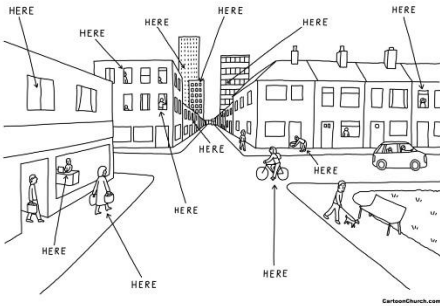




## **St Paul's Egham Hythe, Thorpe Road TW18 3HJ**

*"We are a diverse community of people who receive God's love and seek to show, share and tell of that love to everyone."*

### **WHERE THE CHURCH IS**



**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020**

**Mothering Sunday**

**There are no Services today.**

**Please pray where you are.**

Public worship and regular activities in the church and hall are suspended but that doesn't stop us from praying, and serving our community, joined by the Holy Spirit wherever we are. Rosie

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>. Do pray with us from home and join the churches in making this a day of prayer for our nation and world.** The clergy will be praying the Communion service at 10am on all our behalf, so pause to pray wherever you are at that time. We're invited to light a candle in our window at **7pm** on 22<sup>nd</sup> and pray with Churches Together. The BBC will be broadcasting special services on TV and radio. See inside this sheet for a reflection about Noah from Nikki.



**Private Prayer in Church** – we're hoping to have the church open from 10-12 on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and 10.30-11.30 on Sundays for personal prayer. Please observe the required social distancing, and hygiene protocols, and don't come if you are unwell.

**Keeping in touch** - We'll be producing a copy of this sheet each week which will be posted on the website with other resources. If you have internet access and can download and deliver paper copies of this sheet each week to neighbours unable to make use of the technology that will be really helpful. Please make use of our social media, and telephone (details on the back).

**Caring for one another** Please continue to look out for your neighbours and one another. Many of you already have networks in and out of the church family that will be vital for emotional, spiritual and practical support. It would help to tell us what's happening so we can see who need a buddy.

## Reflection for the week. Noah.

Genesis Chapter 6 verse 9 – Chapter 9 verse 17.

Godly Play: <https://youtu.be/2dc7DLOJI4E>

Beginners Bible: <https://youtu.be/onnEaINBaGg>



*Some encouragement from the story of Noah....*

I would like to start by telling you that you are not alone, you may be in isolation, like us. God is with you, God's Holy Spirit is with you.

I am reminded of the balloon from the All Age service last month. First we blew up a balloon with all our worry and anxiety and then let it go - all that worry and anxiety zipped the balloon here and there without purpose. Then we imagined filling the balloon with God's love tying the Holy Spirit at the end. No longer did the anxiety send the balloon zipping everywhere without purpose. The balloon was round and large and full and bouncy! Just like a balloon should be.

There are so many messages of hope and love for us in the story of Noah. God sees that Noah is a good and faithful man. God wants to save him, his family and the creatures of the earth. God tells Noah what to do; he has to build an ark, a place of safety. The instructions are specific: take what you need; bring the animals; exact details of the boat he is to build are given. Noah was obedient to God.

Then they have the time of preparation, the boat is built. I measured the boundary of St Paul's church grounds to picture the scale! The church grounds are 68m x 48m. The ark was 133m x 22m so very similar in overall size, but just in a different shape. The ark had 3 floors. It was huge.

After forty days and forty nights of rain, even the tallest mountains were covered with water. When they looked from the window all they could see was water. They were on the water for 300 days! Yet in the midst of all this there is an amazing promise; "God remembered Noah and his family and all the creatures on the ark."

For the last 6 weeks or so of their journey, they all wait in the ark with the roof off, for the land to finish drying. They can smell the earth, they can see

the earth, but they have to be patient. Can you imagine their excitement after a year on the ark? God invites everyone out of the ark. What an amazing invitation. Were they cautious at first or did they all come out in a huge surge of humanity?

I have seen this week in the news people who are living in isolation singing and talking with each other from their balconies. The streets are empty, yet there is still life. Everyone is waiting... What will we have found after our periods of isolation? Will the world have been washed clean? Will we realise how we can care for our broken world and for each other? Will this Global crisis draw us together to care for one another, and draw us towards God, or will we allow the fear to rip us apart? I hope and pray that we are drawn together.

When Noah, his family and the creatures leave the ark they enter into a covenant with God, a Covenant is a solemn promise made by the spilling of blood. When Jesus came he created a new covenant so that we his children could have full Covenant with God. But here after the Great Flood is the first Covenant that God makes with humanity. Noah makes an altar and together they worship God. God promises that the earth will never be completely flooded by water again. The rainbow is a sign of that covenant between God and all the creatures of the earth.

Last week as I was walking home with my children we saw a double rainbow over Staines, and we spoke together of God's promise to us. God will hold us close through the storms and floods of this coronavirus; God will grow us and take us deeper in our relationship with him.

If you have to isolate yourself or are already in isolation hold fast to the blessings and promises that we can learn from Noah's story. Remember the Covenants that God made to us through both Noah and Jesus' death on the cross.

*Nikki*

**Activities with children:** Try finding pairs of things around the house and make a home for them. Paint a rainbow and put it in your window for other children to see – then try and spot them if you are able to go out for a walk.

## We pray

**In our cycle of praying for roads in the parish, today we pray for those living in:** Glebe Road, Goring Road, Harcourt Close and Holbrook Meadow

**For those who are sick or needing our prayers including:** Ria, Edna K, Laura, Sammy, Sarah, Kevin T, Stamford, Peter, Bill, Marylin, Colin and Tom P.

**For those who have died** including Terry Worrell, and at their year's mind Alice Turner, Joan Burley, William Corbett, Myrtle Martin, Alan Forey, Sue Gilbert and Stanley Gardiner.

**For our world,** and our local community as we respond to these times.

**Collect for Mothering Sunday:** God of love, passionate and strong, tender and careful: watch over us and hold us all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**A Prayer from the World Council of Churches:** God of life, you have promised to be with us every day, also in difficult days, like in times like these. Give us clarity in our minds, strength in our work and discernment, rest as we sleep, peace in our minds. Be with those who need help more than we do ourselves help us to see what we can offer from your love. Amen.

**Volunteering** One of the best ways we can offer support is to work with our near neighbours. Please let us know what's working in your street or if you can buddy someone from church. Runnymede are organising the care for our most vulnerable, please register with Voluntary Support North Surrey if you can help. <https://voluntarysupport.org.uk/register-volunteer/>

**Foodbank** – please continue to donate food or toiletries – the church is open on Wed and Sat mornings to drop off items for collection.

**Please keep in touch!**

**[www.speh.org.uk](http://www.speh.org.uk)**

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