

CHRIST DIES IN WOODBRIDGE AND GREAT BEALINGS

1. Woodbridge Police and Fire Stations



Jesus is condemned to death

Read: John 19:14-16

Reflect: He has been arrested, charged, tried and sentenced. I don't much understand the reasons but there were plenty of folk shouting about his having broken the law. I do my best to keep away from the law. They seemed to want a quick trial and have done with him. There's plenty of room here to set that restless, noisy crowd up in the Car Park and put the Governor's table in the old Sale Room opposite. They could finish him quickly from the top of that tower but there's a carpenter already working on his cross. Strange that, one carpenter working to bring about the end of another.

Pray: That we may be saved from global events we can neither understand nor control. Give thanks for all our emergency services personnel and the helping hands they extend to save us.

Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.



2. Elmhurst Park



Jesus receives his Cross

Read: John 19:17

Reflect: This is normally a place of recreation, with gardens and flowers to delight the senses. There are usually couples chatting on the benches or holding hands as they stroll around the paths. On a fine day, I expect to hear laughter as groups enjoy a picnic on the grass. Not today. His presence draws many to shout and jeer and it makes others hide away. There's no way an ordinary man could lift the enormous cross they are laying on him. But it is his cross and he will have to take it up.

Pray: Give thanks for all our town's places and spaces of recreation and for the people who maintain them for our enjoyment.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**



3. Kyson Primary School



Jesus falls the first time

Read: Psalm 37:16-17

Reflect: The fences form a formidable barrier here, with stout concrete posts. Parents are sorting out burdens of buggies, book bags, kids and clothes; it can be a jumble. Yet here his load becomes heavy and I see him stumble. Where are all his friends? I saw them with palm branches proclaiming him king when he came into town but they have deserted him now. I would run from bad news and hide from another's suffering too: why get involved?

Pray: For our teachers and all who nurture our children in faith and love. For all the times we have failed to reach out and help, and for those times we now regret when we could have done more to get involved and support.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.



4. Deben View Care Facility



Jesus meets his mother

Read: Luke 2:34-5

Reflect: There's a group of women gathered, looking up at him. They seem to be talking to him and he is answering them. Must be family. Who else would want to get so close to what's happening to him? And they all seem to be crying. He has just called one of them 'mother'. She can't have imagined when he was a little baby in her arms that his life would end this way, can she?

Pray: For our families, and all whom we love but cannot visit or see at this time. For those who live alone, especially in our local care homes.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.



5. East of England Co-op Foodstore, Turban Centre



Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross.

Read: Mark 15:21

Reflect: This always feels like the centre of the town, especially on Saturdays when it is so crowded and every age group is represented. Those in charge have just pulled someone from the crowd, a big guy, looks like he works out in the gym. He has to help with the cross, taking up the strain, giving some relief. As he does it, he comes up against the other man's body, feels his breath and sweat, is spattered with his blood.

Pray: For all who carry our burdens; we ask the Lord to let us see Christ in every helping hand. For our shopkeepers keeping essential facilities open and all those making vital deliveries.

**Our Father, dwelling in the heavenly realms,
may the glory of your name
be the centre on which our lives turn.**



6. St. Mary the Virgin, Great Bealings



Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Read: I Corinthians 13:12

Reflect: A woman in the crowd has come out with a cloth or a veil to wipe the dirt and sweat from his face. That takes courage to stand apart from the masses and do something to help. It's a miracle that anyone is willing to be kind to a stranger in need. If the opportunity came up to assist another in their distress, I wonder what I would do? I think I might be too frightened to have compassion.

Pray: For all those working in the National Health Service. For all engaged in clinical testing and research. For the strangers who are there for us before we even ask.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve.



7. St Thomas of Canterbury Church



Jesus falls the second time

Read: Psalm 69:1-12

Reflect: Where the path starts to go upwards, he has fallen again into the dust on the hard ground. I heard someone once say we all end up as dust. He must be totally exhausted by now. His throat is so parched, he can't even call out. He must be tempted to just lie there, to give up, but they have forced him back on his feet. His sad path isn't over yet by any means.

Pray: For all the 'Churches Together in Woodbridge and Melton' and for their walk of witness in faith together. For grace to face up to our difficulties, asking for forgiveness when we fall or fail.

May your grace come, and may this world soon pass away.



8. Framfield Medical Centre



Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Read: Luke 23:27-8

Reflect: This a centre for healing the sick and helping those with medical conditions. The doctors inside have had to change the way they work to consultations by telephone and diagnoses by video conferencing. It must be challenging for them and their patients. We have been held up by a group of women, crying and wailing over him, mourning for him. Though he isn't yet dead, they know there is only one way this is going to end.

Pray: For our local surgeries and pharmacies in Woodbridge and in the surrounding rural areas. For District nursing staff. For Ipswich Hospital.

Lord, give me the strength to follow in your path.



9. The Salvation Army Building



Jesus falls the third time

Read: John 21:15-17

Reflect: They have pushed and dragged him through the main street to here. It looked at some points like a great open-air theatre but I don't think it is for our entertainment. That blood is real; that man is on the edge, he is dying. This place brings in a lot of people on the edge, those who need help from the pressures of this life. I heard them called the marginalised. I think it is easy to fall into the margins and be rejected. Why do we judge each other so?

Pray: That our passion for Christ is real and not for 'dramatic effect'. For those who live on the edges, all who are caught up in addiction, homelessness and crime. For prisoners, victims of abuse and refugees. For all our charities and groups working to provide relief.

Support us, O Lord, all the day long.



10. E B Button & Sons Ltd., Funeral Directors



Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Read: John 19:23-5

Reflect: This is the final indignity for this poor man, to be publicly exposed. Those garments being gambled for can't be worth anything, yet he is not to be allowed them or any comfort. We come into the world with nothing and it's certain he is going out the same way. In that building across the road, they know something about handling death with respect and dignity. I hope this man is afforded a measure of that. I hope we all are.

Pray: For all those who give care and comfort to the dying, for the staff and volunteers in the East Anglian Children's Hospices, the St. Elizabeth Hospice, and the Marie Curie and Macmillan support organisations. For funeral directors, clergy and church leaders who accompany the bereaved and all who comfort those who mourn.

Abide with me, O Lord, in my going out and my coming in.



11. Wild Strawberry Café, Market Hill



Jesus is nailed to the cross

Read: Matthew 27:45-46

Reflect: This is the oldest part of the town with its quirky, crooked buildings set around the Market Place. People come here to share a coffee with friends, to catch up on news, to renew relationships. Not today though. There's no-one in the café nor in the public house next door. Everyone is silent now, hearing the sound of iron nails tearing through flesh and bone.

Pray: For all the independent stores and shops that have supported us through lockdown with online and takeaway services. That we may soon taste again the new wine of salvation in Christ.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.



12. Deben Riverside Walk



Jesus dies on the cross

Read: John 19:28-37

Reflect: So it is almost finished and his last moments are to be spent in this lovely place, where the beauty of creation can be enjoyed in plants and fields, birds and flowers and especially the majesty of that water; life indeed. Is this just another death, amongst so many we have endured? This cross makes it feel different, a sign that maybe something better, richer, deeper will come out of the pain and sadness.

Pray: For all the dying, especially those who are separated from those they love and who love them. For us, that we never stray too far from Christ's cross for in this end is our beginning: God's gift of redemption, forgiveness, and new hope.

**May the souls of the departed
through the mercy of God
rest in peace, and rise in glory.**



13. Shire Hall



Jesus is taken down from the cross

Read: Luke 23:50-53

Reflect: I had imagined that a condemned criminal would end up in a common grave, or no grave at all. But someone called Joseph has come along. He is an important person with connections to the authorities, probably in that building where the local council meets. He is asking for the body to be given to him, to put in a tomb for proper burial, wrapped in a linen shroud. Finally, that man comes down from his cross of shame and into the arms of someone who loves him.

Pray: For all who die difficult or painful deaths as victims of war, violence, famine, disease, poverty or neglect.

**Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.**



14. St. Mary's, Woodbridge



Jesus is laid in the tomb

Read: Matthew 28:18-20

Reflect: This beautiful building towers a hundred feet to the skies. It has been here, offering welcome and worship, for more than six hundred years. It contains the tombs of many of the rich people from the town and their memorials.

Outside, there is calm and tranquillity in the churchyard with places to sit and take in some peace. This is a place just to be, to pray, and to give thanks for an end to Christ's last days with us on the road. If I listen in the silence, I shall hear him calling to me "I am with you always".

Pray: For all those who, through their gifts of time and talents, keep this place available for our renewal and repose. And most of all for the gift of his life to save us and for strength to follow him, denying ourselves and taking up our own crosses.

Restore the joy of my salvation and forgive me all my sin.



The illustrations of the Stations of the Cross are from the stained glass windows designed by Albert Chavaz (1917-1990), a Swiss artist, for the church in Vercorin, Switzerland and installed in 1965.

The traditional fourteen Stations of the Cross end with 'Jesus laid in the tomb' but Chavaz decided instead to end his sequence of windows with 'Jesus's body is resurrected after death', a scene not from Good Friday as the rest are but from Easter Sunday.