

Dear Church Family

We have entered into a Holy Week unlike one we have known before: For so many of us in the past it will have centered around the church building. Meeting together to reflect, to remember, to wait and to watch and eventually to celebrate with others, our brothers and sisters in Christ. But as Stephen Cotterell says this year 'we are going to have to follow Jesus in his isolation...throughout Christian history and in other faiths as well, when people sought to deepen their relationship with God they went into the desert. They pursued isolation. This way of living the Christian vocation was called the solitary life.'¹

This Holy Week we will each have to sustain our spiritual life on our own. To face this challenge and to help you this letter explains the things we will be providing to help you do this, but we will have to do it alone, or with our households, in isolation.

Every day we will continue to offer a Thought for the Day live on St John's Facebook page at 10am (it stays there for the rest of the day). This week these will have a Holy Week theme.

Attached to this email is an order to use to have a Seder or Passover meal in your own home on **Maundy Thursday** (9th April) to help remember Jesus' last supper. You might like to read it through before hand and gather the things (or approximations) that you will need. You might like to do this as a household (it is suitable for children), or as Life Group using Zoom, or if you are on your own you might like to do it with others again using Zoom. Let Dave know if you want to be connected up.

On Good Friday there will be a reflection written by Pauline Moyses sent to you by email.

I encourage you not to rush too fast through Saturday, to stand in the place of grief and loss with not just the disciples, but those many who mourn and weep today.

And on **Easter Sunday** morning I will reflect live at dawn from Old St Mary's and we will have a celebration of the resurrection on Church On-line, including communion, at 10am with coffee and chat at 9.30

There are a huge number of other prayer and service resources available on-line, take a look at Winchester Diocese website for example – but here are my recommendations for you to engage in two other sensory ways:

Read the Gospels: Sit quietly somewhere comfortable and slowly read the gospel accounts (in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) of the final week of Jesus life, his death and his resurrection. Don't rush, notice and embrace your emotions and talk to God about what you read and feel. Don't forget to listen to his voice too!

Listen or watch: My first realisation that Jesus died for me was listening to Jesus Christ Superstar as a 10 year old. It's being streamed on You Tube at 7pm on Friday evening so why not join me and watch it on <https://www.youtube.com/theshowsmustgoon> ? If that's not your style, why not listen to St Matthew Passion by Bach or Handel's Messiah both can be found on You Tube.

I pray that God will meet you in your isolation, that you will know that Jesus died to show his love for you and receive it and his blessing for yourself afresh this week.

God bless,

Angie

¹ For Stephen Cotterell's full article in The Spectator cut and paste this link into a browser:
<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/a-first-for-christendom-holy-week-without-church?fbclid=IwAR2kryfal6Zezlbu-8VadKLiZ4u-8VndaVxrgFr8Bzad12Rca8xjO1FfMUE>