

Some things you might like to include in your prayers for our region this week.

Businesses who are still operating and the difficulty for some balancing work with family responsibilities and care.

Businesses having to lay staff off.

Holy God,

As I hold my hands out today,  
I offer to you the world around me.

The people I hold in my thoughts.

The news I hear.

The fears, troubles, isolation, hunger,  
poverty and uncertainty.

Your Son, my Lord and Saviour, was  
tempted. Tempted by hunger;  
tempted to 'quick fixes'; tempted by  
power, yet he did not yield.

Give me strength to hold out for what  
is right. To play my part in minimising  
the impact of this pandemic. To offer  
help where it is in my gift: a phone  
call, practical help, support to family,  
my work and my rest, my prayers.

Remind me that I am not a superhero,  
but I can do something, and do it well  
for you.

In the name of Jesus, I pray.

Amen

Prayers for our region:

For those whose regular ambulance  
service is not operating to take them  
to their medical services and care.

For farmers where stock prices have  
plummeted due to export restrictions.  
For those who can no longer sell their  
produce locally.

For 'Anonymous' service users unable  
to attend support groups.

For those suffering increased  
domestic violence in their home due  
to the restricted movements, drink  
and stresses.

Our ONE Opportunity group who may  
not be able to continue their projects  
in the usual way at this time.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer for  
all those who most need your love  
this day. Move through your Spirit  
across our communities: rural and  
urban, large and small.

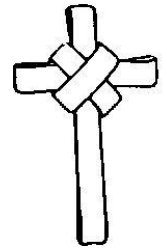
In Jesus' name, Amen

**If you have not received your usual palm cross this year you may like to make one yourself. There are many [instructions](#) on line. Be creative, crosses can be made in paper as well as palm... you might like to write prayers on your paper before folding, and pray as you fold or hold your cross.**

## SHARING IN PRAYER FOR OUR DISTRICT AND OUR WORLD

Be Still, and know that I am God.

Come Father God;  
Come Mother God;  
Come Brother Jesus;  
Come Sister Spirit:  
Fill my soul with your peace,  
and my heart with your love for your world.



<u>Day</u>	<u>For our District</u>	<u>For our Wider World</u>
Sunday 5 April	Stockton Circuit The radio station project	Funeral directors, crematoria
Monday 6 April	Castle Eden Circuit The new community @689	Shop workers, delivery and logistics teams.
Tuesday 7 April	Stokesley Circuit Wesley Mouse stories	People and manufacturers who have changed work to support the current need.
Wednesday 8 April	Cleveland & Danby Circuit The community at Redcar	Foodbanks trying to meet increased demands for food e.g in Durham, Redcar and Middlesbrough
Thursday 9 April	Bishop Auckland & Shildon Woodhouse Close	Politicians and leaders making decisions in response to Covid-19
Friday 10 April	Durham & Deerness Valley Circuit City Service Providers	Those who feel isolated, lonely and forgotten. Those struggling unnoticed.
Saturday 11 April	West Durham Circuit Farming and rural communities	Those across the world who have contracted Covid-19 and those caring for them.

## Lectio divina

5 April 2020 Sixth Sunday of Lent

### WHO IS HE?

*Matthew 21:1-11 (NRSVA)*

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.' <sup>4</sup>This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

<sup>5</sup>'Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup>they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup>A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

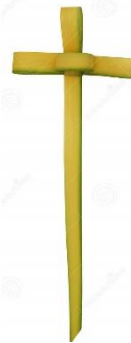
<sup>10</sup>When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' <sup>11</sup>The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

Other Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Philippians 2:5-11  
*you may like to refer to these in prayer / contemplation*

### LECTIO: READING

*As you read the words again underline or highlight words which stand out for you. Notice and appreciate what is written. What is the overriding message in this passage?*

We begin Holy Week with Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. What an occasion it must have been, loaded with symbolic images and meaning. The Mount of Olives starting point is significant as it is associated in scripture with the coming of the Lord (Zechariah 14:4). Matthew (v4) interprets the provision of the donkey and colt as the fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy (Zechariah 9:9-10) proclaiming a King who comes as Saviour on a lowly colt, not with powerful horses and chariots. Jesus is fully in control and aware of what his last few days on earth will bring. Paving the way was a customary



greeting for a victorious king or important person (2 Kings 9:13). Their shouts (v9), echo the words of Psalm 118:25-26 where Hosanna changes meaning from a plea to save to a confidence that God will deliver salvation.

Jesus' dramatic entrance came when Jerusalem was packed with pilgrims who had come to celebrate the Passover (Luke 22:7). In the uproar the crowds ask "Who is he?" Matthew (v10). The Pharisees didn't accept Jesus or his teaching and were disturbed by the focus on him. They may have feared, with good reason, the brutal intervention of the Roman soldiers to restore public order.

His followers believed Jesus to be the Messiah; the religious leaders didn't believe him and many were undecided. And people's responses to Jesus still vary today. Who is Jesus – a prophet, a healer, a good teacher or is he the Messiah, the Son of God?

### MEDITATIO: MEDITATING

*What does the passage mean for you today?*

- 'Who is he?' This was the crucial question then and is now. Who do you believe Jesus is, and why?
- What can we learn from the actions of the disciples in this passage?
- What does his entry into Jerusalem reveal to you about Jesus and his mission?
- How does this crowd scene feel to you today in a time of social distancing?

### ORATIO: PRAYER

*Respond sharing all you have noticed with God.*

Use [Philippians 2:6-11](#) to give thanks to God for his willingness to send his Son to become a man and die on the cross for our sins. Bow before him in worship and extol the 'name that is greater than any other name'.

### CONTEMPLATIO: CONTEMPLATION

*Be still before God. Invite God to be with you. Give time for the words you have read and the meaning you have found to suggest action in your own discipleship.*

Hosanna. Jesus died to save you so that you can spend all eternity rejoicing in his presence. Have you invited Jesus to be Lord of your life? Are there elements of his teaching you still resist and are unwilling to accept? Is there more you need to surrender to God today?

*Acknowledgements This lectio divina is largely taken from 'Sunday Gospel readings' by United Bible Societies © 2010*