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Registered Charity no: 1128508



### Welcome to The Link Plus!

This is our new 'noticeboard' for members and friends of St. John's Church, Hillingdon. Here we will share information and news during this time of not being able to hold services in church during the coronavirus pandemic. It's called 'The Link Plus' because it will have extra information and notices 'above' the normal service info and readings that we usually published in our weekly notice sheet 'The Link'.

### In this issue:

- Join in the Sunday Service with Archbishop Justin!
- National Call to Prayer
- Light a candle 7pm on Sunday
- Prayers and Reading
- What about our Annual Meeting?
- Mother's Day or Mothering Sunday?
- Tale of two trees!
- Services each week on website

### Message from Alan

It almost goes without saying that this is an extremely difficult time for us all internationally, nationally and locally.

Thank you for what you are doing in prayer and in practical ways for others who need our help and support at this time, especially those who are unable to easily get their own shopping or who need pastoral support and a bit of company over the phone or via social media.

Let us all encourage one another to follow all the guidelines and follow the advice which is to protect us all, to help stop the spread of the virus and to help reduce as much as we can the workload of the NHS and the loss of life.



## No Sunday Services or Events

We are not able to hold any Sunday services or mid-week events and meetings at this time.

## Private Prayer in Church

The church will be open 7 days a week for personal and private prayer for individuals only. This opportunity is not open to those who are over 70 or anyone of any age who has underlying health issues.

It is good to have the church open for the occasional individual going through a difficult time and who lives locally and can easily walk to St. John's. We would encourage you to pray at home and, if you live at a distance, there is likely to be a church open near you if you desperately need one. If you do come into church and there is someone else also praying, please maintain a good distance between you. Sorry, no catering or coffee/tea making facilities are available and the café area is closed.

## Special Mothering Sunday Service with Archbishop Justin Welby

The service will be broadcast on **BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship at 0810** and all local radio stations in England at **8am** and will premier **online at 9am** this Sunday. Click on one of the links below (or type the link into 'Google') for the live link at 9am and/or to get the printed order of service which you can follow during the video or radio broadcast.

St. John's Website

<https://stjohnshillingdon.org.uk/>

Church of England link

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/online-church>

## Light a candle of hope:

### National call to prayer in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic

This Mothering Sunday churches are being called to a National Day of Prayer. At such a time as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving heavenly Father and the future that he holds.

**At 7pm this Sunday, light a candle in the windows of your homes** as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer. We have the

## "Tony Sheffield" Tree

The tree that was planted in special memory to the much loved Tony Sheffield is in full bloom!



## Services each week on website

We are working at putting some form of service on our website for Sunday 22nd, and for Sundays thereafter.

This will initially be the service words of our 10-11am service with prayers and a link to a song. Look out for or the '10am Service' tab on our website which is likely be up by late this Saturday evening (21st March).

Thereafter each week we are looking to have service words, song links, prayers and a video talk on the reading or a thought for the day.

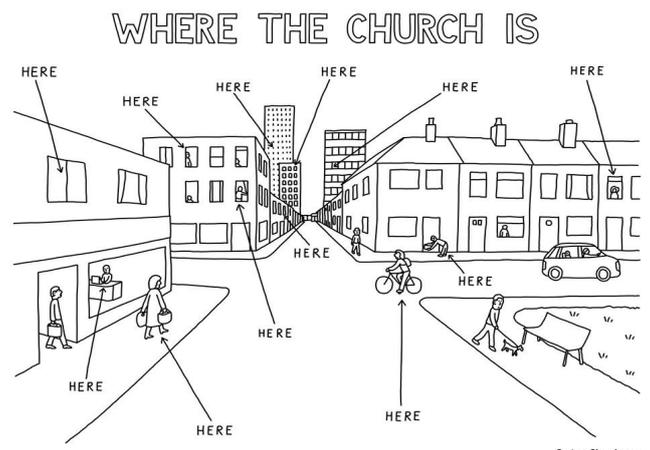
Watch this space and the website!

<https://stjohnshillingdon.org.uk/>

## Clocks Spring Forward

Next Sunday 29th March the hour changes and goes forward.

It's nearly time for Summer time !



on Easter Monday or Shrove Tuesday or on Mothering Sunday. I took part in this tradition in my sending church which is St. Stephen's Church, Worcester. For this the congregation holds hands in a circle facing the church. There might be hymns and a mini-service. People may move in to 'hug' the church three times. Christians adopted this tradition to show their love for their Mother church and the surrounding people.

Mother's Day in the United States began in the early 20th century due to the influence of Anna Jarvis. It is celebrated in the 2nd Sunday of May.

I prefer the roots and history of what we have here in the UK and thus 4th Sunday in March is better than 2nd Sunday in March in my books! Also, for the 4th Sunday in Lent, for me 'Mothering Sunday' is a much better name. There are other theological reasons for this preference too. What do you think? *Alan*

### **Tale of Two trees!**

#### **Cedar Tree**

Our cedar tree that overlooks the A4020 has been pruned! We have now had the work done and it is now safe for the traffic to pass under the tree! Thank you to everyone who has donated towards the cost of this.



great privilege and freedom to be able to call upon God, wherever we are, individually and corporately, for healing in our country. We would pray for all in leadership at this time, making decisions about the containment of the Covid-19 virus, for those working in health and social care, and especially for the most vulnerable, whether elderly or those with underlying health conditions.

There are already stories being told of wonderful acts of kindness across neighbourhoods. Alongside your prayers, take the opportunity to telephone or email someone who is isolated or offer to deliver shopping for an elderly neighbour. We may not be able to touch physically but we can make connections in so many other ways. In the meantime, **do please attend to all the government health advice.**

This call to prayer and action comes on Mothering Sunday, a time of thankfulness, remembering especially mothers who have served us, often in very costly ways. It is also a very mixed day for many. For some the remembrance is painful and for others Mothering Sunday is a reminder of disappointment or loss.

In many ways, this period under the shadow of the coronavirus will be prompting similarly diverse reactions and so it seems especially appropriate that the call to prayer is made this Sunday. At this time of uncertainty join in with the National Day of Prayer, lighting a candle of hope.

### **Prayers**

Please pray for those infected by the Coronavirus and for those who are in isolation or quarantine. Pray for health workers and all those seeing to the needs of those being kept separate.

### **Prayers about the Outbreak**

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and  
fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate  
us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen.

### **Prayers for those who are ill**

Merciful God,  
we entrust to your tender care  
those who are ill or in pain,  
knowing that whenever danger threatens  
your everlasting arms are there to  
hold them safe.

Comfort and heal them,;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### **For hospital staff and medical researchers**

Gracious God,  
give skill, sympathy and resilience  
to all who are caring for the sick,  
and your wisdom to those  
searching for a cure.  
Strengthen them with your Spirit,  
that through their work many will be  
restored to health;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

For more prayer resources click on the link  
below (or type the link into 'Google' ).

<https://stjohnshillingdon.org.uk/prayers/>

### **Reading for Sunday 22nd March Mothering Sunday Mark 1:29-34 Jesus heals many**

<sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.

<sup>30</sup> Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

<sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door,

<sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

### **What's happening about our AGM?**

Obviously under the present circumstances we are not able to go ahead with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to elect our Churchwardens and PCC members.

The Bishop of London, Bishop Sarah, has written to say that the deadline for holding church annual meetings has been extended

until 31 October 2020. Our current churchwardens and PCC members can therefore continue as our representatives.

We will decide a date for the AGM in a few months' time once the overall picture in our nation is clearer.



### **Is it Mothering Sunday or Mothers' Day?**

In the 16th century people would return to their 'mother church' which would be their local parish church or the nearest cathedral. Servants were also given the day off to visit their mother church. Entire families were able to gather together, since on other days they had to work.

The children often picked wildflowers along the way to place in the church or to give to their mothers. This evolved into the Mothering Sunday secular tradition of giving gifts to mothers.

In 1914, the English lady Constance Penswick-Smith was inspired by Anna Jarvis's efforts in the United States and she wrote a book in 1921 which encouraged the revival of this tradition/festival here.

The commercial opportunity was not to be missed of course by those wanting to make money, and it was rigorously promoted here and by the 1950s it was celebrated across all the UK.

People in Ireland and the UK celebrate Mothering Sunday on the fourth Sunday in Lent. Secularly it has come to be known as 'Mother's Day'. 'Mothering Sunday' is a much better title in my opinion, as it better represents the original tradition and meaning.

Some churches have the tradition of 'clipping' the church and they either do this