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Dear all,

Briefing 7: Friday 3rd April, 2020.

“Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”
Matthew 21:9

It's Palm Sunday this week, the day we remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. You will know the story. As Jesus and his disciples enter down the slopes of the Mount of Olives, the people flocked to him, waving palm branches in the air, throwing others on the road, and shouting "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" It's the event which marks the beginning of Holy Week, the week which culminates with Jesus' death on the cross on Good Friday and his glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was anything but spectacular. Yes, there were plenty of crowds, but there was no pomp, no ceremony, no great white charger, no gold chariot. Just a donkey. And a young one at that.

But appearances can be deceptive. This humble king, was and is none other than the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This humble king was and is the one who will one day judge the living and the dead. This humble king is right now, sitting at the right hand of the Father, ruling over all creation, steering events for the good of his people, for the building up of the church and for the glory of God.

Let's not forget who Jesus is. Yes, he had a very lowly birth. Yes, he had a very humble life. But he is the one before whom one day every knee will bow. As we enter Holy Week, let's keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, our glorious king.

SUNDAY SERVICES...

Don't forget to join in with our Sunday service, which will be available from 10am on our YouTube channel. It will look a little different this week and huge thanks to Paul Drakes for editing it all together. The service sheet is attached to this email and can also be downloaded from the show notes you can see underneath the video.

SERVICE DOWN A TELEPHONE LINE

Our new '*service down a telephone line*' is now up and running. The message there will be updated every few days with Evening Prayer services and the Sunday sermon. Simply dial this **local number 01438 907143** (you'll need the area code as well), ignore the American voice and then press any key to listen. If you know of anyone not on the Internet who might find this service useful, please pass this telephone number onto them.

FOOD BANKS

In this time of crisis, many families are struggling to put food on the table. At the same time, The Covid-19 Public Health Emergency has meant that the Stevenage Food Bank's donation network is shrinking daily. However, any donations of food and toiletries be dropped off at **Stevenage Borough Council, Customer Service Centre SG1 1HN**

UPDATE BUILDING WORK AT ST NICHOLAS

Sadly the building work at St Nicholas has now come to a halt, and will remain so until the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Because the works have progressed so far, our architect has signed a certificate of practical completion, and the remaining works will be done in due course. The works so far have made a tremendous difference, and we will not be disappointed when we are able to meet in the building again!

EASTER EVENTS: 3 Extra Events Next Week:

Thursday 7pm: Maundy Thursday service will be released to YouTube, bringing our PRAY BIG Lent course to an end.

Good Friday morning: There's no parade and town centre service this year – but CTiS are putting together a Good Friday service, including a short talk from me. I'll let you know the link when I have it.

Good Friday 3pm: An hour of reflective music and meditations on the cross will be released on our YouTube channel. Set some time aside and contemplate all that Jesus has done for you.

SOMETHING FOR YOUR SOUL...

The song for the day is here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAaQ5EExidc> It's *Praise is Rising!*

The talk for the day an evangelistic talk by Roger Carswell on hope beyond the Corona Crisis. Why not watch it then share it with your friends. It's here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoQMg4-u-wU&feature=youtu.be>

BITE-SIZED BIBLE: A new Bite-Sized Bible has been released on our YOU TUBE channel, this time on the book of **Job**. You'll find it and all our other videos here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzRGAaIRTsJuKFRBvkJAtQ/> Don't forget to share, like and subscribe.

FREE RESOURCES: The Audio Bible read by David Suchet- normally £20- is free for the next few days. You can download it here: <https://aimermedia.com/app/niv-audio-bible/#NIV%20#ChurchAtHome%20#ChurchOnline>

The Good Book Company has also made our Lent book **PRAY BIG** available as a free download from their website.

REMINDERS...

PREVIOUS LETTERS AND INFORMATION: These can all be accessed via our websites or Facebook pages.

KEEPING IN TOUCH: Please do take up the **4UP/4DOWN** challenge and call people regularly.

PRAYER: Why not try downloading the **PRAYER MATE APP** to your mobile device or tablet. A private group prayer network has been set up- and whether you are from St Nicholas or St Mary's, search for the St Nicholas Church Stevenage group, sign up and wait to be approved... You'll then be able to share prayer requests across the church family.

NEED HELP? If you or a neighbour need help that you can't provide, contact Herts Help on 0300 123 4044 or via <https://www.hertshelp.net/hertshelp.aspx>.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER? See <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS> or <https://www.thvolunteering.org.uk/>

There will just ONE update next week- probably on Wednesday, and one Bite-Sized Bible. So do watch out for them.

In the meantime, may God bless you and your families as we walk through Holy Week together, and may the LORD hear our prayers on behalf of our nation and our world.

Yours in Christ,

Dave