

## Introduction to the Readings

**Ezekiel 37:1-14** The Book of Ezekiel was so compellingly imaginative that in strict Jewish circles young people were not permitted to read it alone. The haunting passage comes from a long section expressing hope for a new age initiated by God. It was probably written soon after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in 586 BC. The prophet urged his devastated nation to look beyond that catastrophe to a future that vindicated God's justice and promised the restoration of the nation by the action of God's Spirit.

**Romans 8:6-11** Paul discusses two levels of existence: The physical, which will end when our physical resources are exhausted; and the spiritual level with the on-going assurance of life beyond death. Life focused only in this world is the way to the death that is ultimately separation from God. The spirit filled life is full of energy and intimacy with God now and forever.

**John 11:1-45** The story of the raising of Lazarus is the sixth of seven signs John gives to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through faith in him believers receive eternal life. Even as the event shows Jesus' divine power over death itself, it also shows him as a wonderfully sensitive human being. His love for Lazarus is palpable. Martha's and Mary's accusation that Jesus' presence would have averted Lazarus' death tells how real their friendship was. So also did Jesus' tears. This story is also John's reflection on the significance of the resurrection. Because Jesus is fully human and fully divine, life and death are his gifts to give.

*John Shearman*

### ***"When I Needed a Neighbour Were You There?"***

Jesus broke down barriers and connected us to one another. This Lent is a time for us to walk with our brothers and sisters across the globe. Here in the UK many communities and churches are welcoming those seeking refuge, and Christian Aid works throughout the world, answering the challenge "*Were you there?*" We each need to answer this challenge, not in words, but through our actions, living out the love God desires for us all.

*"When I Needed a Healer, Were You There?"*

In Balaka, Malawi, Lita Daudi used to travel 15km to her ante-natal clinic. She often had to walk. Our partner, FOCUS, has been working with women and men from Balaka to decide how to improve maternal healthcare. Now the men are more aware of their supporting role and the women are more confident in asking for better services in their village. Together they are ensuring that families are starting out in the best of health.

This week we are challenged to donate 30p to *Christian Aid* for each person who will be there for us when we need it most.



*Christian Love in Action*

**2nd April 2017**

Fifth Sunday of Lent

**Welcome to Worship**

9.30am  
11.00am  
6.30pm

**Holy Communion**, St Peter's, Thornbury  
**Iona Hoy Communion**, St Mary's, Black Torrington  
**Taize Service**, All Saints, Bradford



### **Readings**

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Romans 8: 6-11

John 11: 1-45

### **Collect**

Gracious Father,  
you gave up your Son out of love for the world:  
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,  
that we may know eternal peace  
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

"I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die."

John 11: 25,26

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**PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

**The Mission Community;** Revd Jane Lucas and the Ashwater Benefice;  
Revd Chris Penn and Pancrasweek Church



**Holy Cross Electoral Roll:** Margaret Baker, Gillian Bowden, Mary Dayman,  
Jan Luckhurst, Bob Luckhurst

**Those who are ill:** Jenny Searle, Peter Evans, Dorothy Chandler, Avis Radford,  
Norman Lock, Lorna Harris, Renate Egelstaff, Maurice and Joan Thomas,  
Penny Seymour-Lee as she moves to a new home in Bideford

**Youth Worker, Jonathan Schnarr** and all the students he has engaged with in  
his time at Holsworthy

**The Benefice Primary Schools** and all staff, children and helpers as they begin  
their Easter break, thinking especially of those facing redundancy at this time.

**A Prayer for All Suffering from Famine and Oppression**

The fields are empty – the sowers have fled,  
the schools are empty – the children are taken;  
the clinics are empty – there is no medicine.  
The camps are full - full of the homeless, the hungry, the desperate;  
full of the heart-sore, the violated, the traumatised.  
Lord, drive fear and despair from the full places,  
fill the empty places with hope for the future.  
Amen.

*Christian Aid*

**Benefice Diary for April**

Mon 3rd	8.00am	<b>Morning Prayer</b> , St Mary's, Black Torrington
Tues 4th	8.00am	<b>Prayer Breakfast</b> , The Rectory
	2.00pm	<b>Lent Group</b> , Priestacott Barn, Bradford
Wed 5th	8.00am	<b>Morning Prayer</b> , St Mary's, Black Torrington
	7.30pm	<b>Lent Group</b> , The Rectory, Black Torrington
Thurs 6th	8.15am	<b>Morning and Silent Prayer</b> ,
	9.00am	<b>Iona Holy Communion</b> , All Saints, Bradford
Sat 8th	10.00am	<b>Benefice Saturday Church</b> followed by
	11.15am	<b>Iona Holy Communion</b> , Village Hall, Bradford
	7.00pm	<b>Compline</b> , St Mary's, Black Torrington
Sun 9th	11.00am	<b>Palm Sunday Benefice Family Holy Communion</b> , St Mary's, Black Torrington

**A Prayer for Justice**

Holy God, you cast down the mighty and lift up the lowly,  
transforming the world into your kingdom.  
Help us, your disciples, to continue to challenge injustice  
and so be your hands, your feet, your voice today.  
Amen

**Holy Week and Easter Services**

Sun 9th	11.00am	<b>Palm Sunday Benefice Family Holy Communion</b> , St Mary's, Black Torrington
Mon 10th	6.00pm	<b>Holy Communion and Stations of the Cross</b> , Holy Cross, Highampton
Tues 11th	6.00pm	<b>Holy Communion and Stations of the Cross</b> , St Peter's, Thornbury
Wed 12th	6.00pm	<b>Holy Communion and Stations of the Cross</b> , All Saints', Bradford
Thurs 13th	7.00pm	<b>Maunder Thursday Holy Communion</b> St Mary's, Black Torrington
Fri 14th	10.00am	<b>Story Times and Hot Cross Buns</b> , Bradford Village Hall
	12.00pm 2.00pm	<b>Good Friday Service</b> , St Peter's, Thornbury <b>Good Friday Service</b> , Holy Cross, Highampton
Sat 15th	8.00pm	<b>Easter Eve Service of Light Holy Communion</b> St Peter's, Thornbury
Sun 16th	6.00am	<b>Dawn Easter Holy Communion</b> with bring and share breakfast, All Saints', Bradford
	9.30am	<b>Easter Day Holy Communion</b> , All Saints', Bradford
	11.00am	<b>Easter Day Holy Communion</b> , St Mary's, Black Torrington

**To Think About**

*Jesus does not show us a path around life,  
but rather the way through life,  
which means not substitution for our suffering,  
but saving companionship.*

*Metropolitan Kallistos Ware*



**Story Time and Hot Cross Buns!**

Good Friday (14th April) at 10.00am  
In Bradford Village Hall.  
Everyone welcome

