



# Wild Bright Hope

Holy Week and Easter

Resources for Reflection

2025

Words by Chris Thorpe

# Our Retreat



If you knew you only had one more week to live, what would you want to do? Probably to be close to people you love, to be able to say some of the things that need saying, to pass on some of the most important things you treasure. During Holy Week we are invited to walk with Jesus through the last week of his life on earth, to sit with him and learn from him. We are invited to be with him through heightened times of great intensity and depth, to the foot of the cross and beyond.

This Holy Week retreat is an amazing opportunity to grow in our faith as disciples of Jesus. We can opt in to suit our own availability, either at home or by coming to church. This booklet includes a simple liturgy to use at home: each day, there is a reflection, a prayer, a passage of scripture and a focus for our own thoughts and prayers.

Each evening in St Andrew's we will share a special service for Holy Week, including Stations of the Cross, Taizé chants and reflections, a contemporary HeartSpace service with time for prayer and worship and an evening led by Open Door. Maundy Thursday will start with foot washing and the Last Supper and end with the stripping of the church and a vigil until midnight. On Good Friday, there's Messy Church followed by the Last Hour on the Cross. Our Holy Saturday service involves the lighting of the Easter Fire and renewal of baptism promises.

"Wild Bright Hope" is a Lent book that many of us have been reading this year and we are exploring Holy Week through the eyes of that audacious hope. The world around us feels far from hopeful, as we are bombarded with bad news that just seems to be getting worse. After the shock of the pandemic, the economic downturn, war in Ukraine, conflict in Gaza and Israel and worldwide inflation, it's hard to be hopeful. In the climate crisis and with an increasing awareness of the damage we have done to the natural world, it is hard to be hopeful. And as we are caught up in a new kind of global politics and international relations are thrown into disarray, it is hard to be hopeful. But our hope does not rest on any of these things! Our wild, bright hope springs from God's promise to walk with us through all the ups and downs of life, even through the valley of the shadow of death. It springs from God's promise to bring us safely through to an empty tomb, resurrection life.

# A Simple Liturgy

God of our deepest longing  
all our hopes are met in you.  
You hear our heart's cry,  
you know our deepest need.  
Meet us in this place,  
speak to us through the silence,  
touch us with your healing love,  
that we may share your hopes for the whole creation  
in and through Jesus our Saviour.

**Amen**

HOLY WEEK



*Canticle*                  Psalm 62 5-8 NRSV

For God alone my soul waits in silence,  
for my hope is from him.

**He alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.**

On God rests my deliverance and my honour;  
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

**Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart before him;  
God is a refuge for us.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

*Scripture Reading*

*We read the passage set for today.*

*Reflection*

*Time to read the page for the day and think about the questions posed.*

*Silence* – a time to be still and listen for the “still, small voice” of God.

*Prayers of Recognition*

We bring to God, all that distorts us, the unhealthy tensions,  
all that is out of balance in our lives, and we let it go.

Wait on God alone in stillness, O my soul;  
**For in God is my hope.**

We bring to God all of our busyness,  
where we are over stretched, over committed, over wound, and we let it go.  
Wait on God alone in stillness, O my soul;  
**For in God is my hope.**

We bring to God all that diminishes us, that stifles our imagination,  
and limits our horizon and we let it go.  
Wait on God alone in stillness, O my soul;  
**For in God is my hope.**

### *Intercession*

We bring to God the people and situations on our hearts.

*We conclude with the Lord's Prayer.*

We bring to God all that feels hopeless in us,  
our disappointments, our regrets, our fears;  
and hold them in the light of God's assurance,  
for us and for all creation.

*(pause as we reflect)*

No-one who hopes in you  
**Will ever be put to shame**

We bring to God all that is hopeful in us,  
our longings, our dreams and aspirations;  
and hold them in the light of God's hopes  
for us and all creation.

*(pause as we reflect)*

No-one who hopes in you  
**Will ever be put to shame**

### *The Grace*

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, evermore. Amen.

# Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday was the high point of hope for the people of Jerusalem, the triumphal entry of the longed for Messiah. They thought he would overthrow the Roman oppressors, and bring in a golden age of freedom for Israel. They thought the Messiah would be powerful, a great leader, the promised saviour, the new King of Israel. But this king, Jesus, came humbly, almost a foolish figure, riding an ass, the lowest beast of burden. This was the

King of the poor and lowly, who showed a new way to be great. The people cried "Hosanna!" and carpeted the road with their cloaks and palm branches. Our Palm Sunday worship begins outside in the Millennium Garden: bearing our palm crosses, we walk together humbly, simply, boldly through the churchyard into church. There, we hear the Passion Gospel, the story of Jesus and begin our journey to the cross and the empty tomb.



## *Reading*

Luke 19 28-40

## *Prayer*

Humble Saviour, gentle King,  
you come to set us free from all that oppresses us,  
weighs us down and burdens our living.  
You come to give us hope that life can be different.  
We share your hope for a world of peace and equity, where all are free.  
Give us courage to praise your name,  
Hosanna in the highest. **Amen.**

## *Services*

8.00am Early Eucharist (BCP) St Andrew's    Breakfast at 9am onwards

10.00am St Mary's Sheriffhales

10.20am St Andrew's Shifnal

Procession with Palms from the Millennium Garden

10.30am Palm Sunday Communion and Young Church

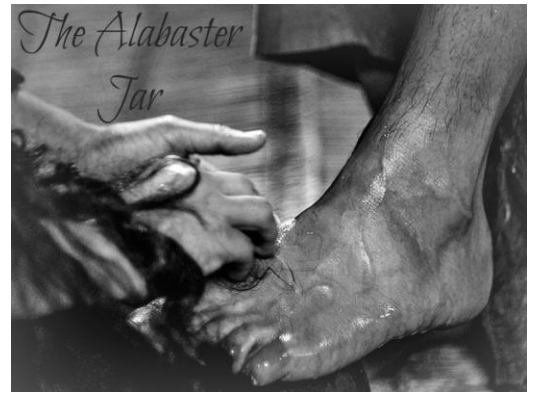
11.00am St Bartholomew's Tong

6.00pm Stations of the Cross St Andrew's Shifnal

**Action** – take a palm cross to give to someone as a gift

# Holy Monday

When Jesus entered Jerusalem he went to the home of his friend Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary. He knew he was walking into danger, into the centre of Roman control, into the web of the High Priest and Temple authorities, into the hands of King Herod. But



still he came. And it was natural to seek out the solace of friends, the comfort of companionship. Lazarus asked him to supper and, during the meal, Mary took a flask of costly nard perfume and poured it over his feet, wiping them dry with her hair. It was an outrageous act, so costly and, in Judas' eyes, so wasteful. Judas knew the cost of it, but not the value: his was a world of numbers and calculations. Mary's was an act of overflowing love and gratitude. When we are faced with a world that knows the cost of everything but the value of nothing, this encounter can give us hope, hope that in God's economy it will be things like friendship, hospitality, generosity, care and gratitude that win through.

## *Reading*

John 12 1-11

## *Prayer*

Generous God, you call us into relationship,  
into the knockabout world of belonging,  
of knowing and being known.

Thank you for the gift of friendship and family,  
places we can be our true selves.

Help us to find our hope not in the world of getting and gaining  
but in the values of generosity, hospitality and sharing.

May our prayer today be an outpouring of gratitude,  
like costly perfume. **Amen.**

## *Service at St Andrew's*

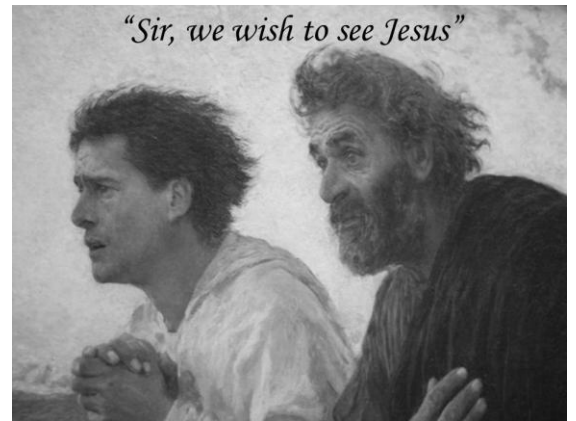
7.30pm Taizé Service

## *Reflection*

What are we most grateful for in our lives? How can we express that gratitude?

# Holy Tuesday

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” It wasn’t just the Jewish people who looked to Jesus in hope. Some Greeks had also come up to the festival and had heard about this new teacher and approached Philip. This audacious, wild, bright hope was infectious, and meant not just for some but for



all. The Jewish world view was still very much about “them and us”, outsiders and insiders, the children of Israel and the gentiles. But this was a hope for the whole world, and Jesus had pointed to that through so many of his parables and his miracles, where the outsider, the Samaritan, the Syrophenician woman, even the Roman Centurion were all included in God’s overflowing grace. But hope like grace can be costly; and for Jesus it would lead him to the way of the cross, suffering and laying down his life for us. “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains a single grain but if it dies it bears much fruit.” Sharing our faith with someone can feel embarrassing or fearful: what if they ridicule or reject us? But we have been entrusted with this wild, bright hope that we can’t keep to ourselves!

## *Reading*

John 12 20-36

## *Prayer*

God of Jew and Gentile, of every people and nation, whose hope is for a world set free of prejudice, give us grace to see other people through your eyes, not as insiders and outsiders, worthy and unworthy, but as children of the same heavenly Father.

Help us to build bridges of understanding and acceptance, of hope and new possibility, that together we may all see Jesus. **Amen.**

## *Service in St Andrew’s*

7.30pm HeartSpace Praise and Worship – come for a cuppa from 7pm

## *Reflection*

Who was part of your journey in coming to see Jesus? Who dared to share their faith with you? Who might we be able to share our faith with?

# Holy Wednesday

It is hard to remain open and trusting and hopeful when you have been betrayed. We know this both in our own lives and in the life of our church family. Our first instinct is to batten down the hatches, lock the doors of our heart, and protect ourselves from being hurt again. Jesus had to face so many betrayals. Judas, plotting with the scribes for thirty pieces of silver; the disciples running away when he was arrested; Peter denying that he even knew Jesus; and the crowd who had welcomed him turning their cry to “Crucify!”. But Jesus’ response was never to harden his heart: he always opened his heart to forgive and to trust again. Peter once asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive? As many as seven times?": Jesus shocked him with his reply “Not seven, but seventy times seven times”. We all betray, we all cause hurt, we all get it wrong sometimes; and when we do, we all need that same generous forgiveness. It’s the only hope we have! So when we are hurt, may we find the grace to work through the hurt and to trust and to be open and to hope again.



## *Reading*

John 13 21-32

## *Prayer*

Forgiving God,  
when we have betrayed,  
help us to acknowledge the harm we have done,  
face the consequences, and seek to make amends.  
When we have been betrayed,  
help us not to harden our hearts but to dare to trust again.  
Give us grace to forgive as we have been forgiven  
and to take hold of your hope of reconciliation and peace. **Amen.**

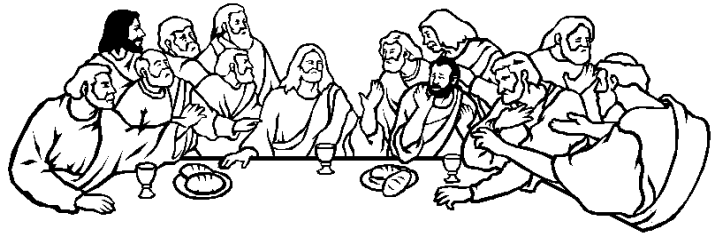
## *Service in St Andrew's*

7.30pm     Service led by Open Door

*Reflection* In our own lives, where do we need to ask for God's grace in the path through betrayal to forgiveness? If we have hardened our hearts, can we dare to unlearn distrust and to hope again?



# Maundy Thursday



The Passover was a promise of great hope to the people of Israel, it represented their freedom from slavery in Egypt. Jesus spent his last evening of freedom with his closest disciples and shared the festival with them. But Jesus did something very special, he reinterpreted the Passover: it became the Last Supper, the Eucharist. He began by washing his friends' feet, showing them how to serve. He went on to break bread and shared wine and asked them to remember him. We are focusing on becoming "humbler, simpler, and bolder" in our faith and life as a church and as individuals. In this spirit, today we break bread as he asked us to, in the mystery of the Eucharist, remembering him, sharing his life. We share in his betrayal and desolation as we strip the altars and the church, leaving it empty and bare. Finally, share in the waiting, we keep vigil: we watch and pray with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

## *Reading*

John 13 1-17, 31b-35

## *Prayer*

Christ Jesus, you emptied yourself, taking the form of a servant.  
May we kneel and serve as you have served us,  
feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, supporting all in need.  
May we break bread together in your name and know your presence,  
reaching out to include all who have been excluded.  
May we carry the torch of your wild bright hope,  
through the darkness of the night,  
through the times of struggle and suffering,  
to find you who call us through death to life. **Amen.**

## *Services*

10.00am Holy Communion  
11.00am Lichfield Cathedral Chrism Eucharist  
7.30pm Foot washing, Last Supper, stripping of the church,  
and vigil to midnight.

## *Reflection*

Are we really hungry for what God offers us?

# Good Friday

There seems to be nothing hopeful about Good Friday. A good man who has done nothing wrong is arrested on trumped up charges, is tried by corrupt and weak officials, and is tortured and put to death by an oppressive and cruel occupying army. The scene is dominated by Caiaphas, the High Priest, seeking to protect his monopoly on faith; Herod the puppet king, seeking to put down any rival to his position; and Pilate the Roman Governor, wanting a quiet life, and not caring about truth or justice. The voices that prevail are the voices of the crowd, of populism, easily riled, easily swayed, crying “Hosanna!” one day and “Crucify!” the next. How can we hope in such a world as this?



Good Friday seems to speak of a loss of hope, and the triumph of hopelessness. It looks like the end. And yet it turns out to be just the beginning. At the end of the day, two figures emerge, having found their courage. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus choose to reveal themselves, to do the right thing, to give his body a decent burial. A spark of humanity on a dark day.

## *Reading*

John 18 1-end chapter 19

## *Prayer*

God of hope, when all is dark,  
when we are feeling overwhelmed  
by the agony of the world, by the suffering of our friends,  
by the struggles we each face,  
stay with us through the darkness and bring us safely to the new day,  
as we await the promise of new life. **Amen.**

## *Services*

10.30am            Messy Church  
2.00-3.00pm      Service of the Last Hour (Tong and Shifnal)

## *Reflection*

What darkness are each of us facing today? Where do we feel hopeless or overwhelmed. Is there a spark of hope or humanity, even in the darkness?

# Holy Saturday

Today we stand with Mary Magdalen, with Joseph of Arimathea, and with all the disciples who have watched Jesus die. Like them, we come in shock and sorrow, in aching loss and grief, knowing that we are powerless in the face of death. All we can do is watch and wait, praying for the dawning of a new day. Unlike Mary Magdalen, Joseph of Arimathea and the disciples, we know the story moves forwards into the new light of Easter Day, we know the promise of resurrection; but sometimes in grief it is hard to reach that place. It is a long journey, and we can only plod on through the “valley of the shadow of death”, holding the hope that this is not the end of the story.



## *Reading*

Psalm 130

## *Prayer*

In the darkness of the night, in the depths of our sorrow,  
when the worst has happened,

**Stay with us Lord Jesus.**

When love has been killed, when hope has been trampled,  
when joy has been extinguished,

**Stay with us Lord Jesus.**

When nothing can be done, when we are powerless to change events,  
when all has been lost,

**Stay with us Lord Jesus.**

As we wait with you, hold us steady in this place of pain:

**Stay with us Lord Jesus.**

## *Service at St Andrew's*

7.30pm The Easter Mysteries

Remembering God's Promises, Service of light, Renewing our baptismal vows.

## *Reflection*

What is God saying to us in the emptiness of today, between death and life?  
What hopes in us have been dashed? What disappointments have we known?  
What new possibilities might we recognise as new shoots of resurrection life?

# Easter Day

To every human tyrant and dictator, to every war monger and oppressor, today is a fearful day. To every religious bigot and extremist, to every fundamentalist, today is a fearful day.

We come to celebrate the liberation of

the human spirit! We come to celebrate the triumph of love over hate, the triumph of life over death, the triumph of good over evil. For today the power of the cross is broken, the power of fear and despair is defeated. Because of today we can dare to hope, we can dare to believe. Jesus, who was killed on the cross, is risen. Jesus, who was laid in a tomb, is alive. Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!



## *Reading*

Luke 24 1-12

## *Prayer*

Risen Lord Jesus,

bring your resurrection life to all that is dead in us and in our world,

bring your living hope to all that despairs,

bring your risen joy to all that is sorrowful,

bring your love to transform our living.

May our lives touch all those we meet,

so that all your children may come to know you

to be their life, joy, hope and love. **Amen.**

## *Services*

8.00am Holy Eucharist St Andrew's

10.00am Family Communion for Easter Sheriffhales

10.30am Outdoor Family Eucharist and Young Church St Andrew's

11.00am Easter Eucharist at Tong

## *Reflection*

What stones need to be rolled away for us to live? What in us feels dead and buried and needs to be raised to life? Our relationships? Our imagination, our creativity, our hope? What new possibility is God offering to us today?