



The West Hereford Team Ministry
The Team Office, Vowles Close, Hereford,
HR40DF 01432 273086 / www.westherefordteam.org.uk

Hello everyone,

This week is a bumper week of resources, but they are for both this week and next week, so do save them up if you can. Hopefully, if all has gone to plan, you will find a sermon, readings, intercessions and prayer sheet for this coming Sunday: 28th March, Palm Sunday, as well as a blessed Palm Cross.

The following week is, of course, Holy Week, and you should find a short reflection for each day of the week to help you in your preparations for Easter Sunday.

Don't forget that there will be a live outdoor Eucharist on Easter Sunday at 9.00am at St Michael's, Breinton for those that would like to join us. Then from 18th April there will be 2 services a week across the Team, with Covid restrictions in place. We will send information about these in due course, as well as the APCM dates for each church.

Over the Easter weekend there will be displays of Easter gardens, trees, pictures in windows and similar produced by members of the West Hereford Team, as well as displays outside the churches. If you would like to produce a small, simple display in front of the place where you live, or in a window, for people to enjoy visiting over the weekend, please contact the Team Office for more details.

Here are the latest Thought for the Day posts to accompany you on your Lenten journey this week.

March 17th:

"Lord, Thou hast been our refuge, from one generation to another." Psalm 90:1
There is a magnificent choral setting of this psalm, which was written by Vaughan Williams in 1921. The words of the psalm are intertwined with the hymn "O God our help in ages past", which is itself based on Psalm 90.
The quiet and yet persistent hymn tune running through the work reminds us that even though God may sometimes seem distant, muffled or in the background, he is always there, offering us a place of refuge. And as the piece reaches its climax, the hymn tune is taken up by the trumpet, bursting to the fore and giving us a glimpse of the glory of Easter Day and the hope of the resurrection.
It's one of the jewels of English choral music and well worth a listen if you have a few minutes.

March 18th:

O God, O Lord. Where are you? I am searching in my heart for you, and praying into the silence. During Lent I feel that I must strive harder to find you, to know you, to be closer to you. But where do I look Lord? Psalm 139 tells me; "If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." Are you really up there amongst the mysteries of space, and down in the depths of the deepest seas? If so, can you really be here in the stillness beside me as well, Lord?
Dear Lord, Loving Lord, Abba, Father, please show me enough of yourself that I may see your greatness yet feel your closeness, wonder at your mystery yet feel within me the warmth of your love. And as I look even at the distant wonders of space, grant that I may clearly see your loving arms embrace your whole creation.

March 19th:

While out for my, should be daily, cycle ride, I stopped and gazed. I was only a quarter of a mile away from home, but how lucky are we to live in a beautiful area? The sight before me was a meadow, with ewes and their lambs. This set me thinking – how ordinary things are continuing their cycles, the mornings are getting lighter, and the evenings are light for longer, the dawn chorus is earlier.

As I continued to think, it's just over a year since life as we knew it changed, we have had new words and phrases 'Lockdown', 'Furlough' 'Stay at Home', 'Work from Home if Possible', 'video conference calls', Lord, help us to stop and gaze, and see the beauty around us.

March 20th

I don't know about you, but in these times when we have not been able to sing all together, it has not only highlighted the inadequacies of my own singing voice, but has also made me pay attention to the words of hymns much more closely. This is especially true at funerals where families still find comfort in choosing hymns for the service, and the time and space that a hymn allows people is greatly valued. Families at these services are invited to listen to the hymns and read the words printed in the order of service and so of course I sit and read along with them. At 2 funerals that I have taken this week the hymn, 'Through all the changing scenes of life', has been chosen and as I have sat and read them, I have been struck at how appropriate the words of the first verse are for these times when we are unable to sing God's praises. When we are unable to lift our voices to praise God, our hearts can still be lifted to God in worship. Indeed we are able to praise God with our whole beings, because we were made to worship God, through *all* the changing scenes of life.

1. Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

6. To Father, Son and Spirit, praise!
To God whom we adore
be worship, glory, power and love,
both now and evermore!

March 21st:

We lift to God those we hold in our hearts – praying for their health, their well-being and their sense of hope.

We pray that even when loved ones cannot physically be together they would not feel apart.

We ask for God's help in our communicating, our connecting and our caring.

March 22nd:

We pray for all involved in the shaping of young lives.

We give God thanks for the sacrifice and commitment of teachers and all those involved in serving children and young people in education.

We pray that all might be nurtured and cared for and that every needful resource would be made available- that all lives can flourish even in these difficult times and that no-one would be overlooked.

March 23rd:

We echo God's commitment to those most at risk of this virus by praying today for those who are particularly vulnerable and isolated: praying for their deliverance, protection and comfort.

We hold before God those who care for them – that they would be strengthened and encouraged in this work.

And a prayer for 23rd March, the anniversary of lockdown restrictions:

God of Love,

As we think about all that has changed this year, help us to trust that you are always with us. As we remember those who have died,

help us to trust they are at peace with you.

As we reach out to others with kindness and care, may hope shine out in every heart and home.

Amen

Christ the Good Shepherd

enfold us with love,

fill us with peace,

and lead us in hope,

to the end of our days;

and the blessing of God Almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

We realise that for many of you the uncertainty and anxiety about lockdown restrictions and health continues. We want to continue to remind you that we are here for you. If you need a chat, prayer, or some practical help then do reach out – either by phoning 01432 273086 or by contacting your Pastoral Coordinator.

We hope these resources help you feel connected as we worship as a scattered Church. Please be assured that you are not forgotten and that you are remembered in our prayers.

God Bless,

Ruth and Jo