalem to the cross (and beyond). It remained the same, it did not waver, it was constant in a week of change. And through the changes we are facing, through the worries and fears that we face, God love is constant. God reaches out in love and care to each of us.

You may have a palm cross or perhaps are able to make one from paper or card. The change is here too. The palm fronds that were waved to welcome the Messiah become the material from which the cross is fashioned. But the cross, the ultimate symbol of God's love remains constant.

I pray that you and every one of us may know God's love as we travel through you, from the acclaim of Palm Sunday, through the treachery of Holy Week, to the events of Good Friday (and beyond).

With all my love and prayers

*Rev Ken*



If you have a palm cross, then hold it in your hand. Feel the texture of the palm frond and join the crowd's joy and excitement as they welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem and into their lives. Now, look at the cross shape and how the joy turned to anger and condemnation. Bring to mind the times when we have condemned others or turned away from God. Offer this to God in confession. Now hold the centre of the cross. Today and through all of life, the love of God

for each of us is there for us. Allow yourself to know and feel God's love, and be held in the arms of God's forgiveness, care and love.

Bible readings for Good Friday: John 18:1–19:42; Isaiah 52:13–53:12

Bible readings for Easter Sunday: Matthew 28:1-10; Psalm 118:1-2,14-24

## Pray activity

This video shows you how to make a palm cross: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcmeCOF-b4k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcmeCOF-b4k). On the strip of paper you are using to make your cross, write down the people or things you want to pray for and lay before Jesus on the cross. Then follow the video, and what you write will be with Christ on the cross.

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## Worshipping together

We can still join in worship together using BBC television and radio.

### Sunday 5 April

8.00am BBC London (94.9FM) *Sunday Morning Worship*

8.10am Radio 4 (93.5FM) *Sunday Service* – Dr Theodora Hawksley of the London Jesuit Centre reflects on how we can accompany Jesus spiritually, as Jesus accompanies Christians in times of trial, suffering and bereavement.

11.00am BBC 1 *Worship from Hereford Cathedral*

1.15pm BBC 1 *Songs of Praise*, where Glaswegians put their faith to work helping others.

And at any time, if you have access to the internet try:

- Contemporary worship from Swan Bank Methodist Church in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent - [www.youtube.com/user/SwanBank](http://www.youtube.com/user/SwanBank)
- Worship from Wesley's Chapel, London - [www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA)
- *Sthie [at home]* – from the Isle of Man, a different style of worship taking place at home. [www.youtube.com/user/andysusiefishburne](http://www.youtube.com/user/andysusiefishburne)

The BBC has a host of different programmes on radio and TV over Holy Week and Easter including:

- *Heavenly Gardens* – BBC 1 visits six spectacular gardens across the UK, all steeped in faith and spirituality (Friday 10 April at 1.40pm, Sunday 12 April at 1.50pm).
  - *Good Friday Meditation* – Talking with others, Baptist minister Richard Littledale explores why Christians see beauty and love in an instrument of torture – the cross (Radio 4, Friday 10 April at 3.00pm).
  - *At the Foot Of The Cross* – Radio 2 combines spiritual and traditional music with a retelling of the crucifixion (Friday 10 April at 8.00pm).
  - *Easter from Kings* - Music and readings for Holy Week and Easter from King's College, Cambridge (BBC 2, Saturday 11 April at 7.00pm).
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## Praying together

A church that prays together stays together. We may not be in one place, but we can still pray together.

Phone (020 8756 0567) or email ([ken.kingston@methodist.org.uk](mailto:ken.kingston@methodist.org.uk)) me your prayers and we can share them and continue to pray together.

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## A few ideas to help you cope with self-isolation

- Stick to a routine. Go to sleep and wake up at a reasonable time, make a schedule that has some variation.
- Dress for the life you want. Put on some bright colours. It is amazing how our dress affects our mood.
- Try to get out at once a day. If you can't, open the windows. Fresh air can lift the spirit.
- Connect with people. Use the phone. If you go out and see someone – smile, wave and say hello.
- Notice the good and make a note of it. Write it in a book or keep a list, so you can look back at the good in people and the world when things feel difficult. And don't forget: clap the NHS on Thursdays at 8.00pm.