

# Get Involved: Pray

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## EMBRACE Prayer Group March 2016

### Polish Easter traditions

Around the world there are different traditions associated with Easter. I wonder if you have had the opportunity to see people going into church with palm branches in their hands on Palm Sunday, or wee baskets on Holy Saturday? This is the way many Poles celebrate Easter Time, in Poland and here in Northern Ireland.

Palm Sunday is a feast which commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Many Poles will bring palms to church – palms representing the branches the crowd scattered in front of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem.

On Holy Saturday many members of the Polish Community will go with 'Święconka' [shvyehn-SOHN-kah] baskets to church. Święconka is "the blessing of the Easter baskets". Baskets containing a sample of Easter foods are brought to church to be blessed. The basket is traditionally lined with a white linen or lace napkin, and decorated with sprigs of boxwood, the typical Easter evergreen. The foods in the baskets have a symbolic meaning: coloured and uncoloured hard boiled eggs indicate hope, new life and Christ rising from his tomb; bread symbolises Jesus; a lamb made of butter or sugar also represents Christ; salt represents purification; horseradish is symbolic of the bitter sacrifice of Christ; ham symbolises great joy and abundance; and sweets, the promise of eternal life and good things to come.

These are just a couple of traditions celebrated not only in Poland, but also in many other Eastern European Countries.

You can try some Polish flavours – visit a Polish shop and buy a loaf of bread or some sausage.

Contributed by Aneta Dabek

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### This month we give thanks for:

- New hopes and new beginnings
- The family God called together from so many people

### We pray for:

- The giving witness to God's love for all people, as we celebrate Christ's Resurrection
- The sharing of our lives and gifts with others
- An overcoming of fear in our hearts, so that we may embrace each other.