



St Paul's Egham Hythe, Thorpe Road TW18 3HJ

"We are a diverse community of people who receive God's love and seek to show, share and tell of that love to everyone."

COVID-19: The Church continues to be alive and active, but our buildings have had to be closed. Our worship of God and our care for each other continue but we must physically distance ourselves from one another and prevent the spread of infection in order to save lives.

Stepping into Holy Week

It's been a strange journey through Lent this year. As we approach Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter it's made me think of how disorientated the disciples must have been as they encountered the events of that turbulent week, faced their own responses to Jesus' death and waited in the emptiness of Holy Saturday, not knowing what lay ahead.



This year we can't meet together. We can't walk along the road together, waving our palm crosses and shouting Hosanna. We can't gather in the church building to pray the Stations of the Cross or wash one another's feet. We can't keep watch together, or pray with one another around the cross on Good Friday. But we can follow Jesus through these days, staying close to him and renewing our faith and trust in him.

On Palm Sunday (5th April) we have the opportunity to gather together remotely via zoom (you can now join the meeting on a landline telephone if you don't have access to the internet). It's a way of reminding one another that we're on this journey together, a spiritual community even while socially distanced. I was really encouraged last week to have the chance to connect and pray with all ages together. Do join in at 10am on Sunday if you can.

Email churchwarden@speh.org.uk if you want details of how to access the meeting.

Our Sunday School leader Clare has produced a video of how to make a Palm Sunday cross – if you'd like to give it a go beforehand you can find the link here <https://youtu.be/GUO7F5z-x1I> Alternatively you might like to draw a cross on the palm of your hand to wave, or bring some foliage along from the garden. I look forward to what you will bring!

The service sheet is on the website which it would be helpful if you are able to download. Don't worry if you can't, there'll still be ways to join in. The service starts with the story of Palm Sunday and then we have the reading of the Passion Narrative, pointing us to the journey ahead. Charles and Val are preparing that section which will be inserted into the service, and available afterwards as a separate YouTube link so that you can listen to it again during Holy Week if you like.

While that's being read do think about helping children access that space (we'll all be on mute at that point!). There's some Palm Sunday resources on the Together at Home sheet attached in case that's helpful. A simple telling of the Easter story can be found here:

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/easter/easterstory.aspx>



Holy Week

Holy Week

As we move into Holy Week a short reflective leaflet is also available on the website with a thought for each day. There are many other resources

online, on social media or on the radio and television – do think about what might help you, or contact one of the clergy if you're struggling to find something suitable.

One thing we'd love to encourage everyone to do, whatever your age, is to create a space at home where you can visually connect with the

events of the last week of Jesus's earthly life in some way. We can't create a space in church for us to come together and walk through the days, but it would be fantastic to have lots of different ways of picturing the journey wherever we are. It could be as simple or complex as you like, large or small, inside or out, using craft or lego or candles or stones or whatever you have available. There's some ideas attached to get you started but just find a way that will help you to pray and follow Jesus in your own household through Holy Week – and do share the pictures of what you do.

We pray

In our cycle of praying for roads in the parish, today we pray for those living in: Hythe Road, Knights Close, Lacy Close, Langton Way.

For those who are sick or needing our prayers including: Ria, Edna K, Laura, Sammy, Sarah, Kevin T, Stamford, Peter, Bill, Marilyn, Colin and Tom P.

For those who have died including John Otterwell, and at their year's mind George Hickmott, William Taylor, Florence Cox, Elizabeth Smithers, Leslie Smither, Tony Otterwell, Margaret Crowie, Patricia Armsworth and Harry Otterwell.

For our world, and our local community as we respond to these times. For all the NHS and other key workers. For our local Foodbank, Runnymede Council, and all the local agencies working together to support the most vulnerable.

A Prayer from the World Council of Churches: God of life, you have promised to be with us every day, also in difficult days, like in times like these. Give us clarity in our minds, strength in our work and discernment, rest as we sleep, peace in our minds. Be with those who need help more than we do ourselves help us to see what we can offer from your love. Amen.

Supporting our local community

Do continue to support one another within our church family. If you're able to help serve the wider community we're working with the various local agencies who are supporting the most vulnerable, and also helping locally with practical needs.

Runnymede Borough Council have a set up a request for help form on their website www.runnymede.gov.uk/covid19help and are working with local volunteers with the Egham, Hythe and Englefield Green COVID-19 Mutual Aid group as a focal point for our local response. Volunteers are all registered with Voluntary Support North Surrey. Do contact Steve on churchwarden@speh.org.uk to find out more about how you can help.

Postscript: “Zanna’s Paws”

Pax (by D H Lawrence)

All that matters is to be one with the living God
 to be a creature in the house of the God of Life.
 Like a cat asleep on a chair
 at peace, in peace
 and at one with the master of the house, with the
 mistress,
 at home, at home in the house of the living,
 sleeping on the hearth, and yawning before the fire.
 Sleeping on the hearth of the living world
 yawning at home before the fire of life
 feeling the presence of the living God
 like a great reassurance
 a deep calm in the heart
 a presence
 as of the master sitting at the board
 in his own and greater being,
 in the house of life.



Zanna (the vicar’s cat) is very good at relaxing – this poem by D H Lawrence is an encouragement in these difficult times to stop and rest in God’s presence.

Please keep in touch!

www.speh.org.uk

Revd Rosie Hoad (Vicar)	01784 449570	vicar:@speh.org.uk
Steve Baynes (Warden)	07884 490654	churchwarden@speh.org.uk
Diane Oliver (Warden)	07961 904160	churchwarden@speh.org.uk
Revd Sue Loveday	07788552316	sueloveday97@gmail.com
Revd Janet Franck	07759599954	janetf5653@gmail.com
Safeguarding Officer	Alison Hawkins	safeguarding@speh.org.uk



@stpaulseghamhythe



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St Paul’s Egham Hythe, Thorpe Road, Staines TW18 3HJ