

Thank you to all those who responded to the Day of Prayer and gifts at Cudham Church. It's been great to see so many of you helping to support our church and churchyard. There's still time to contribute – have a look at our website pcd.org.uk to see how.

Here we are in the month mixed weather – April. Will it rain, will it be sunny – cold or hot? It's a time of uncertainty – a bit like the challenges faced by St Thomas, the follower of Jesus – The story of Doubting Thomas, found in the Gospel of John, offers a poignant exploration of doubt and faith. Thomas, initially sceptical of the disciples' claim that Jesus had risen from the dead, famously declared, "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."

However, when Jesus appeared to him and invited him to touch his wounds, Thomas's doubt dissolved into profound belief. His declaration, "My Lord and my God," serves as a testament to the transformative power of encountering the risen Christ.

The story of Doubting Thomas reminds us that doubt is a natural aspect of faith—a pathway to deeper understanding and conviction. It teaches us that it's okay to question, to seek evidence, and to wrestle with uncertainty. And ultimately, it shows us that faith is not the absence of doubt, but rather the courage to confront it and the willingness to be transformed by encountering the divine. Through the story of Doubting Thomas, we are invited to embrace our doubts, to seek answers, and to journey toward a deeper and more authentic faith.

Later on this year, Bishop Simon will be coming to Cudham and Downe to lead a service of confirmation – a time when those new to faith can express their faith in saying 'yes' to Jesus, and as part of the preparation for that I want to invite you to come along to a series of meeting where you can express your doubts and encounter the divine too. We'll be basing our preparation around a 3 week course called 'Hope Explored', - a short introduction to the hope, peace and purpose that can be found in Jesus.

To find out more and to discover this hope for yourself, why not contact me soon at vicar@pcd.org.uk

Rev John Musson