



# HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2025



Holy Week is a journey into the depths of the love of God and this year we are offering a traditional pattern of services. *Take up thy cross the Saviour said, if thou wouldst my disciple be.*

For some, Good Friday is just one more shopping day with nothing 'good' about it. Others hurry past it in an effort to reach Easter Day. But in truth there are no short-cuts to resurrection. The route is always via Gethsemane and Golgotha. But by God's grace, when we dare to walk with Jesus

this week, we find ourselves inwardly transformed.

*Nails were not enough to hold God-and-man nailed and fastened to the cross, had not love held him there.*

The words of St Catherine of Siena speak of the amazing love of God that we encounter in Christ crucified. It is why the observance of Holy Week is such a powerful experience.

**We invite you to join as many of the services as you can  
and be renewed in your discipleship.**

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## **13<sup>th</sup> April – PALM SUNDAY**

### ***The Entry into Jerusalem***

**9.30am – Sung Eucharist**

We commemorate Our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. For those who would like and are able, we gather at the gates to the churchyard and process into church. During the service the Passion according to St Luke will be read dramatically and we reflect on the events that led to Jesus's trial and crucifixion.

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## **HOLY MONDAY, TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY**

### ***The Way of the Cross***

**6.00pm – Compline**

Each evening this week will be Compline, the last service of the monastic day, followed by a short devotional address on a different aspect of the Passion. The service will last approximately 30 minutes:

Monday	The Anointing	John 12.1-8
Tuesday	The Denial	John 13.33-38
Wednesday	Why is this Night Different?	Luke 22.7-13

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## **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

### ***The Eucharist of the Last Supper***

**7.30pm**

The word *maundy* derives from the opening words of a Latin anthem, often sung at this service: *A new commandment I give you*. According to St John, these words were spoken by Jesus to his disciples as they shared what proved to be his last supper. The commandment to *love as I have loved you* lies at the core of our discipleship. John tells us that at the end of supper, Jesus girded himself with a towel and, taking the role of the house-slave, washed his disciples' feet. It was a deliberate act that cemented Christ's self-giving love into their memories. Jesus was giving them and us an example of service.

At the end of this special Eucharist, the clergy take the consecrated elements to the *Altar of Repose*, dressed with greenery and symbolic of the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus went to pray with his disciples. The lights of the church are gradually dimmed and, while the choir sings one of the psalms of lament, the sanctuary is stripped, echoing the desolation that came upon Christ as he confronted his imminent death.

For those who wish, a vigil of prayer now begins, lasting until 10:00 p.m., mindful of Christ's plea to his disciples: 'Watch and pray with me.' People can stay as long as they feel able. The watch ends with the reading of Christ's betrayal by Judas.

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## **GOOD FRIDAY**

### ***The Way to the Cross: A Service for Children and Families***

**10.00 am**

A morning to remember as we stage an improvised passion play, 'The Way to the Cross.' We follow the narrators and our young actors as they portray the last week of Christ's life. A touch of drama and some fun in this retelling of the Holy Week story. "This is our God, the Servant King; he calls us now to follow him."

### ***The Last Hour***

**2.00pm**

The central focus of any service on Good Friday is the cross and, by custom, the Passion according to St John is read. Then, as a wooden cross is carried into church, we are confronted with its stark reality. The so-called *solemn intercessions* which follow include some of the most ancient Christian prayers that have come down to us. Like Mary and the beloved disciple, we find ourselves standing at the foot of the cross in sorrow and penitence.

There is no celebration of the Eucharist today but, for those who wish, there is an opportunity to receive holy communion from the sacrament consecrated on Maundy Thursday and placed on the Altar of Repose. We do so mindful of the words of St Paul: *When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.*

*Eternal God,  
in the cross of Jesus  
we see the cost of our sin  
and the depth of your love.  
In humble hope and fear  
may we place at his feet  
all that we have and all that we are,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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## **HOLY SATURDAY**

### ***Reflection***

**4.00pm**

Holy Saturday, Easter Eve is a day of waiting. It is the silence between the shout of “Crucify” and the song of “Alleluia”. The silence is as significant as the song. The waiting has been a feature of the whole story of passion, and we must not be afraid of the long, unspectacular waiting of which much of life is made up. We mustn't be too urgent for the coming of every Easter in our lives, for we can learn from the silence before the first alleluia bursts in.

## **EASTER DAY**

***Jesus Christ is risen today***

**8.00am Eucharist**

**9.30am Sung Eucharist**

In early centuries, Baptism and Easter were intimately linked. This was the only time in the year when baptisms were regularly administered. People prepared for their baptism during Lent and at Easter the whole Church celebrated the victory of Christ. As St Augustine says, *We are an Easter people and alleluia is our song.*

The Gospel reading is of the women going early to the tomb as dawn was breaking, there to find it mysteriously empty and famously Mary Magdalene mistakes the risen Christ for the gardener. In today's service the resurrection of Jesus is proclaimed in both spoken word and dramatic ceremony. The great Easter candle is lit, symbolising Christ, the light of the world, risen from the darkness of the grave. Traditionally it is marked with the cross, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, a reminder that Christ is the beginning and end of all things; the numerals of the current year, a reminder that Jesus, the Lord of the ages, is present here and now; and finally five grains of incense made in the shape of 'nails', symbolising the wounds of Christ.

*God of glory,  
by the raising of your Son  
you have broken the chains of death and hell; fill your Church with faith  
and hope;  
for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open  
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Hope is born when we see the world through the lens of Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord. May he renew us with his grace this Holy Week and Easter that we may be bearers of God's hope and joy to the people of Bradford-on-Avon and its surrounding communities.