

May 2023

Bishop Libby writes...

The Coronation of His Majesty the King and the Queen Consort is nearly upon us. Many of us will watch the Coronation on Saturday, 6th May gathered at home or at venues with a big screen.

I'll be watching at a screening at Derby Cathedral with several hundred others (all are welcome to come along). And, over the weekend, our churches will have services with special prayers and perhaps other celebratory events. Check out what is happening at www.achurchnearyou.com.

The liturgy of the coronation is rich in ancient ritual and beautiful prayers. There will be 'sing along' familiar hymns and newly commissioned pieces music to enjoy. At the heart of the Coronation is the anointing of the King with oil consecrated last month in Jerusalem, symbolising his vocation to serve the people of the United Kingdom and the other realms and territories. Part of the ceremony recognises the monarch's role as head of the Church of England, something that King Charles holds very dear and that guides his commitment to serve a nation and commonwealth that are wonderfully multi-ethnic and multi-faith.

On Sunday, we are invited to share the Coronation Big Lunches (with delicious food that no doubt will reflect our nation's vibrant cultural diversity). Some may remember the last Coronation, bringing together communities with a sense of pride in the new Queen. We will all recall last year's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, and across the nation people may again be drawing together with loved ones to celebrate - perhaps enjoying a picnic with friends in the park, or with family over drink to toast the new King. It could also be an opportunity to include those sometimes left out, perhaps inviting an elderly neighbour or newcomers to the street, so they too feel welcome at the celebrations.



The King is determined to ensure the celebrations connect with the reality of our lives with themes of service and neighbourliness shaping all the planning. So, Bank Holiday Monday (8th May) is the The Big Help Out and a new website has been launched to sign up for volunteering opportunities:

www.thebighelpout.org.uk. Could you roll up your sleeves and volunteer locally with a small organisation in your neighbourhood or a more high-profile national charity? Whether you have an hour or the whole day to give, The Big Help Out encourages all of us to take an opportunity to join in and make a difference.

Later in month the Church celebrates the festivals of Ascension and Pentecost, remembering Jesus' heavenly reign and the sending of the Holy Spirit. As we do each year, for the ten days from May 18th – 28th, we commit ourselves to pray 'Thy Kingdom Come'. We pray and work for our local communities to be transformed for good reflecting ever more Jesus' kingly values of love and peace and justice, and for friends and family to come to know and join in the life of His Kingdom, not just for a few hours over the Coronation Bank Holiday Weekend but all day, every day. There are resources for prayer at www.thykingdomcome.global

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