

Prayers

Breath of life,
We think of those who cry out to you today,
of those who long for the morning,
of those who are waiting for Lent to end;
we think of those infected by a virus they could not see coming
and for those who in caring for them, helping them breathe,
are at risk of catching it also.
We pray that our ears will be attentive to their cry,
that we will stand with them,
steadfast together in your love,
bringing life before death. **Amen.**

We pray for those of our own community, our city and parish, for our neighbours and friends, those God has given us to love. Especially we pray for those who are sick, for the housebound and those self-isolating, and for all healthcare workers.

We pray for the homeless and vulnerable, and for the safety and protection of all.

We pray for Syd, Owen, Kay, Ronnie, Emily, Emma & Ella, due to be Confirmed today

We pray for those who have died recently, and those who mourn their passing, including Gillian Masdin, Norman Rosling, Colin Thrower, Gerry Wegg, Angie Twaite

We remember those whose anniversary of death falls at this time:

Doris Randall, Michael Huggins, Kenneth Moore, Arthur Shorten, Clifford Gaffer,
Winifred Holmes, Derek Potter, Allan Lindsay, Elizabeth Raffe, Ernest Fletcher.

Holy Spirit, divine Advocate, guide and encourage us.

Stir within our hearts,
that we may speak anew the familiar words that Jesus taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Lent Collection for our Church Boiler

Thank you to those of you who again this week have contributed to our special Lent Appeal!

Our Boiler has served us well for many years but has been very troublesome recently and we need your help! We have obtained 3 quotes, the cheapest including VAT being **£9489**. Divided equally among Electoral Roll members, that works out at £75 each.

We invite members to make 3 donations of £25 to cover the three months which Lent covers, up to Easter Sunday, 12th April. If we can Gift Aid our donations, that may help cover for those unable to meet the challenge in full.

**For those paying by BACS: Lloyds Bank branch no 776601
account no 64549960 'St Margaret's Church (Old Catton) PCC' (correction)**



Weekly Worship and notices from St Margaret's, Old Catton



Fifth Sunday of Lent
29 March 2020

Church Services are now suspended to help the effort to protect people from Coronavirus

It is with the greatest regret that we cannot now offer normal Sunday worship, or even funerals in church, but we are attending to directions from the Church of England following the advice of the Government. As part of our ministry in Old Catton, this comes with some worship material for you to use today.

The BBC is producing church services on Sunday mornings which is scheduled across TV and radio. **On Sunday 29th, at 10.45 on BBC1** there is a service from Bangor Cathedral, and a service online at 9 am led by Archbishop John Sentamu. On Palm Sunday, 5 April, there will be a service at 11.00 on BBC1 from Hereford Cathedral.

This church notice sheet is being circulated by email where possible and on paper also. If you receive a paper copy but **could** receive it by email please send me a request - adp07@btinternet.com. We have again devised a short service on Youtube, <https://youtu.be/IP5dXwHkcLU> Next Sunday there will be Palm Crosses in a new rack at the church gate, where you can also pick up a copy of this order of service, and a Parish Magazine.

Old Catton Parish Council are offering assistance; phone 01603 423880 (Mon-Fri 9 - 4) email clerk@oldcattonparishcouncil.co.uk CattonWatch: via Facebook (@CattonWatch) Broadland District Council is offering practical advice and financial help for the vulnerable and elderly. Ring the Help Hub 01508 533933, and www.broadland.gov.uk or contact Cllr Karen Vincent 07881 365238 cllr.karen.vincent@broadland.gov.uk

Today is the Fifth Sunday of Lent, the beginning of Passiontide. Our minds turn to the suffering of Jesus as he draws near to Jerusalem.

It was to be the day when our new Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher visited St Margaret's, and it was to be the day when seven members were Confirmed by him; one of them was to be baptised, and then all were to affirm their faith in God Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as he laid hands on them.

But God sometimes has surprises in store for us so now we exercise the fruits of the spirit in lives of patience and self-restraint as we self-isolate.

The Psalms give us wonderful texts that so often chime with our experience and emotion. The Psalm set for this morning is Ps 130.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,

Lord, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,

and in his word I hope;

my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.

It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

Confession:

God of truth and justice,
we have not lived up to the great gifts that you have given to us.
Have mercy on us; strengthen us
in the certainty of your forgiveness and enduring love.
Teach us how to respond to this greatest of gifts
in lives full of grace, bearing fruit in our own love and forgiveness,
witnessing always to your glory and your graciousness.
We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

If God kept track of all our mistakes—
the harmful things we say, and do,
the callous way we sometimes treat the people around us,
the selfishness that puts our needs ahead of the needs of others—
if God kept track, what chance would we have?

But with unfailing love, God offers us forgiveness—
complete forgiveness that erases our sins completely,
and allows us to begin again.

So be at peace – your sins are forgiven!

Praise be to God!

Romans 8.6-11

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

A few thoughts:

We have become increasingly preoccupied with the Coronavirus in the last few weeks. Reports about it are everywhere, and the self-isolating that many of us are practicing occupies our thoughts.

St Paul's words are a challenge. He contrasts the flesh and the Spirit, and talks about the flesh in rather disparaging terms.

And when we think of the health workers, putting their own health at risk for the rest of us, that seems an unworthy contrast. But Paul's argument is in fact different. His contrast between the flesh and the Spirit is between those who live in the knowledge of the love and saving grace of God - the Spirit - and those who believe their heritage and ancestry gives them an advantage in God's pecking order. They believed they had privileged access to God.

Paul came to see that God is not bothered in the slightest about where you have come from, highborn or low, or about the colour of your skin. What interests him is where you are going.

While we worry about issues of health, which is only right, let us not forget the issues of our faith, and how God calls us to be led by the Spirit whose fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

These are times when patience and self-control will be particular gifts we have to exercise as we try to live in God's Holy Spirit.