



19th April 2020 – 10:45am
1st Sunday after Easter
1 Peter 1:3-8 - A Living Hope &
John 20:19-29 – Resurrection
Appearances

We come together, though not seated at Christchurch . . . as those seeking to worship in the Easter Season, during which we celebrate the belief at the heart of our Christian faith, that three days after his Crucifixion Jesus Christ was raised to life . . .

Let's reflect upon our own response to the message of resurrection as we think about what happened when Jesus appeared to his disciples; the difference that resurrection made to them and others who'd been close to Jesus, as they gradually came to understand that he really was alive and accepted their responsibility to continue the work Jesus had begun.

An Easter Acclamation

Alleluiah! The Lord is risen. **HE IS RISEN INDEED. ALLELUIA!**
His love breaks the power of death, the power of fear, the aching moments of uncertainty . . .

like a candle lit in a dark room, gently shining, bringing comfort;
like the sun rising over the horizon at dawn,
bringing colour to the skies, bringing day from the night;
like the light at the end of a tunnel, bringing hope and joy.

Alleluiah! The Lord is risen. **HE IS RISEN INDEED. ALLELUIA!**

Verses from Scripture, words of the Apostle Peter, offering hope to Christians who were being persecuted for their faith, encouraging them to live as people who belonged to Christ.

[StheF 311 - The day of resurrection, earth, tell it out abroad!](#)

(to access the links to the hymns/songs, hover cursor over the highlighted/coloured text, press and hold the ctrl key and click)

Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-8 - A Living Hope

O unfamiliar God, we seek you in the places you have already left, and fail to see you even when you stand before us.

Grant us so to recognise your strangeness that we need not cling to our familiar grief,

but may be freed to proclaim resurrection in the name of Christ.

Amen

A Taizé Chorus

Be not afraid, sing out for joy! Christ is risen, Alleluiah!

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Let's take a step back to what the gospel writer John tells happened in Jerusalem, beginning on the evening of Easter Day

The Gospel: John 20:19-29 – Resurrection Appearances.

I think if I'd been Thomas . . . I'd have been asking lots of questions! Even saying ***I want evidence that he is alive!*** I might have wanted to see the imprint of the nails, though being squeamish I wouldn't have wanted to touch Jesus' wounds. Like Thomas . . . I struggle to grasp that the resurrection of Jesus was real, to understand how he could be alive again. Thomas hadn't been there when Jesus appeared on the evening of Easter Day and much as I'm sure he longed to believe that Jesus was alive he couldn't. I think of him as the patron saint of those who share his doubts . . . he provides the link between the first confession of Jesus as risen Lord . . . and the believer of every age who needs to make the leap of faith but only succeeds in a stumbling confession of doubt - ***Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief!***

Christ's resurrection is a divine mystery, which we may want to solve!

During the weeks of 'lock down' Brian and I have watched a lot of television. We enjoy detective series, repeats of **Inspector Morse - New Tricks - Poirot** It's fun to pit our wits against the

story-teller, we are pleased if we're correct about who committed the crime or realised the solution to a mystery which had foxed the professionals!!

We cannot solve the mystery of how Jesus came back to life. We want answers, concrete evidence, to dispel the mystery. Like Thomas we need to see and touch! The resurrection of Jesus remains a mystery. Like Thomas, we were not there! Yet I do believe that we can learn the truth and come to appreciate what was real as we allow ourselves to be caught up in the experience which the stories in the gospels are seeking **to make real . . .**

*They had no vision amazing of the goodly house they were raising
They had no divine for knowing of the land to which they were going.
But on one man's soul it has broken, the light that shall not depart:
and his face - and a word he hath spoken **touched light in another
man's heart.***

(Part of a poem, Ode, by Arthur O'Shaughnessy, 1873)

Seems to me that the gospel writer John was seeking, in his stories of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, **to shed some light** in order to lead others to the faith he held.

The line of Christian faith stretches back across the years to Thomas - doubting Thomas as we sometimes call him - with a tone of voice which suggests that he deserves criticism.

I'm not sure about the criticism, but I think his story has a lot to teach us about questioning our faith and perhaps we should be grateful that John included Thomas' story in his gospel

I invite you to think about the story, imagine yourself being there with the disciples, and especially Thomas, wondering how you would have reacted . . .

May the light dawn as you read and reflect . . . to make it all real for you . . .

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Meditation - NEW LIFE

Living God, always making new, the resurrection of Jesus challenges us. We admit we find it hard to believe. It's not that we don't want to! We do!

But it is all so amazing. Can it really be true?

Thank you for those who have believed, trusted, obeyed, given their lives.

Thank you for your Church, bearer of the message, borne by the message.

We cannot push aside this great cloud of witnesses.

Your resurrection challenges us in the lives of the saints today... the well-known, public figures, and those folk we know in whose faces, and whose eyes

we catch a glimpse of resurrection hope, for their lives glow with your light.

Your resurrection challenges us to trust, to have faith, to follow; for if Christ is risen indeed then the world has changed.

We can hope. We can give ourselves to you. We can be confident in your love.

In hospital - at the graveside - in the moments of darkness and depression;

in loneliness - in pain - we can remember Christ is risen and there is nothing at all to separate us from your love.

Come, Lord Jesus, live in us. Come, Lord Jesus, we believe, at least a little,

help us to believe even more.

Come, Lord, and live in us, our home - our Church - our world.

Help us to live in you the new life, resurrection life, your life . . . in us.

Prayers for ourselves and others

with times of silence so we can each make our own prayers

Risen Lord, it is hard sometimes to believe.

In the face of frustrated hopes and broken dreams, of sorrow, suffering and death,

we too, like the disciple Thomas, can find ourselves doubting,

wanting proof before we dare to believe.

*Help us, even when faith is hard, even when it's a struggle to hold on,
to put our trust and faith in you, knowing you will not fail us.
Help us to see the truth... and to be filled with the glorious joy*

*Be present to us as we, and others for whom we pray, walk the lonely
path, and be a companion on the way in days of loneliness and grief...
Come when life mystifies and perplexes
Come into situations of disappointment and fearfulness*

*Open our eyes to recognise you. Give us courage to share the good
news of your coming
to those with whom we shall journey in the days to come. We offer
our prayers and the unspoken longings of our hearts in the name of
Jesus Christ Amen*

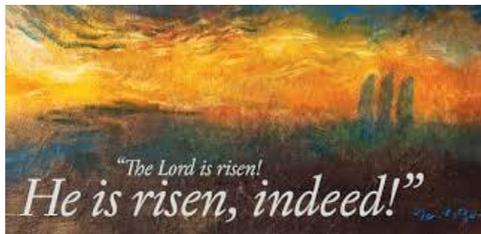
The Lord's Prayer

[Sthef 303 - I know that my Redeemer lives](#)

The Blessing and Dismissal

*Go in hope, the risen Christ goes before you.
God in peace, the risen Christ goes with you.
Go in love, the risen Christ lives within you.*

*And as you go, may the peace of God which passes all
understanding
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
rest upon you, and remain with you, always. **Amen***



Service prepared by Rev Rita Armitage; Hymns from *Singing the Faith*; Taizé song, "Be not afraid" from *Jesus Remember Me*, Taizé Songs; extract of Poem, *Ode*, by Arthur O'Shaughnessy, 1873