

ROSEMARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland – NIC 104448

Rev Philip McCrea
17 Innisfayle Park, Belfast, BT15 5HS
02890778164
philip.mccrea@ntlworld.com
Website; Rosemarypresbyterianchurch.org
Facebook; Rosemary Presbyterian Church

1st April 2020

Dear Friends,

As we come to Palm Sunday (5th April) the start of Holy Week, we want to think together about Easter and what is central to our faith. Palm Sunday is about Jesus entry into Jerusalem in order to bring about the possibility of a new relationship with God through forgiveness of our sin, new life in His Spirit and the hope of eternal life in God's presence.

We read the Palm Sunday narrative in Matthew 21 as Jesus enters Jerusalem to accomplish the purpose for which He came into our world. The Prophet Zechariah had foretold the coming of this humble King! (9:9). Those cheers soon turned to jeers as they realised Jesus wasn't the kind of Messiah they wanted. Jesus makes His own impact in the city as He clears the temple, reprioritising it's intended purpose, as a house of prayer for all nations. Jesus also seeks to teach the people about the true nature of His Kingdom and the necessity of believing in and following Him. His desire for the whole nation is seen in His lament for Jerusalem. Jesus says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Matt. 23:37) His offer of reconciliation was rejected. Jesus is resolute in continuing on to lay down His life so that we could be reconciled to God. Ultimately God accepts this sacrifice on our behalf when He raised Jesus from the dead on that Sunday morning. The grave could not hold Him and now we too are able to experience life through faith!

As Easter approaches there are some things we can do. Over Holy Week I would encourage you to read from Luke 19:28 through to the end of the gospel. We will see Jesus intentionality carrying out His Father's will. We will be challenged by His priorities, fascinated by His teaching, moved with emotion as He prays in Gethsemene, astounded at His restoration of Peter after failure, deepened in our love for Him as we think about the Cross and overwhelmed with joy as we come to the Empty Tomb. He is risen, He is alive! There will also be selected passages of Luke's account read by different members of our congregation on our Rosemary Presbyterian Church Facebook page, during Holy Week.

We have also been encouraged by our church leaders, to pray on Sunday 5th April, from 3.00pm – 4.00pm.

The statement reads, "As Christians, we believe that prayer sustains our life as followers of Christ. In the midst of this global pandemic, we turn to Jesus in our time of need. As Church leaders, we join together in calling all our people to pray. As we begin the journey through Holy Week towards Good Friday and Easter, **we invite all Christians from across the whole Church to join in prayer on Palm Sunday, 5 April, from 3pm to 4pm** - remembering that we should only gather to pray within our own households, in line with government advice.

"God loves the world and everyone in it. We will pray for those who are sick, and those feeling fearful; we will pray for those who have been bereaved and those who are isolated and alone. We will pray for our healthcare professionals, delivery drivers, essential workers and all who continue to work on the frontline. We will pray for, and with those in our communities, who are fearful about their employment and for those reaching out to provide food and shelter. We will pray for our families and friends, neighbours and civic, business and political leaders for the inevitable challenges that will arise in the coming days. We also remember those across our world who are similarly suffering. We pray for those working hard to produce new treatments and vaccines.

"Though we cannot meet as the gathered Church, we will end the hour united in prayer, asking for the Lord's healing touch on our land and all its people. All are invited to pray, regardless of where they are in their own

ROSEMARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland – NIC 104448

journey of faith, even if they have never prayed before. At this critical moment we will bring this land and our world before our loving God in prayer remembering that, “We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy” (Daniel 9:18).”

The Moderator of our church has provided a helpful framework to use during this hour of prayer. This framework has been included in the letter and email. All the resources for this Prayer time are found on the PCI website.

As we continue to focus our lives on Jesus over this Easter I pray that each of us will continue to know Him and His presence during this time.

Philip McCrea

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the course of the past week I regret to inform you that we have had three deaths in our congregation.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Miss Kathleen Gill | 13 Strathmore Park | Died 26 th March 2020 |
| • Mrs Iris Potter | Jordanstown Care Home | Died 31 st March 2020 |
| • Mrs Patricia Ferris | 24 Shancoole Park | Died 1 st April 2020 |

We extend our sympathies to these family circles and assure them of our prayers at this very difficult time.

We are seeking to follow the formal advice we have been given by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in relation to funerals.

Resources

There are a number of resources on the PCI website in the ‘These Three Remain’ section. Tides is a set of daily devotions which provide a section of God’s word to read, a short reflection sharing what this could mean for your life and a way for you to respond.

Keeping in touch - using email

We hope to continue to keep in touch with everyone regularly over the coming weeks and rather than send copies of letters by post it will be easier and less expensive to use email. If you have an email address and are willing to have your letter sent electronically, please indicate this in an email to Liz Eakin (liz@rosemarypresbyterianchurch.org).

A message from the Treasurer

In recent days as the actions around Coronavirus intensify I have been uplifted by the number of members enquiring how they can make contributions to Rosemary Presbyterian Church. I would suggest these are made on a month by month basis until our normal weekly service resumes and the two options are by post or on line banking.

For FWO and / or other funds of the church - by cheque payable to Rosemary Presbyterian Church and posted to me at 18 Farm Lodge Road, Greenisland, Carrickfergus, BT38 8XH

For FWO only - by bank transfer to 95.01.21 account name Rosemary Presbyterian Church and account number 61034898. As a reference quote your surname + FWO number. For example Eakin No 123. This will assist greatly in identifying the donor for gift aid purposes.

Service

PCI Service led by Moderator on PCI Website (There is a link to this service on Rosemary Facebook Page)

Effective Communication

If you know of someone isolated and in need of help to get basic necessities then please let the minister or any of the elders know in order that we can arrange for help to be provided.

A pattern for an hour of prayer

Preparation: Calming our hearts to pray

Read: Psalm 46:10

Prompt to pray:

- Ask God to quieten your mind, help you focus on him and open your heart to him in prayer.
- Pray acknowledging your trust that God is in control of all things.
- For children: Put your hands together. Close your eyes. Be quiet and get ready to talk to God.

Prayer: Connecting with all God's people across Ireland in answering the call to pray

Read or say together: The words of the Lord's Prayer

Prompts to pray:

- Give thanks for the gift of prayer to a heavenly Father who hears and answers.
- Choose a line from the Lord's Prayer that particularly struck you as you read. Turn it into a prayer for our present circumstances.
- For children: Thank God that we can pray as part of his big family. Ask God to give us all we need each day.

Praise: Centring our thoughts on God as comforter and his work in us and through us

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Prompts to pray:

- Praise God as our great comforter in all our troubles.
- Pray that God's comfort might flow through us to those most in need - those who are ill, self-isolating, vulnerable, anxious, alone.
- For children: Thank God for your house in which you can stay home and keep safe. Pray for other boys and girls who have a sick family member at home or in hospital.

Parable: Calling us to neighbourliness and community

Read: Luke 10: 25-37

Prompts to pray:

- Thank God for an increasing spirit of neighbourliness in local communities.
- Pray for frontline health workers as they treat those suffering from the Coronavirus.
- Pray for the global medical science community as they work together to combat and overcome the effects of the virus.
- Pray that in our concern for our own situations we might not pass by others in need.
- For children: Ask God to help you listen to your parents, do what they ask, share with others and be kind while you are inside more than usual.

Promise: Creating peace through faith in Christ

Read: John 16:33

Prompts to pray:

- Ask God that among the many messages we hear in the media, we would hold on to what he has told us in his Word the Bible.
- Thank God for Jesus' victory which overcomes all that stands against us in life and the world.
- Pray that many across the island of Ireland would realise the fragility of life and seek peace in Jesus.
- For children: Ask God to help you not be afraid and to trust Jesus to keep you safe.

Parting: Committing one another to the Lord's keeping

Read: Numbers 6:24-26

Prompts to pray:

- Entrust family, friends, neighbours and congregational members to God's blessing and keeping in these days.
- Ask God that he would show favour and grace to the people of Ireland in the coming days.
- Ask that many might experience God's face turned towards them in their circumstances and find their peace in him.
- For children: Pray for parents, grandparents, family, friends and neighbours that God will keep them safe and well.