

## Newsletter 22

As we are now one year on from the beginning of the Covid restrictions and the lockdown, it is good to reflect on how we have continued and adapted to 'being church'. As we look back at all the things that have had to change, we are thankful that we have been able to stay connected via technology, newsletters and phone calls. And we heartily thank all of those who have given of themselves to help our church family continue to worship and to function as a parish. We look forward to being able to welcome everyone into our churches church for the Easter Sunday services of Holy Communion.

During Holy Week, the churches will be open for private prayer at the usual times.

In addition, St. John's will be open on Good Friday from 1-3pm

For those with Zoom, you are invited to join in online with the following:

- Morning prayer every weekday of Holy Week, **including Good Friday**, at 9.30 on Zoom
- Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March 7.30 pm – Chrism Eucharist on Zoom from Sheffield Cathedral
- Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 7.30 pm – Compline and Reflection
- Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 7.30 pm – Compline and Reflection
- Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 7.30 pm – Maundy Thursday Liturgy
- Good Friday – 1-2pm – Good Friday meditations  
2-3pm – Stations of the Cross

More details, and Orders of Service, for the above will be circulated later this week.

We will be decorating the churches with flowers for Easter and donations towards the cost are welcome. You can take donations to the churches when open, or leave in the vicarage porch. Cheques to be made payable to Abbeydale and Millhouses PCC; or pay by BACS Transfer directly into our Parish account – details on request.

TRIO magazine is now ready for delivery and you should receive yours soon! If you are a deliverer, we hope you will be able to deliver them in time for Easter.

Morning prayer - We continue to pray for the sick and those who have died. This week we are thinking particularly of the family of Katrina Oehlrichs, whose funeral will take place on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March at 11.30 at Hutcliffe Wood crematorium.

Plans are being made to open our church halls and more news will follow in future newsletters.

As we continue to journey through Lent, we have our final **Lent discussion group** this Wednesday 24 March at 8pm on Zoom.

Let us pray for each other as we continue our journey together as a church family this Passiontide and we wish you a blessed Holy Week as we look forward to a joyful Easter.

Peter and Angie

## Recent Sermons

### Philippa's talk from Mothering Sunday

Today is Mothering Sunday, which is also known as Laetare Sunday. Laetare means "rejoice", so today is "Rejoicing Sunday", and it's a day of celebration (and particularly celebrating mothers) in the middle of lent, which is otherwise a time to be solemn and reflective.

In other words, Laetare Sunday – or Mothering Sunday – is a bit of light relief in the middle of a serious time.

But I imagine I am not alone in thinking that this Laetare Sunday feels a bit heavier than usual.

Partly because today marks one full liturgical year since everything stopped. And that's quite a milestone – particularly since I know there are some here this morning who have not set foot inside our churches since then.

But also, because I think that – for more than usual – this Mothering Sunday might feel sad. Of course, there are those who feel the deep grief of having sadly lost mothers, or wives in the last year, or perhaps longer ago.

And then there are other types of grief: people who feel sad that they've been able to see their mothers just once or twice this year, because of restrictions; or mothers who are sad because they miss their children or grandchildren, for the same reason. People who feel sad to have missed out on big family celebrations. Conversely there may be mothers or children who feel they've seen all too much of their family this year, and that has become wearying in a different way. And of course, there are many other reasons that might make Mothering Sunday a tricky day for some people.

There are lots of reasons why today might feel hard, but my intention is not to weigh us down with that grief – after all, today is still meant to be a day of celebration. So let me start by sharing a video that celebrates some very different mothers in the Bible.

The Bible shows many examples of mothers – biological, adoptive, spiritual, and all are treasured by God.

I wonder whether this strange year has caused us to experience "mothering" in a different way?

In the reading, we heard about Moses – his mother knew she couldn't safely be a mother to him, and she must have felt deep grief about that; but an unexpected mother was found in Pharaoh's daughter. And even more unexpectedly, his mother then found herself being a mother to Moses again, albeit in a slightly different way.

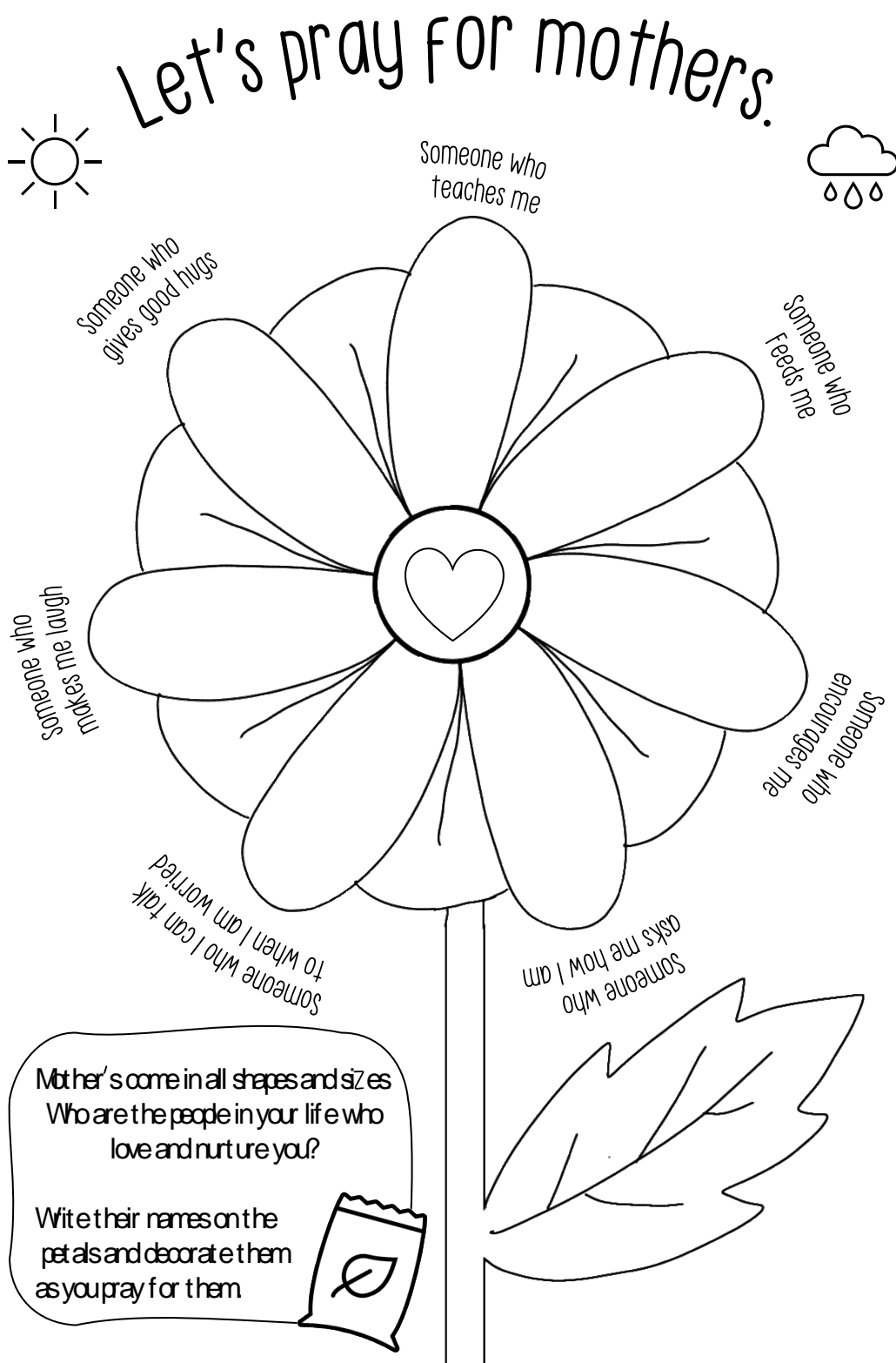
Since March 2020, perhaps we – like Moses' mother – have had to "outsource" our mothering (allow others to take care of us, or take care of the ones we love), or to be a mother to unexpected people (looking after friends or neighbours, shopping, collecting prescriptions when isolating), or even to receive mothering from unexpected places. Perhaps that means that today, more than usual, we really feel the truth that mothering may come from lots of different places.

I would like to finish by allowing us to reflect and give thanks for some of the people who have been like mothers to us. This flower has seven petals to reflect on seven people who we are thankful for.

Heavenly father

Thank you that you bless us with earthly mothers, to care for us and love us. Thank you for all the special people you have placed in our lives, and we pray for your blessing on them today.

Amen.



## **LENT 5 Sunday 21 March 2021 - 10 am Service of the Word at Holy Trinity Church**

Readings: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

*Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. John 12:24*

### **INTRODUCTION**

I like buying seeds! There is excitement in looking at the potential of the beautiful display of colour in the garden that they provide.

And during the Covid pandemic and restrictions, a lot of us have turned to gardening, or enjoying the garden and natural world more.

**HYMN – Broken for me (printed in Order of Service):** As I was planning this sermon, the hymn ‘Broken for me’ came to mind. For me, it fitted in with one of the messages from our Gospel reading this morning – the concept of ‘brokenness’. As the hymn says, Jesus was broken that we may be whole.

A major theme for us to reflect on this Passion Sunday.

But also, the call that we may ‘lose our lives’ and follow Jesus, whatever that means for us.

**THE BIG PICTURE:** The reading from Jeremiah, which Liz read, sets the scene for God’s plan of salvation for the whole world:

“they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more”.

And this plan was fulfilled by Jesus giving his life for us, which ultimately led to his body being broken ... and then resurrected. And in reading we have just had from John’s gospel, Jesus is telling the disciples that the time has come. “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (v.23) ... And he realises the cost to himself, and yet the necessity of going through with it, when he ponders, “should I say – Father, save me from this hour? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour”. (v.27)

This is a once and for all, momentous event in the world’s salvation history. It will change things forever; it is eternal. Jesus’s life, death and resurrection is the enactment of God’s plan to save the world, to reconcile the world to him. As our other reading for today from Hebrews 5:9 states – *Jesus became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

**BROKENNESS:** The concept of brokenness runs through Gospel reading, although word ‘broken’ is not used. But hymn words clearly fit in with the message of today’s Gospel reading and lead us to realise the generous love of God and the commitment of Jesus to fulfil God’s desire to love and save all humanity.

Seeds are a good metaphor for the results of Jesus’ brokenness. When a seed falls into the earth, the seed itself disintegrates and dies but only by doing this does it lead to new life and growth and multiplication. A similar ‘dying followed by new life’ happens in the life cycle of butterflies and moths – a caterpillar disintegrates and becomes a chrysalis which then metamorphoses into a beautiful butterfly or moth – whose whole life then seems to be about mating to lay more eggs which grow into caterpillars! ... and the cycle continues, and is repeated over and over.

In one way, Jesus' life followed a cycle - Jesus was blessed and broken, blessed and broken - blessed by his father in times of prayer and encouragement – then broken by his self-giving ministry and service to God, which could be demanding and emotionally draining sometimes when rightly challenging injustice – so needing more time of prayer and rest to replenish his energy and recuperate before giving himself again.

The final act of brokenness was his death ... and then resurrection. So it now falls to us, as the body of Christ here and now in this place, to continue his ministry. This is the invitation – to follow him and be the body of Christ here and now. The TV drama, Broken, about the life and ministry of a Catholic priest, played by Sean Bean, was very aptly named.

**FINALLY, WHAT CAN WE MAKE OF THIS?** What does it say to us at this time in our parish and in our daily lives?

Like Jesus, we need this cycle of 'blessed and broken'.

In the Eucharist, we take and bless the bread, then it is broken and given.

In the past year, there has been little opportunity for us to meet and celebrate the Eucharist, and when we did, we had bread only.

So today's hymn could sound frustrating ... we still have to wait a little longer to share Eucharist together.

But we can still choose to follow Jesus example, of being blessed and broken.

He invites us to follow and share in this ministry – to be like him so that we can continue bearing much fruit.

At this Passiontide, we are invited to ponder what that means for us in our daily lives. And it will be different for each of us. And I believe God will give us the strength to do it if we ask and are open to his love. **AMEN**