

This service can also be found online at
<https://youtu.be/T-FYTx3P9hk>

If you click on the line above and copy it into your browser (eg Google) you will find a televised version of this service filmed by Diane Parsons in the Vicarage.

Standing Orders

Thank you to a number of you who have now signed a Standing Order for your giving. As you will appreciate, St Margaret's has a lot of fixed costs, but when people cannot walk through the doors, we cannot receive the income you normally so generously give. For some people this will be a particularly challenging time financially, but **if you are able** to contribute in your regular way, it would be really lovely if you would instruct your bank to pay us what you normally would have given in cash. A Standing Order form went out with the Palm Sunday sheet, or ring Andrew for a new one - 425615. NB We are not asking you for more money, just a different way of giving what you already pledged.

In the mean time, **thank you** to everyone who has contributed to the Boiler appeal - we haven't reached the target, but we're on the way!

Foodbank Donations may be left with Linda Hazel, at 1 Prior's Drive

Old Catton News. The parish magazine will not be published for May, since there is very little news to report. Advertisers will be offered reimbursement.

Flower Festival Sadly the Flower Festival has had to be cancelled. Thank you to everyone who has already been preparing for it.

Men's Breakfast The breakfast scheduled for April 25 is cancelled.

We should have been holding our **Annual Church Meeting** this Thursday, but of course we can't at the moment. The churchwardens will continue in office, but I would like to be able to publish a booklet about the activities of St Margaret's in the last year, for us all to read. So if you have been involved in one or other of the clubs, groups or activities associated with St Margarets, please send me, on paper or by email to adp07@btinternet.com a summary of your activities and experiences in 2019 (or the early part of 2020 if you like) and I will try to compile it in the next few weeks.

Please remember in your prayers Syd Clarke, Angie Twaite and Tony Warburton who have died recently, and those who mourn their passing.

Also

Arthur Burton, Audrey Mann, Stanley Higham, Vivien Roxburgh, Marjorie Wells, Vera Hopkinson, Betty Beck, Leslie Jermy, Mark Sutcliffe, Lilian Watts, Rose Boy and Laurel Rudd, whose anniversaries fall at this time.

St Margaret's Old Catton Sunday worship



*For the Second Sunday of Easter,
19 April 2020*

Lord Jesus Christ,
when you rose from the dead
you filled the hearts of your friends with joy;
fill our hearts with joy this morning
as we come to worship you
Son of the living God. **Amen**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Blessed are those who have not seen him
and yet have believed.
He is our Lord and our God.

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.
You came to the disciples in the upper room,
and turned their fear into courage.
You came to the disciples by the lakeside,
and turned their failure into faith.
You came to the disciples on the Emmaus road,
and turned their despair into hope.

You come to your people now,
and turn our weakness into triumph.

For your love and mercy we give you thanks:
we praise your holy name.

We come to God
as one from whom no secrets are hidden
to ask for his forgiveness and peace

Like Mary at the empty tomb,
we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Like the disciples behind locked doors,
we are afraid to be seen as your followers.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Like Thomas in the upper room,
we are slow to believe.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The almighty and merciful Lord
grant us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins,
time for amendment of life,
and the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Gospel Reading

John 20.19-31 Jesus Appears to the disciples & Thomas

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

2

And we (like Mary, like the disciples, like "doubting" Thomas) who have been there with you through Holy Week and the first Easter Morning have been made witnesses to the resurrection story: wondering, bewildered, hoping, rejoicing.... and sometimes doubting.

It is not always easy to believe with our minds and trust with our hearts.

Loving Christ, Open the eyes of our faith that we may behold the work of your redemption. Open our minds and hearts to receive you, Lord: your resurrection glory, your light everlasting. May this time of worship, reflection and celebration be a worthy response to your love and your sacrifice for us. Together we pray as you taught your disciples to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love, to serve your purpose,
and to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen**

7

And we who have not had the chance to touch, as he touched him, or 6
to see him as he did, do have the consolation of Christ's words that
followed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to
believe.

Even as we are deprived of touch, we are blessed in believing, and
sustained by hope and faith, and love.

Christ is risen! Alleluia.

Prayers of Intercession

These things did Thomas hold for real:
the warmth of blood, the chill of steel,
the grain of wood, the heft of stone,
the last frail twitch of blood and bone.

His brittle certainties denied
that one could live when one had died,
until his fingers read like Braille
the markings of the spear and nail.

May we, O God, by grace believe
and, in believing, still receive
the Christ who held His raw palms out
and beckoned Thomas from his doubt.

*Thomas Troeger,
a contemporary American poet, priest musician and hymn writer*

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.

Lord Jesus Christ, on the second Sunday of Easter,
the light of your love shines on!
Your light has come into the world,
And neither darkness, nor evil, nor even death itself
could overcome it.

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with 3
them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them
and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger
here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do
not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'
Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed
are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are
not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to
believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through
believing you may have life in his name.

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Affirmation of Faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?
We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?
We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?
We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.
This is our faith.
**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Address

"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and *put my finger* where the
nails were, and *put my hand* into his side, I will not believe it." John 20:25

We sympathise with Thomas. We have to stay in our homes and be ⁴ very careful indeed about touching. Even as I write these words, Diane has been wiping the front door handle and letterbox with disinfectant, and Mary had been disinfecting the door handle of the church and the bookshelves, the worktops and anywhere anyone might have touched weeks before the lockdown began.

Nearly four weeks in, and we want to touch, we want to be close to one another. For me, two family birthdays have taken place this week, and we have taken to having family Zoom meetings, in which a bunch of you can as it were meet online, can film yourselves in conversation, catching up on news, offering good wishes and in a way being family again. So you can see and hear - two senses are satisfied, and maybe we should be grateful for that. But you can't taste the birthday cake, you can't smell the smoke from the candles and you can't give one another a hug. Touch, taste and smell are left unsatisfied.

In the same way you can see me now on screen and can hear me, I hope - but you can't be greedy and you have to put up with that. And that is particularly poignant in a Communion service where we remember how Jesus particularly invited his followers to eat and drink, to touch and taste, and left that as a legacy for us until we meet again in the kingdom of God. In the mediaeval church, you would go weekly to Mass, and would have watched and listened and indeed smelt as the incense wafted around the church, but as for taste - you would have have received the body of Christ only once a year, on Easter Day, at the chancel step, and in one kind only - just the bread, never the wine. That was surely not the original intention; and this year we couldn't even do that. We are very deprived of touch!

Touch of course can be massively abused, as the 'Me-too' movement highlights. So we understand well that we must be careful about touching, respectful of boundaries, safeguarding the vulnerable. But the desire to touch and be close remains.

For Thomas, there was something else, though. He was the only one who wasn't there when Jesus had appeared to the disciples. He had missed out on the most important encounter of his life - that Jesus, his Lord and Master, his beloved friend and mentor, had shown himself to be risen from the dead, alive against all expectations. He uniquely had missed out - we don't know why. The rest were in lockdown as it were and maybe he was out walking the dog!

One of the effects of lockdown is that days blur into one another with a much less obvious pattern; no Choir practice on Tuesday nights, no

Friday Coffee morning. But Jewish practice was very conscious of a ⁵ weekly calendar. Sabbath observance was extremely strong. And from an early stage, the Christian community adopted a weekly cycle, only they distinguished themselves by meeting on the first day of the week - specifically to recognise and remember the day of the resurrection.

So it's the next Sunday, when the disciples are again gathered together that Jesus comes and makes himself known to Thomas.

Jesus appears among them; no locked doors could prevent his arrival; no unwise words could be beyond his understanding. Thomas had to face the uneasy consequence of his rash words as Jesus kindly but carefully took him at his word and told him one by one to put his finger in the mark of the nails, and in the wound in his side from the soldier's spear. You can imagine that was a moment Thomas would not forget, and St John has ensured it's remembered for ever. For all his other characteristics of faithfulness and his strong commitment to follow Jesus even into times of danger, as he headed to Jerusalem, it is for his doubting that we remember Thomas.

Perhaps we should remember the remark he then made, 'My Lord, and My God'. We live in an age which trivialises language to what I think is a painful level. Social media is filled with exclamations 'OMG' as a response to a funny hat or a silly expression on the face of a pet. In the gospels, words are not bandied about carelessly. When Thomas says 'My Lord, he means it. It was an expression they had often used. Their respect for Jesus was immense. It didn't mean he had ermine robes and a coronet and sat in the upper house of Parliament like a figure out of Gilbert and Sullivan. But it was a sign of the enormous human honour they recognised was his due.

But Thomas adds 'and my God'. And you are faced with words of belief that really dwarf anything that anyone else had ever said. And I don't know how the rest of the apostles gathered in that room felt at that moment, but nobody was rushing to say, 'steady on old boy that's a bit rash'. His words sank into their hearts as completely and absolutely appropriate. Only last week he had spoken rashly and stupidly; and now this morning, back in the same room, his were the words of faith that in a way changed human history. As he put his finger in the wounds of Jesus, he put his finger on the significance of who he really was. 'My Lord and my God.'