

## News from the Parishes.....

With our churches closed at the moment, its likely we will become just a little more familiar with how they really look from the outside as we visit and inspect to make sure all is well against that time - soon I hope - when we can fling open the doors and welcome our congregations once again.

This picture of St Mary's at Sarnesfield is from 1887 and seems quite 'old' on the face of it. And the keen-eyed among us will see that there are quite a few differences to its architectural appearance then and now. But, lest we're just a bit too down-hearted about not being able to celebrate on Easter morning from within our churches, let's not forget they have histories that go back deep in time, some as much as a thousand years, and there will have been other moments of hiatus such as these we are experiencing.

Worrying times indeed, but all the indications are that they will pass as science and medicine - and an immense human effort - get to grips with this virus, and then, in time, our churches, which are so much at the heart of our parish communities, will re-open once again. Until then, lets worship where we can, come together how best we can, be mindful and supportive of one another's needs and together plan for the days when the next, brighter chapter of our churches histories starts to unfold.



**The Living Word** People & Steeple insert gives Bible readings with commentary to read and think about

during the week for the *following* Sunday.

## Staunton & Weobley Group ministry & team

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Copy for next week no later than Wednesday to: [admin@weobleyandstaunton.co.uk](mailto:admin@weobleyandstaunton.co.uk)

# People & Steeple

News and contacts for the Weobley & Staunton Group of Parishes  
Weobley, Sarnesfield, Norton Canon,

Staunton-on-Wye, Byford, Monnington, Letton

Easter Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2020



Somebody once said that it was easier to preach on Good-Friday than on Easter-day, because there's much more to say about pain than about joy. After all, there's nothing much to say about joy except you should enjoy it.

Easter is as much about Good-Friday as it is about Easter-day. If we do not know Christ crucified we cannot well know Christ risen. God's purpose is proclaimed in both.

This Easter differs from others we have known. I mean, known as a community, for personal tragedy can strike on the Sunday just as easily as personal joy on the Friday. As a community we are under the cloud of the Coronavirus epidemic, and we do not know when that cloud will lift.

But lift it will. Until it does, it is our duty to live and think and pray as those who believe that God is at the centre of all things, and that (as the old hymn puts it) behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face. Proof of that faith is in the cross of Jesus, at his empty tomb and at the sudden revelations of his risen presence.

God grant you a joyful Easter.

Rev'd John Thewlis



**Theme for the Week**

What we couldn't do, Christ did for us. Jesus is alive!

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 — Christ's victory and resurrection foretold in a prophetic Passover psalm

John 20:1-18 — After discovering the open, empty tomb, Mary Magdalene hears Jesus and holds Him

Acts 10:34-43 — Peter tells a Gentile household the story of Jesus as one who stood by the Cross and then saw the resurrected Lord

Colossians 3:1-4 — New life in Christ means dying to independence and growing in Him

## Prayer focus

### **For healing**

Jan Griffiths (Weobley)  
David Games  
Pat Claytor

***If you know of anyone who is unwell, please let the Administrator or any of the clergy know.***

### *In our Group of Parishes*

The Weobley and Staunton Group of Parishes serves a rural community and we give thanks for all involved in agriculture, we pray for them, and seek ways to support them.

The Parish of Byford, the Churchwardens Sue Hubbard and Maggi Denaro, and all the church community.

Those that provide music in our churches.

*In the Diocese of Hereford*  
Ledbury

The Dean, Chapter and congregation of Hereford Cathedral.

### *The wider Church*

All other churches in Herefordshire and nationally and across the world who share with us to proclaim God's love to the world.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and the People of the Land of the Holy One.

## The Collect

### **Easter Day 12 April 2020**

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom wit you and the Holy Spirit be praised and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity.

## Worship and Prayer from the Diocese

### **Easter Weekend**

#### **Live-streams and more.**

We would like to thank everyone for all the hard work in recording, filming and creating content for Holy Week. We hope you enjoy the 'Easter Experience' online and can raise an Hallelujah this Sunday from your sofa, still proclaiming joyfully "He is risen!"

We are very encouraged to see all the online activity across our Diocese and the continued growth of Archdeacon Derek's [prayer station](#). Please keep sharing this and joining in online.

Hereford Diocese have scheduled a series of services for every Sunday until May which will be streamed and which we hope we can highlight and provide links for each week.

**Sunday Worship on BBC and Online** - The Easter Sunday Worship Service will be broadcast on BBC One at 10.45 am and features Bangor Cathedral. Songs of Praise on BBC One will feature St Luke's Gas Street in Birmingham at 1.15 pm. You can watch live or via playback with [BBC iPlayer](#). Online from the Church of England, The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury as well as Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkinson will lead worship. On social media, we have a feast of Easter services from across the Diocese leading us from Maundy Thursday through Good Friday towards Easter Sunday when Bishop Richard will lead the morning service and Bishop Alistair the evening service. All these online services will premier via our Facebook feed.

**Diocese Freephone Prayerline** - For those not engaged on Digital channels we are delighted to announce a **Freephone prayer line 0800 304 7052**. This new service enables people to phone in and listen to a pre-recorded prayer, which will be updated each week.

**Pause for Thought - BBC Hereford & Worcester** - BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester – Pause for Thought on Good Friday and Easter Monday Breakfast Show. The BBC has increased coverage of worship as part of the Sunday show each week but for Easter weekend they have agreed to trial 'Pause for Thought' at 7.45 am on the weekday Breakfast Show. We encourage you to tune in live to Archdeacon Robert, Worcester Diocese on Good Friday and Rev Ruth Hulse, Hereford Diocese on Easter Monday at 7.45am.

**Prayer Call from Bishop Richard** - Very often our Easter commemorations jump straight from the pain of Good Friday to the joy of Easter Sunday. We are not very good at waiting on Saturday. However, our current lockdown feels a bit like that waiting time. There is a grief for the old ways, such loss and bereavement and what may come isn't yet clear. I want to invite you to use this Easter Saturday for a more focused time of prayer for our diocese and country. Can we pray particularly for:

NHS staff who are caring for us, for God's sustaining grace and their protection.

- For protection for the vulnerable who are self-isolating.
- For all of us to continue to exercise restraint in going out, especially as the weather improves and we all go a bit stir crazy.
- For those who are suffering economically, that their crisis would be short-lived and a safety net in place to ensure no-one goes hungry.
- For wisdom for those who are seeking to manage the crisis and find treatments and a vaccine. Let's be bold to pray for 'supernatural' progress in this and even to pray for the virus to peter out as summer comes.
- For the spiritual curiosity enabled by enforced inactivity, especially for folk who have been engaging with us through social media. That the curiosity would lead people to a place of commitment to Jesus Christ.
- That we would learn and grow ourselves through all this. That we would be a holier people at the end of it, more deeply prayerful and more in love with the Lord.

And then on Easter Sunday, join with me in placing a candle or light in your window at 7.00 pm to celebrate the hope of Easter and participate in the national prayer going on at that time.

Every blessing, Bishop Richard