



WELCOME TO ST PETER'S ASH



THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT ST PETER'S IS CALLED TO CELEBRATE, LIVE AND REFLECT THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

19th APRIL 2020

EASTER 2

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| <p><u>READINGS FOR TODAY</u> Acts 2 v 14a, 22 - 32; 1 Peter 1 v 3 - 9; John 20 v 19 - end</p> | <p>PARISH OFFICE: Closed until further notice. TEL:01252 331161; e- mail: office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk BOOKINGS OF WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS – 01252 321517 WEBSITE: www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk</p> |
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***ALLELUIA, CHRIST IS RISEN!
HE IS RISEN INDEED, ALLELUIA!***



Jesus said: 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE RECTORY

The great novelist Jane Austen once referred to her own writings as “the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect after much labour”. Those who have read her books would disagree about the ‘little effect’ her work has had, but, certainly, her canvas was not on a grand scale. Her characters inhabit a world which, to us, until recently, seems small. Villages with their great country houses form the backdrop, in the main, to her plots. A visit to Bath or the Dorset Coast is about the limit of her worldview. But her observations of human behaviour are universal and timeless. Loves and hates, ambition and jealousies, envy and manipulation, speak to us today no less powerfully than they did to her readers at the beginning of the 19th century. In Jane Austen, small is definitely beautiful! The horizons may, generally, be narrow, but the intricacies of her work make her novels of global significance.

In the past few weeks I, like everyone else, have had my horizons limited. As a dedicated traveller I have had to look much closer to home than usual. Like Jane Austen I feel I have been working with a ‘little bit of ivory’ rather than a grand canvas. But, remarkably, I have found it very enjoyable. Of course, there is still a lot of the wider world that I hope I will be able to visit one day. But, in my daily walks around Ash and Ash Green I have found a great deal of interest and beauty just waiting to be discovered, right on my doorstep. Sadly, it has taken the threat of Covid-19 to open my eyes to so much that I have been missing over the past 17 years. Obviously, I wish that it hadn’t taken this dreadful pandemic to do this, but, sometimes out of bad situations some good does emerge.

I suspect that for many other people, in ‘normal’ times, busyness has meant missing out on so much that is there to be enjoyed in our own neighbourhood. Likewise, only now, more people have been getting to know their neighbours better over the garden fence. Many have now made the time to check up on the elderly and vulnerable, perhaps for the first time, and been able to offer much needed support, both practical and emotional.

My prayer is that, when the current restrictions are eventually lifted, we don’t all just ‘go back to normal’. I hope that we will all spend more time appreciating the things that are on our doorsteps, and, more importantly, have our eyes and ears more open to the needs of those immediately around us. These past weeks have seen many acts of selflessness. Paradoxically, ‘social distancing’ has brought us together in new and exciting ways. May we all be more active in ‘loving our neighbours’ in future.

COLLECT FOR EASTER 2

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.

A PRAYER FOR ALL AFFECTED BY THE CORONA VIRUS

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

DON'T FORGET OUR ST PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like emergency prayer for yourself or somebody else please phone: 01252 322292 or 01252 323037 – this is a confidential service.

If you would like a chat at any time, or if you need anything, please give myself or Carol a call – 321517 or (Carol) 313239. Be assured that we will be praying for you all, and that you are very much in our thoughts, every day. Our church building may be ‘out of use’ for the present, but St Peter’s Church i.e. we, the people, are very much still in business! Please keep in contact with each other regularly.

Morning Prayer to share at 10 am on Sunday

You may wish to light a candle and have some reflective music playing in the background. Have a Bible to hand.

If there is more than one person present, someone may wish to read the parts marked (L), everyone says the rest together. You can say alternate verses in the Easter Anthems and in the psalm and in the Benedictus

(L) Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All: He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

(L) O Lord, open our lips

All: and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

(L) In your resurrection, O Christ

All: let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia.

L: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind:

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

(L): Christ died to sin once for all, and now he lives to God. Let us renew our resolve to have done with all that is evil and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

(Pause for reflection)

All: 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.

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

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

Lord, have mercy, forgive us our sins and bring us to eternal life. Amen.

Read Acts 2 v 14a & 22 – 32 followed by Psalm 16 ending with:

Glory 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.

Read 1 Peter 1 v 3 - 9:

The Easter Anthems:

- 1) Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us: so let us celebrate the feast,*
- 2) not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*
- 3) Christ once raised from the dead dies no more: death has no more dominion over him.*
- 4) In dying he died to sin once for all: in living he lives to God.*
- 5) See yourselves therefore as dead to sin: and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- 6) Christ has been raised from the dead: the first fruits of those who sleep.*
- 7) For as by man came death: by man has come also the resurrection of the dead;*
- 8) for as in Adam all die: even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Glory 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.

(from 1 Corinthians 5.7b, Romans 6.9–11; 1 Corinthians 15.20–22)

Now read John 20 v 19 to the end. Here are some thoughts:

Fear and doubt are two very powerful forces which affect everyone at some time or another. We all like certainty and feeling that we are in control of our lives, and so, when things happen that are 'out of our hands' we find it difficult to cope. Jesus' friends felt like that on the first Easter Day, so they locked themselves away, fearing for their lives. Perhaps what had happened to Jesus would happen to them too. But that same Jesus who had, so it seemed, abandoned them, comes back into their lives to bring reassurance, fresh hope and renewed purpose.

Jesus brings them 'peace' and unlocks the doors they had shut, by giving them the gift of the Spirit enabling them to 'go out', with authority and power from God. As God the Father sent Jesus, so, now, he sends them. They were transformed from fear to courage and confidence – as Peter demonstrates in our reading from Acts this morning. He doesn't mince his words when he tells his listeners that it is they who crucified and killed Jesus, who had been attested to them by God Himself. Peter preaches boldly and confidently the message of resurrection, and he does it with joy – quoting the psalms to show that this is all part of God's plan. No more fear, no more hesitation from Peter. Then, in Peter's first letter, he goes on to talk about us, who have been given a new birth, 'being protected by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.' Yes there will be suffering and trials ahead, but Peter is full of assurance of God's protection and ultimate salvation for people of faith.

There is no more need to fear. But what of doubt? Thomas has gone down in history as 'doubting Thomas'. He wasn't with the rest on Easter Day evening, and he refused to believe in the resurrection without physical proof. A week later Jesus returns, and, this time, Thomas can see for himself the reality of the risen Lord. Significantly, Jesus isn't angry with Thomas for having doubts. He shows him His wounds and Thomas worships Him – 'My Lord and my God'. Having experienced for Himself the human condition, Jesus understands fully how Thomas can be doubting, and so He isn't angry. He reaches out to Thomas allowing Him to confirm the reality of His bodily resurrection by touch.

Like the others, Thomas receives the commission to 'go out'. Jesus words to him 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe' are perhaps a prompt to him to remember his own doubts and to be patient with those who may have doubts like he did. Jesus shows all of the disciples nothing but love. He gives them encouragement rather than a lecture about their failings for letting him down so badly in the preceding days. Something we would do well to remember when people let us down! How easy do we find it to follow Jesus' example?

John ends this chapter on the upbeat. His purpose in writing is to give us the opportunity to believe in Jesus and so have life in his name. That is the message we must spread to those around us. For many people in this current crisis, fear and doubt are very real issues. We may have fears and doubts ourselves at times. If we do, remember the prayer of the father of the sick child brought to Jesus for healing – 'I believe, help my unbelief'. (Mark 9 v 24) and Jesus' words to him – 'All things can be done for the one who believes'. We are an 'Easter People', people of hope, who have the reassurance that Jesus fully understands us. The message that Life is stronger than death, and that joy does come out of sorrow is one that seems to have even more relevance this year. By our care for one another and at this time, we can do a lot to alleviate fear and doubt. Reflecting the love of God in Jesus in prayer and practical ways, is how we can best celebrate the Easter season.

Pause for your own reflections, and then we say:

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The Benedictus (The Song of Zechariah)

All: The Lord is risen from the tomb who for our sakes hung upon the tree. Alleluia.

1) Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has come to his people and set them free.

2) He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David.

3) Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,

4) To show mercy to our ancestors, and to remember his holy covenant.

5) This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

6) Free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

7) And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

8) To give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of all their sins.

9) In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

10) To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *(Luke 1.68-79)*

All: Glory 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.

All: The Lord is risen from the tomb who for our sakes hung upon the tree. Alleluia.

We now have a time of intercession for the Church, the world, our local community, the sick and the departed.

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father:

That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his glorious and life-giving resurrection: We pray to the Father. Hear our prayer.

That isolated and persecuted churches may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter: We pray to the Father. Hear our prayer.

That God may grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love: We pray to the Father. Hear our prayer.

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter: we pray to the Father. Hear our prayer.

That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world: We pray to the Father. Hear our prayer.

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick, the weak and the dying, to comfort and strengthen them: we pray to the Father. Hear our prayer.

That, according to his promises, all who have died in the faith of the resurrection may be raised on the last day: we pray to the Father. Hear our prayer.

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people, so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection: we pray to the Father. Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant that, as his death has recalled us to life, so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Rejoicing in God's new creation, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray: Our Father in heaven.....

This hymn may be said or sung:

Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord, Alleluia, alleluia, give praise to His name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
He is the King of creation. *Refrain*

Spread the good news o'er all the earth.
Jesus has died and has risen. *Refrain*

We have been crucified with Christ.
Now we shall live forever. *Refrain*

God has proclaimed the just reward:
Life for all men, alleluia! *Refrain*

Come, let us praise the living God,
Joyfully sing to our Saviour. *Refrain*

Let us pray:

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.

May the God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
make us perfect in every good work to do his will;
and the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us and all who we love, today and always. Amen.

(L) Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

All: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, and rise with Christ in glory. Amen.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF THE RECENTLY DEPARTED,
ESPECIALLY:

IVY MILLS; JUNE LARBY; FREDDIE JONES; JUDITH ASTBURY

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK – EASTER 3

Acts 2 v 14a, 36 - 41; 1 Peter 1 v 17 - 23; Luke 24 v 13 - 35

Easter glory fills the sky!
Christ now lives, no more to die!
Darkness has been put to flight!

By the living Lord of light!
Mary, Mother, greet your Son,
Radiant from his triumph won!

By his cross you shared his pain,
So for ever share his reign!

Seek not life within the tomb;
Christ stands in the upper room!

Risen glory he conceals,
Risen body he reveals!

Though we see his face no more,
He is with us as before!

Glory veiled, he is our priest,
His true flesh and blood our feast!

(James Quinn SJ)



Evening Prayer for the Easter Season

O Lord open our lips,
and our mouth shall show forth your praise.

O God make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

In your resurrection, O Christ,
let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia.

Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord
the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
to you be glory and praise for ever.
From the deep waters of death
you brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.
Through him dark death has been destroyed
and radiant life is everywhere restored.
As you call us out of darkness into his marvellous light
may our lives reflect his glory
and our lips repeat the endless song.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This hymn may be said or sung:

Ye choirs of new Jerusalem,
your sweetest notes employ,
the Paschal victory to hymn
in strains of holy joy.

How Judah's lion burst his chains
and crushed the serpent's head;
and brought with him, from death's domains,
the long-imprisoned dead.

Triumphant in his glory now
his sceptre ruleth all,
earth, heaven, and hell before him bow,
and at his footstool fall.

While joyful thus his praise we sing,
his mercy we implore,
into his palace bright to bring
and keep us evermore.

All glory to the Father be,
all glory to the Son,
all glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,
while endless ages run. Alleluia, Amen.

We pray:

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,
so may your mercy come down upon us
to cleanse our hearts
and set us free to sing your praise
now and for ever Amen.

One Psalm is said e.g. Psalm 135 or 136 or 105 or 106 or 107 or 145. Ending with:

Glory 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.

*A Scripture Reading: some verses from I Corinthians 15
or Matthew 28 or Mark 16 or Luke 24 or John 20 & 21 or
start reading the Book of Acts.*

The Lord is my strength and my song: he has become my
salvation. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works
of the Lord. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the
Holy Spirit. The Lord is my strength and my song: he has
become my salvation. (from Psalm 118)

Gospel Cantic: The Magnificat (The Song of Mary)

The stone which the builders rejected has become the
chief cornerstone. Alleluia.

1) My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit
rejoices in God my Saviour; he has looked with favour on
his lowly servant.

2) From this day all generations will call me blessed; the
Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his
name.

3) He has mercy on those who fear him, from generation
to generation.

4) He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered
the proud in their conceit,

5) Casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting
up the lowly.

6) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the
rich away empty.

7) He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, to
remember his promise of mercy,

8) The promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and
his children for ever.

Glory 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.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the
chief cornerstone. Alleluia.

*Prayers of thanksgiving may be made for the day.
Intercessions are offered for the church, for peace, the
world and for individuals and their needs*

Rejoicing in God's new creation, let us pray with
confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

God of life, who for our redemption gave your only-
begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious
resurrection have delivered us from the power of our
enemy: grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may
evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life; through
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great
mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night,
for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all
evermore. Amen.

May the risen Christ grant us the joys of eternal life.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy
of God, rest in peace. Amen.

A decorative graphic consisting of the words "IN Everything GIVE Thanks" written in a highly stylized, cursive calligraphic font. The word "IN" is at the top, "Everything" is in the middle, "GIVE" is below it, and "Thanks" is at the bottom. The letters are interconnected and flow together.

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