

**Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership**  
**St James, New Bradwell**  
*an open, growing presence for Christ*



**22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020**  
*Mothering Sunday*  
*(Fourth Sunday of Lent)*

**Sunday services along with all other events and meetings are suspended for the time being owing to the coronavirus pandemic.**

**The church remains open at certain times during the week and on Sundays during which individual visitors are welcome.**

(See back page for details)

Please feel free to do any of the following:

- Sit quietly in a seat at least 2 metres from others
- Light a candle and say a prayer
- Move around the church interior, perhaps looking at the stained glass windows
- Read the Bible lessons for the day in this leaflet with reflections by Rev Dr Paul Smith.
- Pray for those in need around the world
- Leave an offering in the large plate

Stay in touch by signing up for regular emails including this weekly leaflet by contacting John Porter at: [notices@stjamesnewbradwell.org.uk](mailto:notices@stjamesnewbradwell.org.uk)

Also visit our website: (details on back page)

## **COLLECT OF THE DAY**

Merciful Lord,  
you know our struggle to serve you:  
when sin spoils our lives  
and overshadows our hearts,  
come to our aid  
and turn us back to you again;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **FIRST READING**

### **Exodus 2:1-10**

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

*This is the word of the Lord*

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING**

### **Psalm 127:1-4**

Unless the LORD builds the house,  
those who build it labour in vain.  
Unless the LORD guards the city,  
the guard keeps watch in vain.  
It is in vain that you rise up early  
and go late to rest,  
eating the bread of anxious toil;  
for he gives sleep to his beloved.  
Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD,  
the fruit of the womb a reward.  
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior  
are the sons of one's youth.

*This is the word of the Lord*

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **John 19:25b-27**

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord*

**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Exodus 2.1-10 (CW), Psalm 127.1-4 (CW), John 19.25b-27 (CW): New Revised Standard Version Bible: copyright © 1989, the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved

## **Reflection on today's Bible readings**

I'm sure you don't need me to remind you that today is Mothering Sunday! It will be a day that is tinged with sadness or frustration for many who are prevented from visiting their mother during these days of social isolation because of the coronavirus pandemic. What do our readings say to me in the current context?

### **Moses in the Bulrushes**

This story comes from the time when the children of Israel were oppressed in Egypt and were treated as slaves. Pharaoh had decreed that all male Israelite babies were to be killed so as to reduce the Israelite population whom the Egyptians had begun to fear. But the Israelite birthrate stayed high. Israelite midwives and mothers found clever ways of preserving their babies' lives, including placing them in a basket at the river's edge. Through their creativity, a crisis was countered and life preserved against the odds. Amidst all the fear, gloom and bad behaviour that the coronavirus can provoke in our society, there are positive stories to be told and creative solutions that people are finding. How can we show that we are people of faith, hope and love like the Israelite women to counter fear and selfishness?

### **Watching at the foot of the cross**

This must be one of the most heart-wrenching scenes of the crucifixion! But it's also the most heart-warming as Jesus gives John and his mother to each other. It's a model of the new Christian family in which biological bonds count less than belonging to each other through faith. One of the things that the coronavirus pandemic makes me realise is what a challenge it is to our assumed freedom and control in life! We have grown too used to doing whatever we like and going wherever we want. Suddenly, we can't.

We try and wrest control back by stockpiling and creating shortages on the shop shelves. Jesus gave up control by giving up his life on the cross to give us life: much as a mother risks all to give birth. As small children we are entirely dependent on our mothers/fathers. We don't control our lives. Gradually we gain more and more control until we think we are invincible. As

people of faith, however, we are reminded that we don't and can't enjoy ultimate freedom over nature or human life. Perhaps we've grown too independent and it is time to return to a simple faith in God who is our mother, our guardian and our ultimate place of safety, whether we live or die!

The churches have called for a **National Day of Prayer** this Sunday. Please spend some time in Private Prayer dedicating that prayer to our nation. It is asked that we light a candle and place it in the window of our homes at **7.00 pm**.

**08.10** Sunday Worship Radio 4

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000gm8f>

The Archbishop of Canterbury reflects on this troubling time for our nation in this service recorded in the Chapel of Lambeth Palace.

**10.00** Join St. Andrew's Great Linford for an online Sunday morning service by clicking this Zoom link

<https://zoom.us/j/8302087599> and when prompted to add "meeting ID" please type in 8302087599 and you will be joined to the service

**13.15** Songs of Praise BBC 1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000gpq6>

**17.00** Join St. Andrew's Great Linford for Telephone Evening Prayer free of charge from your land or mobile telephones Dial in number: 0330 088 1939 You will be prompted to add an access code followed by the # key. The access code is: 446028

St James Church will be open this Sunday and from Monday to Friday between 10.00am and 12.00noon.

If you have received this by e-mail and wish to be contacted by another method or do not wish to be contacted at all please e-mail John Porter on [notices@stjamesnewbradwell.org.uk](mailto:notices@stjamesnewbradwell.org.uk)

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