

29th March, 2026

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hear all the tribes hosanna cry;
O Saviour meek, pursue Your road
with palms and scattered garments
strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
O Christ, Your triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered
sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The host of angels in the sky

look down with sad and wondering
eyes
to see the approaching Sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh.
The Father on His sapphire throne
awaits His own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die,
bow Your meek head to mortal
pain,
then take, O Christ, Your power and
reign..

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read Acts 10:34-43 and Matthew 27.11-54

The King comes to die.

Welcome to Passiontide and Palm Sunday. The Lectionary (the programme of set readings set by the Church of England) gives us two reading options, read about Psalm Sunday or read about the cross. The danger of reading Palm Sunday is that in our busy lives we return next Sunday for Easter Sunday and we miss *The* crucial moment of history – God’s love glimpsed in its staggering entirety – *‘This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.’* (1 John 4:10).

I use the word ‘crucial’ deliberately because ‘crucial’ derives from the crucifixion, the root word of which means simply, a cross. But because of the significance of Jesus’ crucifixion we have the word crucial in recognition that the crucifixion is central, pivotal, and essential to our very being, life, and eternity.

Everything, every reality, past present and future is now framed around Jesus – read Revelation if you’re unsure about this. But even if we can’t see this we can recognise Jesus as the crucial to human history – the most influential man to ever live.

The death of Christ was not an accident or miscalculation, it was God’s plan all along. In Acts 2:23. 23, Peter says to the crowd at Pentecost. *‘This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.’* In the consequence of ‘The Fall’, in Genesis 3:15 God says, *‘And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’* Read Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, both written centuries before Christ’s walk on Earth which foretell the events of his death. On the cross, Christ declares ‘It is finished’ – not a cry of despair of defeat but one of relieved and confident satisfaction, meaning it is completed, perfected.

So what can we learn about the Cross?

On the cross Jesus stands in for us.

- Romans 3:23-24. *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*
- Isaiah 53:6, *...the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

- 1 Corinthians 5:21: *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

On the cross Jesus removes the divide between us and God.

- 1 Corinthians 5:19. *God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.*

On the cross Jesus makes us clean.

- Romans 3:25. *God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood*
- 1 John 1:7. *...the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

On the cross Jesus demonstrates God's love – the crux of the matter.

- Romans 5:8. *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
- 1 John 4:10 *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

On the Jesus wins the victory of evil and death.

- Colossians 2.15. *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*
- 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. *'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?'*

On the cross Jesus gives us new life:

- *Galatians 2:20. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

For me one of the beautiful moments in the story we've just read is that the curtain of the temple was torn in two. This happened not to let God out, but us let in – the temple was the symbolic dwelling place of God, limited to minimal human contact. But we are gifted a relationship of love, and a place, a home, the home for which we all long with God (See John 14:1-6 and Revelation 20). Read Hebrews 10:19-25.

Pray, giving time to thank God for his love and sacrifice and to receive his gift of love and life for yourself.

Palm Sunday: *Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen*

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd:

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: April 15th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: April 22nd at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.parihofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>