

**ST JAMES' METHODIST & UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH WOOLTON L25 7RJ**

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*Peter's day off is Friday - messages and emails left on Fridays
will not be received by him until Saturday.*



SUNDAY APRIL 11th 2020

Dear friends – My computer desktop is full of daffodils, photographed some years ago in Sefton Park. It cheers me up every time I open up; a reminder that the season of Spring is a powerful symbol of resurrection, whether we are allowed to visit the parks or not.

I include again the relevant prayers for Holy Week, and repeat the appeal from our treasurer to try to maintain the church's income during the lockdown. Peter has pointed us towards the stations of the cross and his blog, and I know how many of you have found great help in Dave Bedford's songs – don't thank me, thank him. And I add some notes towards the sermon you could have heard from me on Good Friday.

Stay safe, and may you receive many new blessings this Easter.

PRAYERS

Please remember Rebecca Davies, who lost both her parents-in-law to the virus last week; Helen Munro's granddad, and any others you know of. And please pass on any news you would like to be circulated.

MONEY -As you are all aware sadly we are not able to meet at our Church premises at present, and maybe for some time yet. Nevertheless we do still need to maintain our premises so that our Ministry, outreach and service to God can continue, although currently in a limited form. There are expenses which will continue during this period such as the utilities, cleaning and insurances. Because we are not meeting we are not able to have our normal weekly offering, and as the Pre-school and other organisations that normally use our buildings are also no longer meeting our rental income from these has also stopped. We realise that many people regularly contribute by direct payments into the Church's bank account, and we hope that you will be able to continue to do this.

We are aware that the current situation is difficult for everyone. However, could we just make a gentle request? If you would normally put your offering on the plate, could we encourage you if at all possible to put the money aside ready for when we are able to return to Church.

The Collect for Maundy Thursday

God our Father, you have invited us to share in the supper which your Son gave to his Church. Nourish us, we pray, by his presence, and unite us in his love; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Good Friday

Gracious and eternal God, look with mercy on this your family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed and given up into the hands of sinners and to suffer death upon the cross; who is alive and glorified with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Easter Day

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. Amen.

NOTES FOR A GOOD FRIDAY SERMON

Why did Jesus die? There have been many attempts to explain the Atonement:

- Jesus was sacrificing himself in the tradition of the Jewish practice of getting sin forgiven;
- Jesus was punished instead of us;
- God was so angry with humanity that only a death would calm him down;
(on two consecutive Sundays recently you sang “the wrath of God is satisfied” – do you really believe in a God like that?)
- and many more.

I take a simple view of this at-one-ment; that all Jesus’ life, from birth to death, was demonstrating that God had become one of us; and died because that is what all humans do. Irenaeus of Lyons famously wrote (around 180 AD) “He became what we are so that we might become what He is’. And so there is a sense in which the Resurrection is only the proof of what had already been accomplished at the Cross; Good Friday itself is the day of triumph.

The Easter hymn says “made like him, like him we rise”. We should be clear: our hope is that we shall become not just *like* him, but *one with him*. Because on Good Friday, God truly becomes at-one with us.

QUIZ NIGHT 21st MARCH

Please will all those of you who bought a ticket for this event contact Wendy Doig for refund and she will ensure the money is returned.