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Sunday 11th April 2021 Second Sunday of Easter

Collect

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. **Amen**

1st Reading: Acts 4: 32 – 35

Now 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

New Testament Reading: 1 John 1: 1 – 22

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.

The Gospel – John 20: 19 - 31

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." 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.

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**

Reflection

The bad news was that Jesus had died. He was crucified and they wouldn't see him again.

The good news was that He was alive and they had seen Him, though not all of them.

It remains for us, even now, such a lot to understand and take in, so imagine what it was like for those disciples, just hours from having seen their Lord dead on a cross and then to see Him apparently alive and well? Mind blowing doesn't really describe it.

What do you do when you fear everything around you is under threat, even your life? Gathering together for comfort and safety is wise in the circumstances. The door is locked and you can share your sadness in quiet solitude. But that was not allowed to happen in quite the way the disciples anticipated. Jesus came among them and greeted them with words of peace. This was Jesus, the marks of death were there to see. How, they could not believe, but yet their Lord was alive and in their midst.

John is the only gospel writer to include this scene and he does so to reinforce that Jesus is alive, but also to point out that Jesus still had work for them to do. They received authority with the giving of the Holy Spirit, to

speaking and acting in Jesus' name. *"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."* Rather than hide in the safety of locked rooms, they are called to act and go out, with the now very special GOOD NEWS – that Jesus Christ is Risen.

Thomas is not present the first time Jesus appears and John uses his natural scepticism to make the point that even though we might not have hard evidence, believe that Jesus lives and He has a job for us to do. *"Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."* Thomas' reaction is enthusiastic to say the least, *"My Lord and my God!"*

Within weeks this group of fearful disciples, including Thomas, would be in the world, confidently proclaiming the risen Lord to all peoples. *With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.*

Acts 4.33

What changed for these men and women who spoke with such authority? Jesus was the difference, as He had been all the way through their time with Him. In Jesus they found truth, understanding and compassion. In Jesus they saw the power and redemption of healed bodies and minds through the gift of trust and faith. Jesus was then and still now remains the difference in how we see life best lived.

The great mystery of faith is perhaps best understood in that moment when Jesus came and stood among them in the locked room and said, *Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."*

If we are people of confidence in the faith that we claim, then we do so in the power of the Holy Spirit and with the gift of Christ's peace ever present in our lives. In exchanging the PEACE, we are at one and the same time giving and receiving Jesus into our lives. We share Christ, not in some half hearted way, but in a full blooded exclamation, THE PEACE OF CHRIST...be with you.

There are questions however, that remain for each of us to ponder and they are, *what is Christ's peace and how do I embrace it and so let it guide my living?*

What do we feel the peace of Christ feels like? What can knowing Christ's peace enable us to do? How do we live our lives in such a way that Christ's peace is understood and desired by others?

Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." John 20.26

Revd Ian Gardner

Intercessions

In the power of the Holy Spirit
And in union with Christ let us pray to the Father,

Jesus showed the disciples the marks of the nails and said, 'Peace be with you.'

Loving God as we look at the world in the light of the resurrection and the hope that it brings, we see all too clearly the mark of the nails of suffering and the sore need for peace.

We pray for the worldwide Anglican Communion where in many places there is persecution and suffering. We pray for the Gloucester Diocese and its bishops, Rachel and Robert, and all its clergy and lay leadership, who are ministering to communities deeply traumatised by inability to meet and share worship over this past year.

**V. May the resurrection of Christ
R. Bring peace healing and hope.**

We pray for our local community and all who bear the marks of the nails, through sickness, poverty, prejudice or lack of opportunity. We pray for bodies like GL11 and the Vale Hospital who seek to bring hope and healing into our communities.

**V. May the resurrection of Christ
R. Bring peace, healing and hope.**

We pray for the people of Syria who continue to bear the marks of the nails of persecution and suffering. For the people of Myanmar, under military rule which is violent and cruel. For international bodies who seek to make public what is happening, and to bring peace with justice.

**V. May the resurrection of Christ
R. Bring peace, healing and hope.**

We acknowledge our blindness to the scale of damage to the environment, caused by human action. Encourage us to open our eyes to ways we can change and to pray for those groups around our world who seek to challenge and make long-lasting change.

**V. May the resurrection of Christ
R. Bring peace, healing and hope.**

Let us remember those individuals in our community who for whatever reason bear the marks of the nails of suffering and who have asked for our prayers John, Dave, Sue, Lynne, Mary, Frances, Joan, Norma, Phil, Pat, Joan, Jean, Jack

**V. May the resurrection of Christ
R. Bring peace, healing and hope.**

Let us hold in our prayers those who have died and those who grieve at their dying Heneage Brooke, Rose Sharpe, Kevin Pagett and Simon Wyatt.

**V. May the resurrection of Christ
R. Bring peace, healing and hope.**

We conclude our prayers with words from the Wild Goose Community:

This morning, in the multi-coloured company of your Church on earth and in heaven, we celebrate your creation, your life your death and resurrection, your interest in us; so we pray:

Lord, Bring new life, where we are worn and tired; new love, where we have turned hard-hearted; forgiveness, where we feel hurt and where we have wounded; and the joy and freedom of your Holy Spirit, where we are prisoners of ourselves. *Revd David Vonberg*

If you would like someone who is currently unwell or in particular need of prayer to be named on the weekly pew sheet, please email the parish office giving the person's name and also your name as the contact

Pastoral Care

Please continue to let Canon Michael (546459), Revd Ian Gardner (546895) or Revd Jane Wood (07983 623525) know of those who need to be contacted or those who need to be contacted or are in hospital and we will get in touch. Marion Kee (860364) or Pat Jones (860696) are happy to be contacted for Uley, Owlpen and Nympsfield

Please continue to check the Ewelme Family Facebook page and the Benefice website www.ewelmebenefice.co.uk regularly and if there are members who you know do not use any of these media, please let them know what is going on.

Printed copies of the weekly pew sheet are available to pick up from the porch in St James from Friday lunchtime. The porch will be left open every day. For those who can't come into Dursley, especially from Nympsfield or Uley, please do contact the office if you know of someone who would appreciate a printed copy.

Churches are still open for private prayer

The pattern for opening the churches continues to be:
St James, Dursley: Mondays & Thursdays from 9.30am
St Giles, Uley: Tuesdays & Fridays from 10am
St Bart's, Nympsfield: Wednesdays & Sats from 10am

Service Sheet for Worship at Home

If you are unable to join the Sunday services, please do make use of the reflective service for use at home alongside the prayers and readings for the day which can be found on this pew sheet.

If you would like a copy please contact the office
ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com

Zoom Service for Sunday 11th April Easter 2

Topic: Ewelme Benefice- Benefice Holy Communion
Time: 11th April, 2021 09:45 AM. Service starts at 10am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89067301045?pwd=c1R4czB4VkvZMU42SIFwdHJFT0t5dz09>

Meeting ID: 890 6730 1045 Passcode: 980187
To join by phone, dial: 0203 901 7895 or 0131 460 1196 United Kingdom

About an hour after the service, a recording will be uploaded to YouTube. Go into YouTube and search Ewelme Benefice.

Morning Prayer in April via Zoom

9.00am: Apr 14, Apr 21, Apr 28

To join the Zoom Service click:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87577090443?pwd=TFBDTVR3K09jS2loYWZkUEFhNThsZz09>

Meeting ID: 875 7709 0443 Passcode: 264816
To join by phone, 0131 460 1196 or 0203 051 2874

Evening Prayer via Zoom

This has been paused for the next two weeks with the hope of resuming during week beginning 19th April. Further details to follow

Next Sunday 18th April 3rd Sunday of Easter

10.00am Holy Communion in St Giles, Uley
10.00am Holy Communion in St James, Dursley
(this service will be live-streamed)

Food Bank

The Food Bank is now operating and donations are welcome. Uley village shop and both Tesco's and Sainsbury's have food donating points which can be used. Please continue to donate.



Christian Aid

Bishop Rachel writes in the Gloucester Diocese Bulletin:

"As you and your family members are vaccinated, I would like to encourage you to show your thanksgiving by making a donation to the work of Christian Aid. Whilst the cost of vaccination in the Global South is being met, organisations such as Christian Aid are working with communities where the impact of Covid has added further pain, struggles and challenges to those which already existed, amid poverty, injustice and lack of resources."

Canon Michael says;

'I have had my first vaccination and made a donation to Christian Aid to give thanks for the skill of those who have developed the vaccine.

Click this link to donate

<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/2021/generosity-in-thanksgiving-for-vaccinations/>

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll for Uley, Owlpen and Nympsfield is now open for revision and names can be added. If you want to check whether you are already on the Roll, or if you would like an application form, please email Charles Drewett (Electoral Roll Officer) on charlesdrewett@hotmail.com

Dursley's Electoral roll is now open for revision prior to the Annual Meetings on 23rd May. If you want to check whether you are on the Roll, or if you would like an application form, please email Chris Raffle (Electoral roll Officer) on rafflechristine@gmail.com

Parish Office is closed

During the current lockdown, Clive will be working from home. You can email him on ewelmeeparishoffice@gmail.com He will also check for any messages left on the office answer machine.

Easter Flowers

Many thanks to Jo Rymer and her team for the lovely flowers inside St Giles, and for the Easter Cross in the churchyard.

Donations towards the cost of the flowers, perhaps in memory of a loved one, would be gratefully received.

You can give online (see Ewelme Benefice website for details), but there will also be envelopes available at the St Giles services on 18th and 25th April
IPauline Thomas

Off duty time

Canon Michael and Revd Jane are both taking some time off until 12th April

Visit us on Facebook : Ewelme Benefice Family

Stewardship, Parish Giving Scheme, gifts and donations

Very many thanks to all members of our church community who have helped us financially by registering for the Parish Giving Scheme, increasing contributions through the Parish Giving Scheme, sending cheques to the treasurers or making bank transfers into our parish bank accounts.

These acts of generosity are really, really appreciated.

Please visit our website for quick and tax efficient online ways of giving -

<https://ewelmebenefice.co.uk/coronavirus/>.

You can also donate directly via on-line banking:

Uley account:

Barclays 20-33-83 A/C 43042057

Dursley account:

Lloyds 30-98-29 A/C 02391588

Dursley PCC