

Christians are to be encouraged to make their own paper or card 'palm' crosses and display these in their windows in a national virtual church service for Palm Sunday to be broadcast by the Church of England.

The Bishop of Manchester, David Walker, will put a paper 'palm' cross in the window of his Salford home in a national service he will lead for Palm Sunday, marking the start of Holy Week and Easter.

The Bishop of Manchester sticking a Palm Sunday cross up in his window at home.

The Holy Communion service will be broadcast at 9am on [the Church of England's Facebook page](#) and [Church of England website](#), with readings from the Archdeacon of Manchester, Karen Lund and prayers by Lucy Hargraves from St Peter's Church in Bolton. All three record contributions from their own homes in keeping with the rules on physical distancing.

In his sermon, Bishop David will speak of the strength and mutual support from the crowd that he addressed in Manchester city centre following the Manchester Arena attack in 2017

At a time when gatherings are no longer permitted in order to stop the spread of coronavirus, he said support and comfort was being drawn from events such as virtual church services and campaigns such as #ClapForCarers to thank NHS staff and key workers.

"In this time of social, or more accurately physical, distancing, the ways in which we can come together matter even more," he will say in this sermon.

"It wasn't only our health workers who took strength from that recent evening when so many emerged from their front doors to offer a round of applause.

"Each might only have been able to see or hear at most a handful of others, but everyone knew that this was something huge - a mighty crowd."

The three contributors to the Palm Sunday virtual service.

Palm Sunday is the start of the most solemn week of the Christian calendar when events leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ are commemorated.

Materials and guidance to parishes and individuals have been issued by the Church of England including practical activities to do at home, suggestions for prayer and Bible study, live streaming of services and advice for dioceses and churches.

The resources being offered include a series of five podcasts to take people through Holy Week, exploring and reflecting on five of the 'Stations of the Cross' which mark Christ's journey to Crucifixion.

Read more about [how the Church of England is adapting plans for Holy Week and into Easter](#) to meet the challenges of coronavirus.

The virtual service will be the third to be broadcast on national Church of England channels since the suspension of public worship in church buildings. [Last week's broadcast by the Archbishop of York](#), Dr John Sentamu is estimated to have attracted 500,000 viewers who watched live or on playback. The national service broadcast by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which also featured on BBC Radio 4 Sunday worship and local radio stations, [attracted around five million listeners and viewers](#).

## More information

- Gatherings, whether indoors or outdoors, cannot take place at present under the Government's restrictions.
- The Church of England is advising against the distribution of palm crosses on public health grounds.
- Read about [the Church of England's first virtual service](#), led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which reached over five million on Mothering Sunday.

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