

Benefice of Goring & Streatley with South Stoke



Sunday 11th & 18th April

Easter 2 & 3

Alleluia, Christ is risen..... He is risen indeed, Alleluia!



This week's notice sheet covers two weeks to allow Jill (and our paper boys) a week off!

We thank God for the continuing roll out of the vaccine to the most vulnerable, in turn, and that hospital admissions from Covid-19 continue to fall.

We rejoiced in the glorious Easter day weather and the permission to sing outside and to have a larger but still socially distanced choir. We give huge thanks to everyone who decorated our churches so wonderfully this Easter.

As we move towards more normal services we are maintaining a 10am Zoomed service this month but also adding one other service each week. This extra will alternate between an 8am at St Thomas' and an 11.15am at St Andrew's.

Please continue to book if you wish to join the 10am service in person to ease the register taking at the door. (Face coverings and spacing out – so limited numbers continue in church.) Thank you all for your understanding and care.

Welcome to Church

This weekend (Sunday 11th):

8:00am BCP Holy Communion at St Thomas'

10:00am Morning service at St Mary's

Next weekend (Sunday 18th):

10:00am Holy Communion at St Thomas'

11:15am Holy Communion at St Andrew's

The 10am service is ticketed and will be available by Zoom:

Meeting ID: 826 6127 7602 and Passcode: 038739.

Our churches are open every day for private prayer and for public worship under the following guidelines:

PLEASE

- Book in advance for the 10am service, either by Eventbrite or contact the parish office in advance. (Ben or Jill via email vicarofgsandss@yahoo.com or phone 875651) so we have a list of who is coming. By **Saturday 8pm at the latest**.
- wear a face covering
- sanitise hands on arrival and when leaving church
- go to your seat straightaway on arrival
- only enter into conversation after the service **outside the church**
- **keep socially-distanced at all times** from those not in your 'bubble'

Thank you.

We do look forward to worshipping with you on Zoom or in person. ☺

For those who are not able to join us in church or by Zoom on Sunday morning it is our hope that you will be able to take time to stop, find a special place, switch off all distractions, light a candle perhaps, and join in spirit, and by God's Spirit worship and be built up together.

Suggested wording for you to say:

This is the day which the Lord has made....

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

*The Lord is here, **His Spirit is with us.***

Lord Jesus, lead us as we come before you now.

The Collect, the prayer for the week

<p>Sunday 11th April, Easter 2 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;</p>	<p>Sunday 18th April, Easter 3 Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life</p>
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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.	and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; 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.
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<p>Psalm 133</p> <p>1 Behold how good and joyful a thing it is to dwell together in unity!</p> <p>2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down upon the beard,</p> <p>3 Even on Aaron’s beard, running down upon the collar of his clothing.</p> <p>4 It is like the dew of Hermon running down upon the hills of Zion.</p> <p>5 For there the Lord has promised his blessing: even life for evermore.</p>	<p>Psalm 4</p> <p>1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness; you set me at liberty when I was in trouble; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.</p> <p>2 How long will you nobles dishonour my glory; how long will you love vain things and seek after falsehood?</p> <p>3 But know that the Lord has shown me his marvellous kindness; when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.</p> <p>4 Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.</p> <p>5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness and put your trust in the Lord.</p> <p>6 There are many that say, ‘Who will show us any good?’ Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon us.</p> <p>7 You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their corn and wine and oil increase.</p> <p>8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for it is you Lord, only, who make me dwell in safety.</p>
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Readings

Our readings for Sunday 11th are Acts 4: 32-35, Psalm 133 & John 20: 19-end.
Our readings for Sunday 18th are Acts 3: 12-19, Psalm 4 and Luke 24: 36b-48.

Clive has written a reflection about prayer:

“See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are.”

This is the opening verse of the epistle set for 18th April, 1 John 3: 1-7. It particularly resonates with me because it echoes the message of the Zoom Home Group on Prayer that Mary Scriven and I have been leading: namely, that we are God's beloved children and He is always waiting eagerly for us to pray to Him.

I would like to share just a few of the many insights into prayer that this has provided. It set the tone of joyful confidence in the love of God from the start. Whenever we pray to Him, we can be sure that God is already there, with a smile, waiting for us, always pleased to see us. He actually enjoys us spending time with Him and He wants us to enjoy it too. Jesus told the story of the Prodigal Son to show how extravagantly kind God is, running towards us with arms flung wide, whenever we approach him, irrespective of where we have been or what we have done.

Having established the level of intimacy that God is inviting us to, we next need to know how vitally important prayer is. God has deliberately limited himself so that his perfect will for us will not happen unless we ask in prayer for it. There are wonderful things that will only happen if we ask for them. God has given us free will. This means that our fate is not set. Our free will can release or restrict the purposes of God. We can shape the future with our prayers. God wants us to be co-workers with Him in determining the outcome of events. If I do not pray, things will not happen.

We should try to set aside a regular "Quiet Time" at the same time and in the same place each day. We pause, before coming into the presence of the sovereign, awesome, holy creator of the cosmos. We gather our scattered senses to re-focus them on God. To put us in the right frame of mind, we may read a Psalm that expresses praise and thanksgiving, for example, Psalm 8 or 19 or 33, or many others. The psalms were the prayer book of Jesus, who memorised and recited them as prayers even from the Cross.

Jesus used the Kaddish prayer, one of the great Jewish prayers of adoration, as his model for the Lord's Prayer, but, crucially, he added in all the Asks. So we have the warrant of Jesus that "asking for things" is the primary purpose of prayer.

God wants us to pray with the "wide-eyed wonder of children". He does not want us to save up our prayers for only the big issues in the world. It is not too selfish or self-centred – as some would think – to pray about the little things as well. By filling our days with tiny prayers about the smallest things in life, we get to live with greater gratitude. We begin to realise how many miracles occur in the course of our everyday lives. It was William Temple, the great Archbishop of Canterbury in the Second World War, who wrote: "when I pray, coincidences happen; when I stop praying, coincidences stop happening". We know, therefore, that he certainly prayed about the little things of life. "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances....." 1 Thess. 5: 16-18.

Similarly, although God already knows our needs, He wants us to spell out our requests to Him, boldly and clearly. This is what Jesus got blind Bartimaeus to do, even though it was obvious to everyone what he wanted. “What do you want me to do for you?” asks Jesus. “Lord, I want to see” he replies. God wants us to frame our requests to Him with careful intent. This makes our relationship with him more personal. It is putting “face and feeling” to our prayers, generating warmth, love and trust. Admitting some area of personal need also shows how vulnerable and dependent upon Him we are.

In His death on the Cross and now in Heaven, Jesus is the ultimate intercessor. The Holy Spirit intercedes, too, with “groans that words cannot express” (Romans 8: 26). It seems that Heaven is a place of loud intercession. We should join in.

The Lord’s Prayer says: “deliver us from evil” or “from the evil one”. It does not matter how we express it, but the reality is that we are in a spiritual battle not “against flesh and blood, but againstspiritual forces of evil....”(Ephesians 6: 10-12). It is only in the western world in the last 200 years that this has been doubted. However, it is our faith that Jesus, in his death and resurrection, has overcome evil. Therefore, our prayers should not be despairing or despondent but from a place of victory, celebration and joy. Our part in this spiritual warfare is to “pray in the victory of Jesus”. If we keep our focus on Jesus, we will get the balance right.

Prayer is basically straight forward: “Keep it simple”, “Keep it real” and “Keep it up”. Use a good dose of common sense in discerning what God is saying to us. But the essential message is that we are designed as human beings to “walk and talk” with God, so we should learn to know his voice. Be assured that we are his “dearly loved children”. He is always waiting to greet us with tender love and attention to our needs.

Book: How to Pray – A simple guide for normal people by Pete Greig

Hymn

<p>How deep the Father's love for us? How vast beyond all measure? That He should give His only Son To make a wretch His treasure</p> <p>Behold the man upon a cross My sin upon His shoulders Ashamed I hear my mocking voice Call out among the scoffers</p> <p>I will not boast in anything No gifts, no power, no wisdom But I will boast in Jesus Christ His death and resurrection</p>	<p>How great the pain of searing loss? The Father turns His face away As wounds which mar the Chosen One Bring many sons to glory</p> <p>It was my sin that held Him there Until it was accomplished His dying breath has brought me life I know that it is finished</p> <p>Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer But this I know with all my heart His wounds have paid my ransom</p>
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Prayers for this week

Thank you to Barbara Taylor for this week's prayers.

Father God we pray for our Benefice and that each of us will make use of our individual talents enabling the church group to flourish as a witness to the "One Body" of the church. Help us all to spread the warmth of Your love to everyone we meet and to welcome all who come here.

We remember the older and retired people here in our church and around us in our lives and give you thanks for all that they do in our Sunday worship, in our church fellowship and in our communities. Send your Holy Spirit to inspire them to use and share their life experiences with wisdom, humility and gladness.

Gracious God we pray for the work and service of all care homes and day centres for elderly and sick people, and for those carers who look after family and friends in their own home. We thank you for the many charity organisations who raise money and provide supportive services to help. We pray for all finding their life painful, lonely or uncertain, especially those who are ill or vulnerable. Help them to sense your comfort in times of need and bless their families and carers.

In a few moments of silence, we bring before you those know to us.

Lord God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, understood people's fear and pain before they spoke of them, we pray for those in hospital; surround the frightened with your tenderness; give strength to those in pain; hold the weak in your arms of love, and give hope and patience to those who are recovering; we hold before you those who are homeless and cold especially in this bitter weather. Draw near and comfort them in spirit and bless those who work to provide them with shelter, food and friendship. We ask this in Jesus' name.

God of compassion, who hears the cries of all who are in trouble or distress in the world, accept our prayers for those whose lives are affected by storms and flooding, bushfires and unrest between nations. Strengthen them in their hour of need, grant them perseverance and courage to face the future and be to them a firm foundation on which to build their lives; this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Heavenly Father, you are the source of all goodness, generosity and love. We thank you for opening the hearts of many to those who are fleeing for their lives. Help us now to open our arms in welcome and reach out our hands in support, to those in need; identifying ways we can be of use in enabling refugees to settle in our communities.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Footprint Care for Creation card Please collect a copy from church, ponder it and bring it to a church service on 18th April to lift up our intentions in our prayers and offering. Thank you.

Funeral of Michael Howell

Anne thanks everyone who took part and surrounded us with prayer. We had all seasons and emotions in one day, sun and snow, “and the blossoms looked like candyfloss” she says. And Michael would have enjoyed slowing the traffic to admire the view too.

The service is still available:

<https://youtu.be/FbGhuJ6t0x8>



Toddler Play and Praise

Please pray as we set into action a vision of offering support and the knowledge of Jesus’ love to young families. We hope to hold a fortnightly gathering for story, action songs and a prayer on Wednesdays at 10.30am at St Mary’s. Please pray for this... For the Mum’s to come up with the right name and to set it rolling in the new term. Offers of help welcome!

Daily readings for the week beginning 12th April

Monday am:	Ps 19	Deut. 1. 3-18	John 20. 1-10	pm: Ps 139	Col. 1. 1-14
Tuesday am:	Ps 8	Deut 1. 19-40	John 20. 11-18	pm: Ps 104	Col. 1. 15-end
Wednesday am:	Ps 30	Deut. 3. 18-end	John 20. 19-end	pm: Ps 33	Col. 2. 1-15
Thursday am:	Ps 28	Deut. 4. 1-14	John 21. 1-14	pm: Ps 34	Col. 2.16-3.11
Friday am:	Ps 61	Deut. 4. 15-31	John 21. 15-19	pm: Ps 118	Col. 3.12-4.1
Saturday am:	Ps 84	Deut. 4. 32-40	John 21. 20-end	pm: Ps 66	Col. 4. 2-end

We are asked to pray this week for Pat A beginning new treatment, Diana Monk, Jean Edwards, Jo Harvey, Peter Phillips, Mary Bulmer, and for Rose, and for all their families. For teachers to be refreshed.

We give thanks... for the glorious Easter Day joy and truth and the weather that made our celebrations possible.

RIP We lift to God the recently departed including Michael Howell, Jenny Emerton and Elizabeth Stokes and pray for their family and friends and on the first anniversary, Geoffrey Brisby.

Diary for the next two weeks:

Tuesday 13th April

1.00pm Funeral of Jenny Emerton at St Thomas'

Wednesday 14th April

10.30am Toddler Play and Praise at St Mary's

10.30am BCP Holy Communion via Zoom

Link for Zoom: Meeting ID: 894 7049 1237 Passcode: 385710

The readings will be Acts 5 17-26, Ps. 34. 1-8 & John 3. 16-21.

Thursday 15th April

1:45pm Funeral of Elizabeth Stokes at St Thomas'

Sunday 18th April, Easter 3

10:00am Holy Communion at St Thomas' and via Zoom

11:15am Holy Communion at St Andrew's

Wednesday 21st April

10.30am BCP Holy Communion via Zoom (link as above)

The readings will be Acts 8. 1b-8, Ps. 66. 1-6 & John 6. 35-40.

Sunday 25th April, Easter 4

8:00am BCP Holy Communion at St Thomas'

10:00am Holy Communion with baptism at St Mary's and via Zoom (link as for Sunday 18th)

Daily readings for the week beginning 19th April

Monday am:	Ps 96	Deut. 5. 1-22	Eph. 1. 1-14	pm: Ps 61	Luke 1. 1-25
Tuesday am:	Ps 98	Deut 5. 22- end	Eph. 1. 15- end	pm: Ps 71	Luke 1. 26- 38
Wednesday am:	Ps 105	Deut. ch. 6	Eph. 2. 1-10	pm: Ps 72	Luke 1. 39- 56
Thursday am:	Ps 136	Deut. 7. 1-11	Eph. 2. 11- end	pm: Ps 73	Luke 1. 57- end
Friday am: St. George	Ps 5	Josh. 1. 1-9	Eph. 6. 10-20	pm: Ps 3	John 15. 1-8
Saturday am:	Ps 110	Deut. ch. 8	Eph. 3. 14- end	pm: Ps 27	Luke 2. 21- 40

For further information please check www.thomandmary.org.uk