



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 19th April

Collect

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father.

Amen

A MESSAGE FROM REV. KEN HOBBS

I trust you all had a safe and happy Easter under these strange circumstances.

It was good to welcome all those who joined us via zoom for our "live" service on Easter Day- a joyful celebration of the Resurrection. If you missed that you can access the 40 min service on the St John's website. It was based around the "Worship at Home" section of the Sunday newsletter. You will have received an email with the instructions about how to join us next Sunday at 10 am. The service each Sunday will follow the outline of the Worship at Home section below. Do feel free to access any of the music below from YouTube or elsewhere or find an alternative that suits.

The Church of England has produced an excellent booklet of prayers for this crisis. We will be using some of these this Sunday morning and one is printed in the service information below. If you would like to download this free resource go to <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

God bless you all.

Ken

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Don't forget you can keep in touch by joining the WhatsApp group, visiting our website and following us on Facebook. All your contributions to these groups during this time provide great encouragement to us all. For details of the website and where to find us on Facebook, please see the bottom of this page. To join the WhatsApp group, you will need a smartphone and to have installed WhatsApp. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

RELIGIOUS BROADCASTS

BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong Wednesdays at 3.30.p.m and Sundays at 3.00.p.m.

BBC Radio 4 – Sunday morning services at 8:10am

BBC One – Sunday Worship, please check your TV times

BBC One – Songs of Praise at 1:15pm

CHURCH AND PARISH CENTRE

Please be reminded the Church and Parish Centre are both closed until further notice. This includes the office too. If you need to contact the office please send an email rather than leave an answer phone message as these are not being listened to. If you do not have access to email and need to get in touch with the office, do call either Jean Tutton (020 8393 3687) or Joan Simon 020 8393 6155. Thank you.

Keirie Winter

KEEPING IN TOUCH

For many of us the next weeks and months are going to be difficult and stressful with worries about our families, friends and ourselves. Even though we can't meet face to face it will be important to keep in touch with our church family. If at any time you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed or need some practical help do give me a ring - even if just for a chat. I'd be very happy to hear from you. **Jean Tutton 020 8393 3687**

PRAYERS

As the church is now closed it is no longer possible to put prayer requests on the prayer board. If you do have a request which you would like to be included in the newsletter please either email Kerrie at office@stjohnsstoneleigh.org.uk or ring me and I will pass the details on to Kerrie. **Jean Tutton**

HOPE

I have heard from Churches Together Ewell that sadly, given the current COVID-19 crisis the HOPE event scheduled for the end of June will no longer be taking place. **Sue Pennington**

PASTORAL CARE

Thank you to all those who are involved in our pastoral care in the parish. If you would like to receive a call from St John's during this time, please contact Jean Tutton to make arrangements. **Rev. Ken Hobbs**

FOODBANK

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Foodbank. Stoneleigh Baptist Church remains open for donations to be dropped off on Wednesday mornings between 10am and 12pm and the Foodbank warehouse on Ruxley Lane, Ewell, KT19 0JG is open Monday to Friday, 9am until 3pm. Most supermarkets still have Foodbank drop off too. Monetary donations are still welcome (thank you for those received so far), please see last weeks notice sheet for details. This week the list of food required is as follows:

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VERY URGENT Hand gel sanitizer, Men's deodorant, Adult toothbrushes, Instant mash, Shower gel, Shampoo, Powdered milk, Tinned vegetables - not sweetcorn, Tinned meat, Sugar 500g, Washing up liquid, Washing powder/tablets/capsules.

URGENT - Tinned rice pudding, UHT Milk - full fat, UHT fruit juice, Tea, Long life sponge puddings.

The Foodbank have set up a home delivery service which is going well as they have a great team of drivers. In their first four days of offering delivery, they were able to deliver 43 food parcels and so far this week they've delivered 50. Thank you again for your support with the Foodbank. **Polly Elder**

Worship at Home

The Lord is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Opening Prayer

**Lord Jesus, our risen Saviour,
we rejoice in your mighty victory over sin and death;
you are the Prince of Life;
you are alive for evermore.**

Help us to know your presence in our worship and to receive

your power in our lives until we rise to live with you forever.

Amen

Hymn Morning has Broken

Confession

O Jesus Christ, risen master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief:

We have lived by our own strength and not by the power of your resurrection. In your mercy forgive us.

Lord hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes as faithless and not believing. In your mercy forgive us.

Lord hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone and doubted our home in heaven. In your mercy forgive us.

Lord hear us and help us.

Lift our minds above earthly things, set them on things above: show us your glory and your power that we may serve you gladly all our days. Amen

Collect for Today

Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification: grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Hymn Be Still for the Presence of the Lord (Sarah Tutton)

Scripture Reading Luke 24: 13 - 35 read by Richard Denyer

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from

Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

A Day Return to Emmaus Part 1

During World War 2 many priceless works of art in the National Gallery in London were removed for safe keeping. Due to many requests the gallery agreed to bring back certain pieces for limited periods according to public demand. At the height of the Blitz the people of London voted overwhelmingly for Titian's painting "Noli me tangere"- Mary in the garden with the resurrected Christ- it provided hope in a time when hope was in short supply!

Here are some background notes to this passage

- It is the best known and most loved of the 12 resurrection appearances of Jesus
- They have no clear pattern and they were clearly not hallucinations
- Jesus is often not recognised instantaneously

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- The events are not precisely harmonised- their artless lack of coherence points to their reliability- if the disciples were anxious to make up the story they would have made sure that the stories tallied exactly.
- These eyewitness accounts are part of the evidence for the resurrection- along with the empty tomb; the events of that first Easter weekend and the experience of Christian believers for two thousand years
- On this Sunday and next week we will look at the way that the conversation develops in this account- It shifts from the ordinary to the extraordinary and from the physical to the spiritual
- We have the opportunity to eavesdrop on the conversation.
- Jesus is a controversialist but he also a conversationalist.
- The two characters are Cleopas and his companion (wife?)
- They were not members of the original band of the Apostles because they returned to the eleven at the end of the passage.
- It is remarkable that so much space is devoted to this encounter with two of the ordinary followers of Jesus- not those specially chosen (encouragement to us perhaps!
- He meets them at their points of need and as we follow the story we can see 5 stages Here are some thoughts about the first 3 and the other 2 will follow next week

1. The Alongside Stage

Jesus himself came up and walked with them (v15) but he was the stranger (in the Resurrection accounts he is a stranger in the garden; a stranger on the road and, courtesy of Acker Bilk, a stranger on the shore!). Think of the state that these two people were in

(a) DEPRESSION

They seem oblivious to the stranger walking beside them. "their faces were downcast" Our faces betray how we feel Often we put up masks? They were locked into a private world. Depression and anxiety are both private and common place. It affects 1 in 4 of us Two of its many features are that (a) facts get distorted and (b) our psyche turns in itself. But at this moment of their lowest ebb- they discover they are not alone!

(b) DISILLUSIONMENT

Their expectation was that the Messiah would be a military deliverer. Their their hopes and dreams of a new Messianic age were shattered. There is a message today for those whose road to Emmaus is one of shattered dreams and unrealised hopes.

(c) DISBELIEF

Their understanding of what had happened and what was going on was misplaced and inaccurate. They saw Jesus as a prophet (v19) and they were in possession of some resurrection information (v23-24) But Jesus would later remind them how slow of heart they were to believe all that the scriptures has foretold.

There is always a danger of second hand knowledge and borrowed experience. The Bible describes the Holy Spirit as "paraclete"- "one who comes along side to help" Jesus walks not ahead or behind but alongside them. For a time he says nothing. Often when dealing with grief we don't know what to say to people. Many of us would say however to our concerned friends "I was just glad that you were here" Our Holy Communion services often use the greeting "The Lord is here!"

2. The Listening Stage

I saw a plaque on a wall in someone's house which read "Christ is the head of this house; the unseen guest at every meal; the silent listener to every conversation" Do you remember the old Midland Bank advert "The listening bank!" A former American President once said "A man never listened himself out of a job"

We worship a talking God but we also worship a listening God- Jesus listened on the road to Emmaus and he listens to us on life's journey.

3. The Questioning Stage

Cleopas says "**We had hoped that he was the one who would redeem Israel**". It reflected a world of pathos and shattered dreams Note Jesus' use of "door openers" like "what are you talking about?" and "what things" (they were open not closed questions) His gentle questions cause all the grief, doubts, fears and uncertainties to flood out.

It is remarkable that Jesus used this approach- why did he not appear in Resurrection Glory? Perhaps because this was **the road to Emmaus not the road to Damascus**- Saul (later Paul) was proud and arrogant when he met the risen Christ but these two were broken hearted.

One philosopher once described death as "the iron ring round existence" But the Easter message is that the iron ring has been broken! We will leave the story at this point but may you find encouragement today, as those two followers did, on our road to Emmaus!

(to be continued!)

Prayers (Margaret Hobbs)

We pray for the needs of the world.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, risen from death, we praise you for changed lives and new hopes at Easter.

You came to Mary in the garden, and turned her tears into joy. For your love and your mercy: **we give you thanks O Lord.**

You came to the disciples in the upper room and turned their fear into courage. For your love and your mercy: **we give you thanks O Lord.**

You came to the disciples by the lakeside and turned their failure into faith. For your love and your mercy: **we give you thanks O Lord.**

You came to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and turned their despair into hope. For your love and your mercy: **we give you thanks O Lord.**

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You come to us in our unworthiness and shame, and turn our weakness into triumph: For your love and your mercy: **we give you thanks O Lord**

Keep us Good Lord under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

Music to listen to "The Power of the Cross " Stuart Townend and Keith Getty (first line "O to see the Dawn")

The Peace

A Thanksgiving Prayer

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them up to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give thanks and praise.

On the night when He was betrayed, at supper with his friends, Jesus took bread and thanked you. He broke it and gave it to them saying "Take, eat, this is a picture of my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me"

At the end of supper, taking a cup of wine, Jesus thanked you and said "Drink this all of you. This is a picture of my life's blood given to forgive your sins. Do this in memory of me"

So in obedience to Jesus' command we remember and celebrate his death for us.

As we share together, we pray that the presence of the Risen Christ will be in our hearts and homes this Easter Season.

With Christians throughout the world we bring our thanks and praise.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven

Hallowed be your name

Your kingdom come

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

As we forgive those who sin against us

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours

Now and for ever. Amen

Do share some bread and wine as you feel appropriate

Hymn Thine be the Glory

Closing Blessing

May the Lord bless us and watch over us.

The Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us.

The Lord look kindly upon us and give us peace.

From our Remembrance Book: Tiger Walden, Helena Rhodes, Ivy Dorothy McCulloch.

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