

NEWSLETTER into touch

The Kingswood Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon, Wallington, and Weston



KINGS
WOOD
BENEFICE

Welcome to this edition of In Touch.

Well, the sun is definitely warmer and even I have been out in the garden without a coat on – it does not seem that long that even a trip to top up the bird feeder was a major event in the coat, hat, gloves and scarf department! We have passed the spring equinox and Easter is just around the corner. The daffodils are wafting in the soft breeze rather than being blown sideways by a gale. This has certainly been a year when the old saying 'March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb' has proved correct. This time last year we had just gone into lockdown and this year we are slowly making our way out of the latest one, strange and challenging times for us all. This Sunday is Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week – a time of deep reflection for Christians as we walk in our hearts and spirits along the road trod by Jesus in Jerusalem. Do come and join us at any of our services, you would be most welcome. Stay well and get as much sunshine as you can. **With blessings Fiona**

Palm Sunday

*All glory, laud and honour to thee redeemer king'
'ride on ride on majesty'.
'we have a king who rides a donkey'.*



So start many of the famous hymns that we will sing this Sunday at zoom services and in churches up and down the land. Alas this year we will not be parading around our churches holding our palm crosses high to celebrate the start of Holy Week, but we will still be gathered, and we should still have our hearts high. Holy Week and Easter are more important than Christmas for they lie at the heart of our faith. True, if there had been no acceptance by Mary and no birth of the Christchild then there would be no Easter; but none the less the events of Easter are at

the heart of our faith. On Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey the way a king would come as the donkey showed that he came in peace not on a war horse in power and military might. And Jesus is received like a king, cloaks and palm fronds were laid upon the road to keep the dust down so that he would not get dusty and also so that he would not be obscured by dust and people would be able to see him. He was expected, honoured and yet feared. All too soon the temple authorities would see him as an unquestionable threat and the plots which had already started would come to fruition. By the end of the week (Good Friday) Jesus would be hanging on a cross dying for all of us, for our sins and inability to live the way that God would like us to, in peace and dignity. Holy Week is a journey through those days, walking with Christ on that last journey so that we might reflect deeply on ourselves and the way that we live – very much an appropriate action in these times of the pandemic and all that it has shown us about our society. We too, in the coming week, can be welcomers at the gate, diners at the Last Supper, witnesses at the crucifixion and mourners at the tomb. It is a journey of the heart and faith that is worth taking so that we can arrive at Easter Morning with more understanding of just how wonderful that Resurrection Morning felt. Do you dare to travel? Come and join us at our zoom and church services this week – you never know how it will change you!

WRITTEN IN MARCH

*The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun...*

*There's joy in the mountains,
There's life in the fountains,
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing,
The rain is over and gone.*

*From a poem by
William Wordsworth*

HOLY DAYS

27th March: Rupert the salty

Rupert is the saint for you if you like The Sound of Music – or salt with your food!

Rupert (d c 710) was bishop of Worms and Salzburg, and it was he who founded the great monastery of St Peter in Salzburg in the eighth century, thus firmly establishing Christianity in that city. True, it would be another 11 centuries before a certain young wanna-be-nun wandered about singing of her 'Favourite Things' and 'Something Good', but you have to start somewhere.

In the meantime, Rupert also helped the people of Salzburg by developing the salt-mines nearby. This was 'something good' as well, because it brought in an income. Though if salt became a too 'favourite thing', it would also have raised the locals' blood pressure.

Rupert's iconographical emblem is a barrel of salt, which makes sense, but is not as romantic as raindrops on roses, or whiskers on kittens.



Palm Sunday foods and recipes



Fish, pasta, and other meatless dishes are traditionally served on Palm Sunday

In the Greek tradition, Lenten fast is broken with a fish dinner on Palm Sunday featuring bakaliaros or salt cod. In some parts of Italy, homemade fettuccini pasta topped with tomato sauce, bread crumbs and chopped nuts is the customary Palm Sunday dish.

In Great Britain, traditional foods served on Palm Sunday include fig pudding because Jesus is said to have eaten figs on his entry into the city of Jerusalem. In Wales, the day is known as Sul y Blodau or Flowering Sunday because of the association with the flowering of the fig tree. Making split pea soup is another tradition still observed in Northern England and Scotland, derived from the ancient practice of wearing a hard pea in the shoe as penance during Lent.

In other areas of the UK, pax cakes - along with best wishes for peace and brotherhood - are given out to congregations after Palm Sunday services in a custom said to date back to the 1500's.

More modern interpretations of appropriate foods to be eaten on Palm Sunday include hearts of palm featured in salads and side dishes to observe the day.

Andrea Mantegna: *The Agony in the Garden* (c.1460)



We stand with the painter by a stream, looking across it past three sleeping figures, one of whom, his closed book gripped by his side, self-consciously displays the artist's abilities with foreshortening. If you want to sleep then read a book – works every time. Beyond them Christ prays in palpable trepidation on an outcrop of rock whipped into concentric layers by the erosion which began on the day of creation, yet part refashioned as steps to a sacrificial altar. He holds distance between himself and what that fearful altar foreshadows; so far back that only the grip of his toes prevents him tumbling down. With agonized resolution he confronts tomorrow's death, its manner displayed by the cloud-borne tableau moving inexorably toward him, which our eyes now reach.

When his brother-in-law Giovanni Bellini painted this subject he did so with compassion, depicting a solitary angel holding the cup which Christ wished could be taken from him. The cup was the comfort his Father offered as well as his destiny. But Andrea Mantegna's instinct for drama conjures instead a militant gang of divine messengers, implacably bearing the instruments of torture and death; a column to be flogged against, a stick carrying the vinegar-soaked sponge which with a last act of will be refused, the piercing lance, the cross itself. The outlook is clear to Christ and to the vulture perched in the half-dead tree behind, the uprooted trunk of another lying alongside, bridging the stream. Mantegna pulls taut the tension between malignity and innocence by scattering defenceless rabbits about the pathway, and a pair of pure-white egrets in the water inviting the viewer to think of baptism and the consequences of following Christ. The sleeping disciples have crossed that water, and will one day share in Christ's death.

Now out of the city gates stream the soldier-police to make their arrest, led by elders with Judas at their head, pointing the way. Over it all looms Jerusalem in all its faceless authority, the power over life and death built into its stones and moving snake-like from its gates. Mantegna was an artist who revered Roman antiquity and here he creates his dream city complete with Colosseum, yet one with the crescent moon of Islam standing atop many of its towers and pinnacles, a reminder of old antagonisms which have yet to find a way to die.

All hopeless then. But Mantegna, for all his clouds of night approaching, thought not quite. For out of the rock below Christ and among the disciples, an impossible sapling grows. The death that lies ahead will not destroy him; new life emerges even in this barren garden.

It's all go for Easter!!

SUNDAY 28TH MARCH (PALM SUNDAY)
10AM BENEFICE ZOOM SERVICE
3PM HOLY COMMUNION AT RUSHDEN

HOLY WEEK
MAUNDY THURSDAY – ZOOM SERVICE 7PM
GOOD FRIDAY – 2PM SERVICE OF REFLECTION AT WALLINGTON
7PM -ZOOM SERVICE OF REFLECTION

SUNDAY 4TH APRIL (EASTER DAY)
7.30 AM – EARLY SERVICE AT RUSHDEN
10AM BENEFICE ZOOM SERVICE
3PM HOLY COMMUNION AT CLOTHALL
6PM EVENSONG AT WESTON

If you would like to donate to any of our churches in the current crisis - details are below. We would be very grateful in your help to keep our churches going.

Thank you.

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LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845350

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