

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 18 April 2021 - Third Sunday of Easter

**Lectionary Readings** (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Acts 3.12-19; Psalm 4; I John 3.1-7; **Luke 24.36b-48**

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by the Revd Steven Rothwell, Curate Training Officer and Training Incumbent**

Over the past few weeks as we approach what we hope to be the final stages of lockdown and the end of a pandemic that has devastated so many lives, I've heard a few people say how much they have longed to be hugged. Or to be able to hold the hand of a grandchild or put their arm round a friend they haven't seen for a while.

Touching can be as routine as a handshake or a high five. It can be as exploitative as lustful pawing, as threatening as a clenched fist. Or, as Luke writes, touching can be the means whereby the risen Christ chooses to make himself known.

After Jesus' Emmaus appearance, the two disciples hurry back to Jerusalem, where their excited report falls flat. Then Jesus' sudden appearance scares them out of their wits. He shows them his hands and his feet and says, "Touch me and see that it is I myself; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Note that they did, however. The story is told carefully, so as not to make faith a tactile matter for a few privileged disciples; instead, it conveys a trust in the gospel word of Easter for everyone, for all time. The resurrected Christ, the text declares, is not the product of the disciples' overheated imagination. He is no ghost, no apparition.

In the beginning, as Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel portrays it, God touched humanity into being and in Jesus' ministry those who are outcast or diseased or in great need, were restored by his healing touch. The Easter God gives us back our touch when Jesus invites us to "touch and see."

*Touch nurtures.* Before birth we were enfolded in our mother's womb, then consoled by a parent's shoulder, then congratulated with hugs and kisses. Life's milestones are marked by touch. Many of us take the nurturing touch right into our liturgy, joining hands and embracing others in the passing of the peace. We might consider never to take such touching for granted. Acceptance, encouragement, trust and hope come through in the touch of hand upon hands as the risen Jesus touches us through others.

Sometimes when someone is very ill, perhaps close to death, many of their mental and

physical capacities are lost, but the sense of touch might remain. Often a carer will simply sit alongside a person and hold their hand.

*Touch reconciles.* In Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, the waiting father does not hold back in tight-lipped reticence, waving a sheet of conditions handed to him by the older brother sulking in the distance. Instead, he offers a bear hug of reconciling love that speaks of a love strong enough to bear a cross and to say with authority to frightened disciples, "Touch me and see." Through the open arms of forgiven and forgiving people, the deepest wounds are set upon a path of healing.

*Touch points us to the future.* The risen Jesus' invitation to touch and see portends what is yet to come for *our* bodies. We long for that fulfilment, to embrace the Christ and those long gone from us. In our society we are becoming more aware of the inappropriateness of touch when it can be abusive. No-one has the right to insist on touch when it is not welcome.

The other aspect of the reading from Luke today that really strikes me are Jesus' words 'Have you anything to eat?' A strange request for the resurrected son of God make. Or perhaps not, after all, this is Jesus and we have become accustomed to his taste for food and sharing food with friends and strangers alike. If his disciples aren't convinced that he really is Jesus by touching and seeing then perhaps they are by this very characteristic request to eat. And this is what makes our sharing of food as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christians so integral to our faith. It epitomises the essence of hospitality. Food is a central part of many religions – the sharing of a meal at a festival, or the giving of food as an offering.

What an important way to begin to relate and understand people – sharing food. I remember the story of local Muslims in this region who were in Cambridge a few years ago when a far-right extremist political group was going to demonstrate in the city expressing their contempt for those of other races and creeds. The Muslims in attendance were not going to hurl insults or abuse but were going to offer the extremists cake to eat. Perhaps by overwhelming hatred with hospitality they hoped to quench the situation or maybe to expose the bigotry of the demonstrators. It might have made them even more aggressive. Either way, it was a risk and hospitality often means taking a risk as we never know quite how our hospitality will be received.

We do well to gather our memories around things we can touch and eat, especially baptismal water and the bread and wine of the eucharistic meal. These are things we have sorely missed throughout the pandemic. The opportunity to sit and share food with others and the loving embraces that keep our relationships warm are things that enrich our lives. As we gather once again around the Lord's table and around tables in homes and restaurants, let us be thankful for the opportunity to sustain one another as we journey, hand in hand, sharing our food together in the assurance that God's love touches each of us this Easter season.

### **Suggested intercessions**

In today's Gospel we hear how when Jesus broke the bread the disciples' eyes were opened and they recognised him. Let us pray that our eyes, too, may be opened to God's infinite love.

May all our church leaders aspire to their integrity and deep faith and lead us forward into a bright future.

Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer**

For Peace in our troubled world, especially for those who suffer in places of violence and conflict. May Christ's love touch them with peace and safety.

Lord, in your mercy...

Let us pray for all who are lost and unlooked for, that the Lord will again show compassion to those who feel empty, and empower us to lead others into God's presence.

Lord, in your mercy...

For all who have died and especially those whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Lord, in your mercy...

In a moment of quiet we bring to God our own prayers and concerns for this day...

Silently we pray for our own intentions.

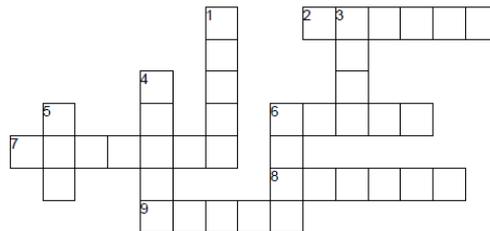
Loving God, we ask you to accept our prayers in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Suggested hymns/songs (all first lines)**

- All People that on Earth do Dwell
- Alleluia Sing to Jesus
- Be Thou my Vision
- Christ the Lord is Risen Today
- Crown him with Many Crowns
- God be in my Head

Some resources for children to use:

# Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

2. To deliver a sermon
6. The soft outer parts of the body; skin
7. Countries; territories where groups of people live
8. To feel pain
9. to handle or feel something with your fingers

DOWN

1. What the skeleton is made of
3. To return from death
4. A dead person appearing in a bodily form
5. To take in food through the mouth
6. An animal that lives in the water

|       |         |       |        |       |
|-------|---------|-------|--------|-------|
| RISE  | NATIONS | FISH  | SUFFER | BONES |
| TOUCH | EAT     | FLESH | PREACH | GHOST |



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# Children's Worship Bulletin

## Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Luke 24:36-48

### Word Search

### Puzzle

E Z X V O Z D G I C Z K H X S  
H Y G L B J E P C Z S G G X T  
E P H H P E A C E B U U K B Y  
S K O K R G D P I F F K T O U  
Z K S I P R E A C H F A X N Q  
Q W T D O U B T S A E W H E E  
S Q X U U Q R I S E R A A S E  
Z I F I X H F L B K R G M H M  
K E S F R F L Y K H A N D S B  
L F R B E L I U N O J S Q Z C  
D S Z J K E L Y N A T I O N S  
M P X G I S T L K Q Y J P F O  
G U C F F H X Q N V H O V I K  
H L S H A M M O V H L S X K X  
Q A D K K V I Q T D N U L R H

BONES  
DEAD  
GHOST

HANDS  
NATIONS  
FEET

PEACE  
PREACH  
RISE

SUFFER  
FLESH  
DOUBTS

# Colouring Page



Jesus Appears to the Disciples

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# Decoder Puzzle

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J  | K  | L  | M  | N  | O  | P  | Q  | R  | S  | T  | U  | V  | W  | X  | Y  | Z  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |

- 4-15-21-2-20-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7-8-15-19-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19-21-6-6-5-18 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2-15-14-5-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 14-1-20-9-15-14-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-12-5-19-8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-5-5-20 \_\_\_\_\_
- 18-9-19-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8-1-14-4-19 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4-5-1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

|        |       |        |       |         |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|
| DOUBTS | GHOST | SUFFER | BONES | NATIONS |
| FLESH  | FEET  | RISE   | HANDS | DEAD    |

