



The Severn Loop Parishes
Albrighton Bickton Fitz Leaton Montford Shrawardine

www.severnloopparishes.org.uk

Priest in Charge:

The Revd Mary-Lou Toop 01743 851375 maryloutoop@gmail.com

Curate:

The Revd Hannah Lins 07736 012011 revhannahlins@gmail.com

Assistant Priest:

The Revd Peter Allan 01939 290048 pallan412@gmail.com

Lay Pastoral Minister:

Mrs Joyce Jagger 07802 695954 pearhill1@outlook.com

Loop Special – Sunday 29th March

A Prayer for these Unsettling and Anxious Days

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Come follow Christ  **in the footsteps of St Chad**
Know the Story **Share** the Story **Live** the Story

A Collect for the 5th Sunday in Lent

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Readings: Psalm 130 - Romans 8.6-11 - John 11.1-45:
in full for you, look in News on the website!**

REMEMBER! STAY HOME AND STAY SAFE!

Mary-Lou writes ...

Well here we are at the end of the second week of isolation for many of us, and the end of the first week of 'lockdown' for the majority. How are you doing? It has been such a joy and encouragement this week that the sun has been shining! I imagine lots of you have been able to enjoy time outside, which is so vital for our well-being and health. Allan and I are doing ok, although we find we suddenly wake up on the odd day really weary – I suspect it's the levels of anxiety for loved ones, all of you and our country that are around all the time, but not overwhelming, just having that wearying effect as time draw on.

This Sunday we put the clocks forward an hour – some of you may have seen the message going around on Facebook that it would be a good idea to put them on by four months, never mind an hour! If only Coronavirus was as easily dealt with, how wonderful that would be. But this is real and must be lived through by all of us; there is no escape. Digging deep in our faith is our call right now. A prayer to help with our longing for God's protection for our dear ones and all on the front line fighting the virus is **Psalm 91**. We often pray it during Compline, prayer for the end of the day. Try it before you go to sleep.

Our Financial Giving: while public worship is suspended, of course our churches are not receiving our giving if we usually make that offering through the weekly collection plate and cash flow to pay the ongoing bills is going to be really hard in our parishes. **Please consider if you possibly can paying direct into your church's bank account** – contact your treasurer or one of the wardens if you're not sure how to do that. Or please save your usual offering and keep it safe until you can pass it on or until we're back worshipping in church again.

Church Closures: we have received specific instructions from the **Archbishops and our Bishops that our churches may not now be opened for any reason**, opening them for private prayer **or any other reason has to stop during this time of lockdown**. Sadly, this means Peter and Hannah will not be able to gather to offer the Eucharist on Sundays in one of our churches until the restrictions are lifted.

This Sunday is **Passion Sunday** and our hearts turn to the final events of Jesus's earthly life in Jerusalem. You will find the readings for you to read in full and a reflection under the **News** section of the website.

Holy Week will begin next weekend, with **Palm Sunday**. We'll be offering you a daily walk through this most precious time of the Christian year with daily posts on the website and a couple of practical ideas for marking the time at home with prompts for reflection and prayer.

Have you heard about the **Easter Tree** idea? On the continent most countries have a version of this – I was introduced to it when my brother moved to life in Germany a long time



ago. Some of you I know have ready made 'trees'. In Germany, the idea is that you cut some branches that have leaf buds close to Easter and place them in a vase of water – keep it topped up and try and bring the leaves out of bud so the 'tree' indoors is green for Easter Day! Then they decorate it with Easter symbols, lots of little painted wooden eggs, chicks and bunnies – the signs of new life in springtime in the northern hemisphere.

Our idea is that if you'd like to we join in making ourselves an Easter Tree of this sort but don't decorate it till Easter Eve, or Holy Saturday as it is called by some. Then each day from Palm Sunday onwards, we will offer you a picture - a symbol of some part of the events of Holy Week, which you can print if you'd like to, and cut out to hang on your tree. There will be a Bible verse to think about and a prayer to reflect with. Occasionally there may be another idea to make and place by your tree. If you can't print, don't worry, you can look on screen at the symbols and copy them if you wish, or just pray with them.

Things that we do, rather than say, can help us to express our faith at times when we can't find the words or worship together.

Another idea for those of you who enjoy more hands-on projects and have access at home to pieces of wood or larger branches is to **make a cross that others can see and place it at the front of your home, perhaps in the garden**. Then on Easter Day, tie on some greenery in leaf or flowers if you have them, to show your bit of the world it is Easter!

Stay safe and well, dear friends, know that you are prayed for ~

Mary-Lou

May Light Perpetual Shine Upon Them

*Gwen Hardman of Bomere Heath
passed recently to her eternal rest.*