

Notices

Instructions to access the live stream for services:-

- Navigate to the main St Mary's Woodkirk Facebook page.
www.facebook.com/stmarywoodkirk.
- All scheduled lives will be pinned at the top of the page and you can join them by clicking on them at the time that they start.
- Alternatively a link to the live will also be published on our **A Church Near You** page
- Find the event taking place and click on "More about this event" this will automatically take you straight to the live service on Facebook.

If you wish to make a donation to the work of this church or if you wish to pay your weekly collection via our bank account then the details are given below:-

Yorkshire Bank Morley
Sort Code 05-01-31
Account – Woodkirk PCC 31405751

Thank you - Sharon



WELCOME TO ST MARY'S WOODKIRK

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Leeds

*Engaging with God
Engaging with Each Other
Engaging with the Community*

Sunday 7th March 2021

10.30am Holy Communion – Lent 3
(Service streamed via Facebook live)

Instructions to Connect given in column 4

Services for next week

Mon 9.00am	Morning Prayer streamed as above
Tues 6.00pm	Evening Prayer
Weds 10.00am	BCP Holy Communion streamed as above
7.00pm	Lent Reflective Service streamed as above
Thurs 9.00pm	Night Prayer/Compline streamed as above
Fri 9.00am	Morning Prayer streamed as above

Next Sunday's Services are as follows: -

10.30am Mothering Sunday - Said Holy Community
streamed as above)

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

From our Parish Prayer Diary: Local Churches
From our Church Prayer Diary: Uniformed Organisations

We pray for Baptism Families, Wedding Couples and
Funeral Families.

Those who have asked for **prayers for healing**:
Kevin, Richard, Grace, Betty, Lionel, Frank, Nicole, Simon,
Faith, Alfie, Bree, Marlene, Philip, Jillian, Brian, Margaret,
Jerry, Louise, Mark, Sandra, David, Prince Philip

The family and friends of those who have recently died:
Audrey Gill, Beryl Linton

And those whose **anniversaries** fall at this time:
Kathleen Graham

VICAR: Revd. Sharon Wilkinson 07539 466724
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CHRISTENINGS can be booked by contacting:
BAPTISM CO-ORDINATOR: Barbara Tate
Email: barbara@stmarywoodkirk.org

WEDDINGS can be booked by contacting our:
WEDDING CO-ORDINATOR: Gail Townsend 07792
975814
Email: gail@stmarywoodkirk.org

CHURCH WEBSITE: www.stmarywoodkirk.org

FACEBOOK: regular updates about life at St Mary's
can be found on our Facebook pages:
*St Mary's Church, Woodkirk,
and Friends of Woodkirk Churchyard.*

TWITTER: tweet us and follow us @stmarywoodkirk

Scripture Readings for the coming week:-

Sunday 7th March – HC –streamed live

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

Monday 8th March – Morning Prayer – streamed live

Psalms 5

John 7:37-52

Tuesday 9th March – Evening Prayer – streamed live

Psalms 64

Hebrews 5:11-6:12

Weds 10th March – BCP HC – streamed live

Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

Matthew 5:17-19

Thurs 11th March – Night Prayer/Compline – streamed live

Psalms 139

Isaiah 58: 6,7

Fri 12th March – Morning Prayer - streamed live

Psalms 22

John 8:48-59

Services for Lent and Easter

Lent Reflections

There will be streamed Lent Reflective Services on Wednesday evenings at 7.00pm the next one will be on Wednesday 10th March 2021.

14th March – **Mothering Sunday**

28th March – **Palm Sunday**

Holy Week

Mon 29th March Reflective Service at 7.00pm

Tues 30th March Stations of the Cross at 7.00pm

Weds 31st March Reflective Service at 7.00pm

Thurs 1st April Maundy Thursday - Reflective Service and Watch 7.00pm

Fri 2nd April Good Friday - Solemn Service at 2.00pm

Sat 3rd April – Easter Vigil and Service of Light 8.00pm

Sun 4th April - Easter Sunday – 10.30am He is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia.

Current advice from Leeds Diocese.

Current advice from Leeds Diocese and the Church of England reiterates the steps in the four stage plan presented by the Government. The PCC are due to meet on Monday evening (8th March) and at this meeting we will plan a date for reopening that meets the advice we have been given by those three agencies. We have now contacted those who have wedding plans in May and June

and tentatively confirmed that they will go ahead within the agreed guidelines for numbers etc and providing their wedding banns can be read (not just in our church but in their own parishes) and this depends on churches being open and having a live congregation to read the banns too. We have also started to book in baptisms from the end of May. Of course all of this depends on criteria being met that is driven by the scientific data.

So there is some positivity on the horizon and we are moving forward albeit slowly and I am hopeful that in the next Notice Sheet there will be a definite date to reopen St Mary's for live worship.

As much as I know that you have all missed worshipping in the church building, this year has taken its toll on all of us, and from a personal point of view, the church building has been a lonely place, because it is you the people that make it church, that give it life.

As it stands – the Lent Reflections will remain streamed only, and all other services for Easter are presently streamed but this may change once the PCC has met on the 8th March but I again emphasise that the PCC's main responsibility is to make sure that you are safe and that there is minimum risk of spreading the virus amongst ourselves.

I would again like to stress that once St Mary's is open, facemasks and social distancing will continue to take place and there should be no congregational mixing, singing, or coffee and tea for the foreseeable future. We will have a system of leaving the church and it is imperative that when invited to leave you do so to both protect yourselves and others around you. The PCC would like to get back to the social aspect of church just as soon as we can safely do so but it has to be small steps at the moment.

I think most of you will have had your first vaccination by now and that you will be looking to have your second in April so by the end of April, beginning of May the majority who need that extra protection will have had it. I had my first jab this past Thursday with no ill effects.

Church has been open for funerals and we have had two or three recently making it a very busy week.

If you are struggling or need anything then please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Gail.

Love and prayers to you all.
Sharon

Lent Reflection on 3rd March looked at the theme – Walking toward Jerusalem.

Opening Prayer

Jesus, Lamb of God,
when you walked this earth
you did not consider
heavenly equality,
though it was yours to choose,
but took the role of servant
and in humility
and obedience
allowed the rough nails of our sin
to be hammered into your flesh
for the sake of our salvation.
And so it is
that we acknowledge you
as Lord of our lives
and Lord of all,
to the glory of God the Father,
Son and Spirit, Three in One.
Amen.

Reading: John 2:13-22, Psalm 63, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Among the many changes that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought into our lives is a change in how we define and “do” church. What *is* church, these days? Is it the livestream service we watch on Facebook? Is it the private devotional time we spend with God in our living rooms? Whatever it is, it is not “business as usual.” For better or for worse, our global circumstances have forced us to change. To question. To deepen our comprehension of what “church” means.

I know that for many of us, this has been an occasion for sorrow. We wish we could go back to how things were. But even in our grief and longing, I wonder if God is issuing a hidden invitation. A hidden invitation to reimagine, develop, evolve, and grow. A hidden invitation to ask the most basic, ground-level questions about what we’re doing, and why.

In our Gospel reading this week, Jesus forces exactly these kinds of questions. The story is a difficult and perhaps even offensive one. The Jesus we’d rather keep tender and soft-spoken makes “a whip of cords,” drives sacrificial animals out of the temple, overturns tables, pours coins all over the floor, and tells the moneychangers to stop making his Father’s house a marketplace. When his stunned audience asks for a sign to authorize his violent actions, Jesus doesn’t bat an eye: “Destroy this temple,” he dares them, “and in three days I will raise it up.”

Not exactly gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

Biblical scholars have different theories about this story. Some argue that what Jesus calls out in his “cleansing” of the temple is not Judaism or its various forms of worship, but a system of exploitation via exorbitant tithes and taxes that blocks equal access to the divine, keeping the poor outside the gates of the temple, and forcing them into more and endless debt before they can approach God.

Others argue that what displeases Jesus is a Sabbath-only form of piety that separates temple rite from holy living, or a compartmentalization of faith that renders the temple “sacred” and the home “secular.” A contemporary analogy could be those who go to work all week and sin or fail to do what is right but attend church on a Sunday, heartily sings the hymns and puts a generous donation in the collection plate. That makes the a safe place for those who are not truly repentant and who do not truly follow what Jesus asks. The church becomes a place of showboating, not of fishing for people.”

In my mind, all of these interpretations are compelling, and all point to a deeper and more unsettling truth about the one we call “Lord:” when it comes to our spiritual lives (both individual and collective), Jesus is not about “business as usual.” Jesus is not a protector of the status quo. Jesus has no interest in propping up institutions of faith that elevate comfort and complacency over holiness and justice.

No. Jesus is a disrupter. A leveller. An upender. As his disciples immediately realize when he throws out the moneychangers and occupies the temple, *zeal* is what animates the Messiah. Fervour, not casualness. Depths, not surfaces. He will not tolerate the desecration of his Father’s house. He is not impressed by “marketplace” faith.

Where does this leave us as Christians and churchgoers? What can we carry away from this disturbing story as we move deeper into Lent, a season of penitence and self-examination?

Perhaps we can begin by asking honest questions about our reactions to the story itself. How do we feel about Jesus’s posture, language, tone, and actions in the temple? Are we offended by his anger? His violence? His zeal? If yes, why? What cherished version of God, church, piety, or worship does Jesus threaten in this narrative?

And then: what are *we* passionate about when it comes to our faith? What are we most inclined to defend, to protect, to hoard? What are we zealous for as members of the body of Christ? Is zeal even on the radar, anymore? Or have we settled for a way of being Christian that is more rote, safe, casual, and comfortable than it is disorienting, challenging, transformative, and missional?

We don't hear much about anger in mainline churches these days. After all, there's something unseemly about rage, right? Something unsophisticated, something crude? It's not polite to get angry, and it's positively insupportable to *stay* angry. But Jesus — the temple of God — burns with zeal for his Father's house. He doesn't use love and forgiveness as palliatives; he allows a holy anger to move him to action on behalf of a more robust, equitable, holistic, and impassioned spiritual practice. In the story of the temple cleansing, there is nothing godly about responding to complacency or injustice with passive acceptance or unexamined complicity.

Jesus interrupts "business as usual" for the sake of justice and holiness. He interrupts *worship* as usual for the sake of justice and holiness. His love for God, the temple, and its people compels him to righteous anger. If we *ourselves* are temples — holy places where heaven and earth meet — then what would it be like to work, as Jesus does, to preserve and protect all bodies, all holy places, all temples, from every form of irreverence and desecration? What would it be like to decide that our highest calling as Christians is *not* to niceness?

In her widely influential essay, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love," Beverly Harrison writes: "The important point is that where feeling is evaded, where anger is hidden or goes unattended, masking itself, there the power of love, the power to act, to deepen relation, atrophies and dies."

Where, I'm asking myself during this Lenten season, has my power to act, to deepen relationship, or to love fiercely, atrophied? Where has my faith become so rote, so abstract, so disembodied, that I no longer find it natural or easy to rejoice with those who rejoice, or mourn with those who mourn? Where am I refusing to ask the hard questions -- the questions that will pull me into uncharted and risky territory for the sake of the church, Christ's body?

Whenever the pandemic winds down, our communities open up, and we find ourselves free to return to "business as usual" on Sunday mornings, I hope we won't. I hope we'll remember Jesus, who upended the temple when it forgot how to be the Father's house. I hope we'll burn with the passion that animated the whip-wielding, coin-scattering Christ. I hope we'll settle for nothing less than churches that are, *truly*, houses for prayer, welcome, freedom, and hope for all nations.

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For us, living after the crucifixion and resurrection, this text makes sense. We probably don't even flinch. For those of us who are, perhaps, already thinking about our Good Friday liturgies and sermons, this text has clear

meaning. And, I think it had the same clear meaning for Mark's first audience: *Just as Jesus bore his cross, the trajectory of our lives of faith must be similar.*

We have our cross to bear too. And when we bear that cross, we become more and more like the One who bore the cross on Calvary. And, that is the point of a life of faith.

However, just because *we* get it—and because Mark's audience around 70 AD got it—does that mean that Jesus' first listeners got it?

Did the people standing around hearing Jesus start to talk about his death and suffering have any clue that he would die on such a horrific instrument of tortuous death? Could they even conceive that this teacher, rabbi, healer, preacher, exorcist, and Godly man would meet such a grisly end?

Of course not.

And so, before they could even begin to wrap their heads around his death, Jesus tells THEM that they have to "take up *their* cross." When Jesus says this here, a long time before Golgotha, these words would have *had* to sting and confuse the ears of his listeners.

Take up our cross? What cross? Oh, you mean a cross of crucifixion? The instrument of death for a slave?

There are some who clearly want to toss this passage in the *historical-Jesus-didn't-say-this bin*. They may be right. This verse hardly makes sense pre-crucifixion.

And yet...we could argue about that...or, we could imagine the sheer linguistic power that he was conjuring up to make his real point here:

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.

When you follow Jesus it means putting your own self-survival in the backseat. The first act of following Jesus is totally re-ordering your priorities and principles to the way of the Kingdom. It's no longer about saving your life. Following Jesus means that your priority is to lose your life.

And, what better way to talk about that than the cross. It's an instrument where not only are you condemned to a tortuous death, but you're also succumbing to a dishonourable death. A slave's death. A death that even the Hebrew Bible calls "accursed."

On the cross you don't just lose your life, but you do so in a wholly unfashionable way.

You lose everything. Life. Honour. Pride.

But, Jesus says that in such a loss everything is, in fact, gained.

And, just in case Jesus' first audience didn't get it—because they were scandalized at the thought of dropping those last few pitiful rungs on the societal ladder—Jesus himself follows this up with showing them how it's done. How to lose. And how to triumph. For God and His Kingdom.

Closing Prayer

God of the journey,
give sight to all
who have not found
the path to follow,
strength to those
who are walking
that you have trod,
and hope to those
growing weary
of the travelling,
that all might meet,
one glorious day,
at this journey's end.

Amen