

WEEKLY PRAYER DIARY Week beginning 25th March 2018

Try and read through a Gospel narrative of Christ's passion this week: **Matthew 26-28; Mark 14-15; Luke 22-24; John 13-20**

SUNDAY – Jesus rides in to Jerusalem – hailed as a king, yet the crowds won't last. As the prophets before Jesus had found, when they said or did things that the rulers and the people didn't find appealing, they quickly found themselves alone. It was the false prophets who Jesus said everybody spoke well of, because they spoke what the people wanted to hear. Pray that church leaders, and we ourselves, will be fearless in saying only what God gives them to say, not seeking applause or commendation from people.

MONDAY – the withering of the fig tree, and the cleansing of the Temple happened on this day. Both are signs of God judging the Jewish religious leaders, who have become fruitless, and seem more concerned with making money than honouring God. Pray for our church leaders, bishops and archbishops, that they will seek God's kingdom first, and that their heart will be to see His kingdom come, and bearing fruit on earth.

TUESDAY – Jesus taught and told parables during this last week, including the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. It reminds us to be alert and ready for the return of the bridegroom, to have the oil of the Holy Spirit, and to be ready to respond whenever God calls. Pray that we might all be filled with the Holy Spirit, and alert to God's work in our lives, and in the world around us.

WEDNESDAY – Jesus is anointed at Bethany. We recall the extravagant sacrifice made by Mary, and the understanding she must have had of what Jesus was about to do. Pray for those whose task it is to prepare others for death, especially in hospices, and ask that the Lord will help them in this work. By contrast, it's the moment when Judas decides to betray Jesus, and the Sanhedrin plot His death. Pray for those who plot death and destruction, that their schemes will be thwarted, and that they might come to know Jesus, as Mary did.

THURSDAY – the day of the Passover Supper, which we now call the Last Supper. Jesus reinterprets the Passover meal as prefiguring His death and sacrifice for the sins of all. Pray for our Passover supper at St Alban's this evening, and for the footwashing and Holy Communion service at St Paul's, and ask that all who attend will gain a deeper insight into what Jesus was doing by His actions that evening.

FRIDAY – we call this Good Friday, though there doesn't appear to be much good about it. Trumped up charges, dodgy judicial processes, torture, and a cruel and humiliating death on a cross are not what most people would call remotely 'good'. Yet the goodness belongs, as always, to God, who, in Christ, is reconciling the world to Himself. It was when God paid the price for a sinful world, and released us from the slavery that sin held us in. The goodness was in Jesus, submitting Himself to this terrible trial and death, dying while people were most definitely still sinners. Though we may feel that the world hasn't changed much – it still has the cruellest, most terrible sin – yet we can be grateful that God hasn't changed either – He still shows His goodness to a hurting world. Pray for an area of the world where there is great suffering, and pray for God to reveal His goodness there.

SATURDAY – this is a day of quiet, of waiting and watching, as things are going on beyond our understanding. Traditionally, this is when Jesus was 'harrowing hell', going to release the captives from there, and breaking its power. Christ, being perfect, and having submitted Himself to death, overcomes both death and hell. Pray for patience in the waiting for the fullness of the kingdom of God come, and trust in suffering.

Events this Easter

**Monday
26th March**

- **Easter service
6pm @ Yew Tree
Lodge**

**Wednesday
28th March**

- **Stainer's
'Crucifixion'
7.30pm @ St Paul's**

**Maundy Thursday
29th March**

- **Passover Supper
6.30pm**

**Good Friday
30th March**

- **Passion Play
7pm @ St James'
hall**

**Easter Day
1st April**

- **Dawn service
6am @
Furzedown Rec**
- **Holy Communion
10.30am**

St Paul's Furzedown Holy Week Concert **STAINER'S CRUCIFIXION**

a performance by
FURZEDOWN CHURCHES CHOIR
with congregational hymns
**Wednesday, March 28th,
7.30pm**
Retiring collection
in aid of the children of Yemen

