



St John's, Stoneleigh

Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 26th April

Collect

Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen

A MESSAGE FROM REV. KEN HOBBS

As the weeks pass and the lock down continues I want to thank all of you for the ways in which the St John's church family continue to support one another in various ways – this newsletter, Facebook, emails, the website, the weekly video reflection, WhatsApp, telephone calls, offers of practical help and the like. It has been great to join with up to 40 of you via the Zoom live service at 10 am on Sundays and I do encourage you to join us. Do ask for help in learning how to do this. It is simple to use and although we don't have the technological sophistication of a prerecorded service, there is something special about meeting together in this way. The early church was entirely a lay movement and clericalism was unheard of and they met in homes. My prayer is that we use this time of enforced separation to recover something of the spark and inspiration of those early days of the church.

Keep well and safe

God bless you

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

SUNDAY SERVICES

Don't forget you can join us live on Sunday at 10am using this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86852818063>

KEEPING IN TOUCH AND PRAYERS

Please don't forget to call if you need some help during this time or if you would like to add something to the prayer board.

Jean Tutton 020 8393 3687

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

FINANCE UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who continues to give by standing order. Your monthly giving is even more vital at this time as St. John's is no longer receiving income from letting the hall. If you normally give using numbered envelopes and can afford to do so, please continue putting money in your envelopes each week. These can be put in the collection once services resume. Envelope givers can switch over to paying by monthly standing order if they wish. This would be particularly helpful for St John's cashflow, as we do not know how long the lockdown will last. Please email your contact details to office@stjohnsstoneleigh.org.uk and Kerrie will arrange for the Treasurer to provide a calculation of your monthly giving amount based on your previous weekly envelope giving, and help you set up a standing order.

Tim Rogers

REV. MARK BORLEY

It is with great pleasure that I am able to let you know that I have heard from Mark and he has let me know that he has accepted the post of Priest in Charge of St Werburgh in Hoo, Kent. As you can imagine, he is delighted about this because he felt right from the time he saw the role advertised, that it was what God was calling him to do.

Sue Pennington

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:

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.

Polly Elder

From our Remembrance Book: Geoffrey Barry Rhodes, Sylma Jeanne Sorensen.

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From our Prayer Board: Please pray for Rev. John Ricahardson who is currently in hospital.

Worship at Home

Lord direct our thoughts and teach us to pray. Lift our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn Praise my Soul the King of Heaven

A Confession Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you reveal your truth to us, but we fail to understand or obey your will for our lives.

Forgive our stubbornness **and help us to see your glory**

Lord Jesus Christ, you reveal your compassion to us but we fail to show it to others.

Forgive our selfishness **and help us to see your glory**

Lord Jesus Christ, you reveal God to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit but we persist in our divisions and maintain our differences .

Forgive our disunity. **Help us to see your glory, the glory as befits the Father's only Son and to bear witness to the Word who became flesh and lived among us, for his name's sake, Amen.**

May God in his mercy draw us to himself, forgive all our sins and pardon our wrongdoing. May he grant us a vision of His glory that through us Christ may be revealed to all the world, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Collect for Today

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading Luke 24: 13 - 35 read by Maggie Savill

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.

Hymn The Lords my Shepherd (Stuart Townend_ "I will trust in you alone") sung by Sarah Tutton

2nd Reading Revelation 3 19-22 read by Maggie Savill

I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.'

Reflection

This week we are making a second visit to the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus- the best known and most loved of the 12 resurrection accounts of Jesus. Some years ago a report was published in the Times entitled "After death then what?"

The results of a survey were as follows

5% I don't believe souls survive but my life force may go on in some form.

20% unsure what will happen

29% part of me, my soul or spirit, will continue to exist in an afterlife

46% I'm fairly sure that nothing will survive my death except memories, writings etc.

The extraordinary thing about these findings is the extent of doubt.- apocalyptic doubt. The afterlife has become taboo. Even during Easter, the great Christian story of death and resurrection, we prefer to think of chocolate eggs and fluffy bunnies

It has been said that "Nothing is more certain than death and taxes." Death is the ultimate statistic- we all die! "Death is the iron ring round existence" Yet the good news of Easter is that for Jesus Christ and for those who trust him- the Iron ring is broken! We ended last week on that note.

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We also saw how remarkable it was that so much space is devoted to this encounter with two of the ordinary followers of Jesus- not those specially chosen (encouragement to us!) We saw how Jesus met them at their points of need. There are 5 stages in the story and last week we saw the first three,

1. The Alongside Stage Jesus himself came up and walked with them (v15)

In their state of depression, disillusionment and disbelief they discover they are not alone.

2. The Listening Stage

God is a listener- Jesus listened on the road to Emmaus. and he listens to us on life's journey.

3. The Questioning Stage

Jesus' gentle questions cause all the grief, doubts, fears and uncertainties to flood out.

We said last time that it is remarkable that Jesus used this approach- why not Resurrection Glory? Because this was the road to Emmaus not the road to Damascus- Saul was proud and arrogant. These two were broken hearted.

We move on in the story to

4. The investigation Stage

Having drawn alongside them and asked the right questions Jesus goes on to open their hearts and minds to the Old Testament Unlike modern counsellors he has not been professionally detached, reflective and non directive! He says emphatically "how foolish you are!!"

Jesus teaches them in the context of three things (a) **History**-beginning at Moses... (b) **Theology**.. "the Christ had to suffer" and (c) **their experience**. Easter is about history (it really did happen!); theology (Jesus died for a reason!) and experience (we make it our own!) . Making sense of the Gospel is about history; theology and experience!

The journey of Faith involves teaching, discovery and investigation!! Peter writes "Always be ready to give a reason for the hope you have" So let's start the process- read the Scriptures!! Try regular and systematic use of daily Bible notes such as those produced by Scripture Union or the Bible Reading Fellowship.

And finally

5. The Revelation Stage

We know what happened- the arrival, meal arrangements etc. What was it that made them recognise him? - tone of voice.. familiar words..gestures.. the nail prints in his hands?

All we know is that he was made known to them "in the breaking of the bread" It had a dramatic effect. They moved from social and intellectual understanding to personal experience They rush back to Jerusalem to hear the most important words in the New Testament "It is true- the Lord is Risen!"- For the rest of the group it was the Reporting Stage The uniqueness of Jesus provokes the central question "is it true?" Bishop Leslie Newbiggin writes "We cannot commend the Gospel by standing outside it. There is no spectator's gallery in the universe where we can evaluate the truth of different religions" We must make our commitment and take our stand on Gospel truth.

Conclusion

I have had several opportunities of skiing below the North face of the Eiger in Switzerland. It is one of the most dramatic back drops in Alpine Skiing. For the first two days it was hidden in the clouds. The newcomers in the group had to take our word for it. "it's there but you can't see it!"

On the Third day!!!- the clouds lifted and they saw it for themselves. So often we feel spiritually disoriented and shrouded in cloud but on the third day, like those at Emmaus the Lord himself can be "made known to us in the breaking of the bread!"

Prayers - Joan Simon

Hymn to listen to "Ten Thousand Reasons" (Matt Redmond) Sarah to organise

The Peace

A Thanksgiving Prayer

The Lord is here

His spirit is with us,

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 And Can it Be

Closing Prayer

God of life you call us and envision us, We give ourselves today to each other and to you, trusting that as you call us, so you promise to be with us as we share this uncertain journey. Nurture and sustain our life together and guide our paths for Jesus sake Amen.

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