A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Colossians 3.1–4

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.” This is my message for you.’ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.’

Matthew 28.1–10
FOR OUR PRAYERS
Those who are ill or in need:
Michael Green; Jenny Smith; Sarah Pitman;
Hilary Brazier; Judith Sanson; Joyce Smith;
Sachin Shah; Fr Michael Shrewsbury.
Pray also for those who have the COVID-19
virus and those who are working to treat them,
particularly those members of Christ Church
who work for the NHS.

Those who have died, particularly those who
have died unexpectedly of this virus.

Those whose anniversary of death falls
this week: Ciora Smith (2019)

Link Parish of St Francis of Assisi, Barham
Green, Zimbabwe

NEXT SUNDAY 19 APRIL 2020
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

A story. It was around Easter time 1930 that a
Communist leader journeyed from Moscow to Kiev. His
mission was to address a huge assembly on the subject of
atheism, of not believing in God. For a solid hour he
shouted, he harangued, he threw abuse at the Christian
faith, hurling argument and ridicule, seeking to destroy
Christianity. At last he was finished and sat down,
satisfied that he had, once and for all, demolished any
sense of the people’s Christian faith. ‘Are there any
questions?’ he demanded. A solitary man arose and asked
permission to speak. He mounted the platform and moved
close to the Communist leader. The audience was
breathlessly silent as the man surveyed them, first to the
right and then to the left. At last he shouted the ancient
Easter greeting ‘Christ is risen’ – and the vast assembly
rose as one and the response came crashing like the
sound of an avalanche ‘He is risen indeed. Alleluia’.

Today it is not a Communist leader who might be
threatening the faith of Christians – but a vicious
worldwide virus. Yet, despite all our anxiety and worry at
this highly unsettling time of uncertainty and fear, those
who are Christians and those of the other world religions
are all doing their best to hold on to their faith – and in many
senses living out our faith in generous acts of kindness
and service to others. Even though we cannot
physically worship together at the moment, we are bound
by the strong if invisible thread of our faith.

Some words from Sr Edith Stein, a Carmelite Nun,
imprisoned in Westerbrook transit camp, August 1942:
“We are very calm and cheerful. Of course, so far there
has been no Communion; maybe that will come later. Now
we have a chance to experience a little how to live purely
from within”.

May this Easter see our faith strengthened and deepened
– so that, by God’s grace, we may become all the stronger
for the time when we are once more able to meet again
and to worship together and to proclaim ‘Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia’.

Let us pray:
Dear God,
Thank you for that first Easter Day.
Thank you that the stone was rolled away.
Thank you that Christ came back to stay
Starting on that first Easter Day.
Amen.

Eternal Father, look with love on your
people of Christ Church and pour
upon us the gifts of your Spirit.
Although we are apart, draw us to you
and to one another, so that by our
growing love and unity we may bring
healing and life to all. Through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Dean of Southwark has written the
following prayer which you may wish to
use:

A prayer in lockdown
The doors of the house where the
disciples had met were locked.
(John 20.19)

Ever present God,
be with us in our isolation,
be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness,
be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness,
be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is
unfamiliar,
that when the doors reopen
we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness
to an emerging world.
For Jesus’ sake.
Amen