

PALM SUNDAY

Revd. Cara Heafey, Associate Minister, Summertown URC



"Stones" by Cara Heafey - mixed media

READ: LUKE 19:28-40

"I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

REFLECT:

The Palm Sunday Story paints a picture of a noisy, jostling crowd... of people gathered with a shared purpose... of exuberance and excitement. It's a story that, on the face of it, seems very much at odds with our current situation of social distancing and isolation.

Now the streets of our city are empty. Our neighbourhoods and parks and public spaces are quiet. Our churches too. And we may feel at a loss about how to worship without our familiar patterns and buildings and the physical presence of other people.

I find myself drawn, though, to Jesus' words in verse 40. When some Pharisees tell Jesus to shut his disciples up, he replies, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

It reminds me of the stories emerging of the ways in which nature is responding to the respite from people in this quiet time. I've heard that the water has cleared in the canals of Venice; that there are fish and swans using the water-highways, and the air is cleaner. In other parts of Italy under lockdown it's reported that dolphins have been spotted swimming in the waterways, and wild boar trotting about the streets. In Wales, goats are venturing into town centres.

Perhaps our absence is giving the earth a space to sing.

Perhaps our silence will enable us to hear it.

CONNECT:

Try to find a way to connect with the natural world this week.

Open a window, or if you can, safely, get outdoors. Breathe some clean air. Feel the sun on your face. Notice the signs of Spring emerging. Listen to birdsong, or the sound of the wind in the trees.

Consider this nature's worship; the earth praising its creator. May the fellowship of trees, of birds, of sunlight, of air remind us that we're not alone.

PRAY:

- For healing for the earth
- For those who are finding social-distancing tough
- For those who were isolated even before the virus outbreak - may our experience of this time make us more aware
- For those putting themselves and their families at risk to provide healthcare and keep vital services running

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS:

Our friends at Wheatley URC have a huge archive of online sermons you can listen to, and are regularly posting new resources on their website:

www.wheatleyurc.org.uk

If you need any help, have a prayer request, or would like someone to talk to; please contact your elder or one of us:

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