

Please hold in your prayers this week:

- Each of our village communities in lockdown
- All who are lonely, fearful and anxious
- All those who are affected by COVID-19 in any way
- Pubs and other businesses in our area who may be finding these times difficult
- Our schools (Grendon C of E Primary School, Denton Primary School and Yardley Hastings Primary School), their Headteachers, teachers, staff and pupils
- Young people struggling with doing schooling in challenging conditions
- The parents within our benefice, trying to work from home whilst teaching their children and keeping the home running
- The government and wider MPs as they lead our nation through these complex times
- The mass protests in Myanmar following the military coup, for all who have lost their lives in the protest, or whose lives are in danger.
- Those who are in residential care or housebound, among them: Audrey Desborough, Ruth Williams, Gwen York, Ann and Colin Dix
- Those struggling in body, mind or spirit, among them: John Payne (Yardley Hastings URC), Jenny Payne, Judith Keggins, Jane Cave, Freddie Hogan, Mandy Bates, Jo Cawley, Michelle Wright, Peter Vaughan and family
- The recently departed, amongst them Sue Good, Patricia Fraiel, and all who grieve at this time

REFLECTION

I recall at primary school learning about the Giant Redwoods in North America, massive trees which can be up to 85 m tall and 11 m in diameter. And you may have seen photos of a car driving through a trunk of one of these trees:

They grow mainly in what are called clonal colonies, deriving from a single parent tree. You would think they have deep, deep roots to anchor them against strong winds. But NO - their roots are actually shallow -- they spread out wide in search of surface water, and they reach in all directions, intertwining with roots of other redwoods. Locked together in this way, all the trees support each other in wind and storms.



All very interesting! But what's that to do with Easter, the disciples and Jesus turning up in a locked room? A couple of days after the crucifixion, confusion reigns, and the disciples are huddled together. Jesus, the one who had held them together, is dead & buried or so they thought. There's a sense of failure & loss, they'd let him down, disappointed with themselves and him, who had raised their hopes so high. Women came with stories about him being alive. No one really knew what was going on, so they stayed where they were and waited. And now, astonishingly, quietly, there he was amongst them. No trumpet fanfare, no recriminations, just "peace be with you". And the Holy Spirit. What an experience! And then he left them. Only the team wasn't together; Thomas was missing. Maybe nipped out to see someone, maybe needed a bit of time to himself, who knows?

Jesus could have said, "Tough! Hopefully he'll catch up with me sometime." Thomas missed out on that first meeting with Jesus, but he's not left behind. Jesus came back just for Thomas. The team was together, no-one left out.

Over this last year, we have had many opportunities to work together as "The Body of Christ" in our villages, supporting one another and our communities in different ways. Now, as we come towards the end of lockdown restrictions, it helps to remember how much like those redwood trees we really are. We need to stay connected to our parent tree – Jesus; the one who feeds each one and the one who breathes his Holy Spirit and gives life to each. And we still need to support one another and help one another – storms still happen, not just during a pandemic!

Blessings,
Rev'd Janet

The Collect

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

First reading

Acts 4: 32-35

The whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

1 John 1.1 - 2.2

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

John 20: 19-31

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord**

It was evening on 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.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with 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.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord God our Father,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ you have assured your children of eternal life and in baptism have made us one with him: deliver us from the death of sin and raise us to new life in your love, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

What Can I join in with in our Benefice?

Sunday	Service/zoom church at 10.00am	
Monday	Morning Prayer @8:30am	Evening Prayer @5:30pm
Tuesday	Morning Prayer @8:30am	Evening Prayer @5:30pm
Wednesday	Morning Prayer @8:30am	Midweek communion @ 9.30am at St Mary's, Grendon
Thursday	Morning Prayer @8:30am	Evening Prayer @5:30pm

Morning or Evening Prayer - all welcome to join, please email Rev Morna for a Zoom link revmorna@gmail.com

What Can I join in with further afield?

A virtual prayer walk from Turvey Abbey <https://youtu.be/Y37XaiKi6A8>

Services at Peterborough Cathedral - for more information please click here:
<https://www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk/services.aspx>

Church of England Church Online - for more information please click here:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/church-online>

The Church of England's free phone line with hymns, reflections and prayers - call 0800 804 8044

Listen and sing along to the hymn for the day - <https://www.rscm.org.uk/our-resources/hftd/>

Download the Daily Prayer app or Time to Pray app from your App Store which gives you services of prayer with set readings for the day.

BBC Radio 4 Prayer for the Day - Listen each day via the BBC Sounds App, here:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000r3q5> or listen live on BBC Radio 4 at 5:43 each morning.

BBC Radio 4 Daily Service - Listen each day via the BBC Sounds App or listen live on BBC Radio 4 at 9:45 each weekday morning.

BBC Radio 2 Pause for Thought - Listen each weekday on the BBC Sounds App, here:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p015nm0y/clips> or live on BBC Radio 2 at 9:20am.

BBC Radio 2 Good Morning Sunday - Listen each Sunday on the BBC Sounds App, here
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006wqvh> or live on BBC Radio 2 each Sunday at 6:50am.

Songs of Praise - Watch on BBC Two at 1:15 each Sunday, or catch up on iPlayer.

Something Interesting to Read or Listen to?

If you haven't discovered it yet, please take a look at Rev Morna's blog, which she's aiming to keep up to date with a mixture of photographs, reflections and poems: <https://teaandtheology.org>

On Being (<https://onbeing.org/>) is full of interesting things to read or listen to with interviews from so many marvellous minds.

Poetry Unbound (<https://onbeing.org/series/poetry-unbound/>) is a series of podcasts with Padraig O Tuama reading and exploring a poem - they are wonderful and Rev Morna highly recommends them to you.

Great is Thy Faithfulness by the World Vision Choir: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRXR2O_JBU&list=RDMM&start_radio=1