



Bolton Parish Church Newsletter Sunday 22 March 2020

4th Sunday in Lent Mothering Sunday

Welcome to our first email newsletter. Here you will find readings for the day, prayers for the week, and news and information items.



Collect for the Day

Merciful Lord, absolve your people from their offences, that through your bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins which by our frailty we have committed;

grant this, heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Today's readings

Ephesians 5.8–14

⁸ For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

John 9

⁹ As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' ³ Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' ⁶ When he had said this, he

spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷ saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' ⁹ Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' ¹¹ He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' ¹² They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' ²⁰ His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' ²⁵ He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' ²⁶ They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' ²⁷ He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' ³⁰ The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' ³⁴ They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' ³⁶ He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' ³⁷ Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' ³⁸ He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.'



Intercessions

We pray for the church, the world and all God's people.

For the church,

We pray for our Bishops; David, Mark and Mark, as they seek to lead all your people in this diocese and reach out to those who may have struggle to hold fast to hope.

Help us, your church, to *bear the light of Christ*, in the shadow of this current pandemic.

Grant your people *strength of faith*, and the *resolve* to work for the good of the Bolton community.

Thank you that your *ever-present word* speaks *hope* into troubled hearts and *sustains* the weary.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

For the world,

Gracious God, give *skill, wisdom* and *resilience* to all who work in our health and emergency services, and all whose work is to care for others. Strengthen them in *hope* and *love* and *resilience*.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

In heeding your command to bear one another's burdens, we pray for the sick, whether in body, mind or spirit; those undergoing treatment, those with a condition and those self-isolating, the sick and the lonely. those recently bereaved, and those whose anniversaries are recorded in our Book of Remembrance. *You have borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, and we approach your throne of grace with confidence that we may receive mercy and find grace.*

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we confess to you our own needs at this time

Faithful God, you are the light of the world, give us courage as we walk in that light.

Merciful Father,

Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen



Please continue to pray for the church and world:

Diocese: For David Bishop of Manchester, Mark Bishop of Middleton, Mark Bishop of Bolton. Parishes in the Deanery of Salford; the Church of England; the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, Dioceses of Lichfield, St David's (Wales).

World: Countries of the Middle East, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen; Brazil, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Isles, Brunei, Bulgaria.



If someone from Church tells you they haven't had an email letter from Canon Chris, or this newsletter, ask them to check their junk mail or spam folder to see if they are there.



Notices

Sunday Worship on Radio 4

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby is to lead a national broadcast as the Church of England responds to the challenge of becoming a "different sort of church" in the face of the coronavirus crisis. The service, including prayers, hymns and a short sermon, will be broadcast online by the Church of England and broadcast on **BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship at 8.10am**



A National Day of Prayer and Action has been announced by the presidents of Churches Together in England, re. the Coronavirus epidemic, for this Sunday 22nd March.

In an excerpt from a joint letter, they wrote:

"At such a time as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds.

Therefore, at 7 p.m. this Sunday, light a candle in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer." Wherever you are in the world, we invite you to join with us in prayer to see an end to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Prayers for Bolton on Bolton FM

Ian Smart is the presenter on the Bolton FM 'Spirit of Bolton' Show and minister at Harwood Methodist Church. Please see his message below about the new 'Prayers for Bolton' show over the next weeks and months. If you would like to contribute to this show please contact Ian at ian@karenandian.com .

"Bolton FM have agreed that Sue Snowdon and I will offer "Prayers for Bolton" which will be an act of worship for those unable to attend church worship on Sunday. This will be between 6pm and 7pm this week only, switching to an earlier, and hopefully longer, slot on the following Sunday. We are working with Keith Armstrong from Bolton Christian Community Cohesion, to try and get representation from across all the Bolton churches, and we hope to include input from across the faith groups as well. That said we will see what is possible. For now, we have a way of at least being able to offer some worship this Sunday in a way that is hopefully low-tech enough to allow just about anyone to listen. I can confirm that our "preacher" on Sunday will be The Rev'd Paul Martin, our Methodist Chair of District, delivering a message to everyone. In future weeks we hope to have other prominent church leaders. **Bolton FM** is available on **96.5FM** and online at www.boltonfm.com – it is also available on your smartspeaker and digitally via TuneIn."

Church opening times

The church building will be open for private prayer and meditation at these times:

Sunday 09.00 – 12.00;

Tuesday and Thursday 11.00 – 13.00.

There will be NO SERVICES until further notice.

If you come to church, please observe the hand-washing and social distancing measures at all times.

Meetings

The scheduled PCC Meeting and APCM have been postponed indefinitely. More details will follow when we have them.