

**Sunday 19 April 2020**

The paper-version Service



*For now, we cannot meet in the building – but the church is still open!*

# Happy Easter

**The Weekly Service Sheet:** All of our services are on-line [www.goodshepherdfourmarks.org.uk](http://www.goodshepherdfourmarks.org.uk) but we're producing this weekly sheet which captures our Sunday service for those who can't access internet.

If you know of others who'd like to receive this, or you'd rather not receive them yourselves; or if you find yourself isolated and not able to get neighbours, friends or family to help, then ring Howard, 01420 563344.

**To Begin:** Enjoy the Service: Grab a Bible, if safe, perhaps light a candle, find a comfortable place and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin.

**Hallelujah, Christ is Risen – He is Risen indeed, Hallelujah!**

**Opening Prayer:** Father God, thank you meet with us where we are and invite us in. Thank you that you receive us with loving kindness. We offer ourselves to you, our failures and our joys. We receive your forgiveness and offer our thanks and worship. As we today the wonderful story of your resurrection, help us to receive your peace and know your joy. Help us, full of your Holy Spirit to declare your love to the world by our deeds and words to the glory of your name. Amen

**Read:** John 20.19-31.

**Living** (A summary of Howard's talk for 19 April): There had been so much fear and anguish, for the disciples but now, Jesus is alive.

There is much fear and anguish for us, but Jesus is alive; do take this in: Jesus is alive. It changes everything. Death, our greatest enemy, the one seeming dead-end, is defeated, hope is alive, God and his love win.

In our reading Jesus comes to his disciples and says, 'Peace be with you'. It's understood that this is likely usual greeting of the day. Much like our, 'Hi, how are you?' But, Jesus' greeting of peace is not an empty greeting but here it takes on a new importance. Jesus offers peace to the troubled disciples and he offers it today to us in our concerns and he offers it to our anxious world. Jesus' action on the cross has bought a deep peace to the world and an answer to the terrifying problem of death. There is no more fear. We, as the Bible is, must be honest, there is pain and grief, but it cannot anymore overwhelm us or defeat the hope, the peace and love of God at work in us.

There will absolutely, completely, certainly be a day when all pain and tears are wiped away – God and his love have won

On seeing and hearing Jesus, the disciples are overjoyed. Psalm 30

says: 'Tears may flow in the night, but joy comes in the morning.'

Can we know joy in these moments? Yes, but, joy is not pretending things are not as they are. The Joy of the Lord is not a demented laugh, or a shallow temporary happiness. God's joy comes from a deep sense of security in the certainty of God and his work in us, and among us. It comes from a thankfulness for the good things we have had and enjoy today.



Joy is one of our church values and this joy can be ours as we take time to hear Jesus' greeting to us, 'Peace be with you' and his words of grace: 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. Joy is a portion of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Power is the outworking of the Holy Spirit, and mission, the Spirit's purpose as He gives glory to God the Father through the Son.

And we are sent by Jesus, with His Spirit, as he himself was sent by the Father. The word apostle means 'sent-one'. We are sent to proclaim

the forgiveness of sins. Death, sickness, disease, disintegration of human relationships, seen in quarrels, abuse, oppression, inequality and ultimately war, have all come about because of sin – including that of our own!

We are sent by Jesus to proclaim the forgiveness of sins as a gift to all creation. The kingdom message is ‘repent’, or simply ‘turn to God, call on him, ask him for help’ and receive the forgiveness of your sins.

Jesus has taken our sin and it’s nailed to the cross, paid for by the self-sacrifice of God, the perfect Son, for us.

We, like Thomas might not be sure about this. Is it for real? Is Jesus alive? Is Jesus God and does he love me? Does he have everything under control? Are my sins forgiven? Can I know this peace, this joy, his love?

The Bible encourages honesty about our struggles. We all have doubts, read Psalm 89 if you have any doubts about this! And, Jesus meets Thomas where he is and Thomas responds, ‘My Lord and My God!’

One day every person will have to acknowledge Jesus. Right now, we

are sent to invite them to come



willingly and receive his love. We are called to be a people who declare by our lives, our love and our words that the fear of death has been defeated. That there is the forgiveness of sins through Jesus’ death and that this Jesus is alive, bringing peace, hope and joy to all today who will receive him.

Today we are restricted in our meeting with people, except we can pray, we have phones, the internet, even letters and we might see our neighbours, even if socially distanced. Do keep in touch with others, reach out with smiles, deeds and words as appropriate. If you know of needs you can’t meet but together as a church, we might be able to, then contact me.

Tomorrow, even greater opportunity will arise – we are being prepared. Let’s be ready to declare the risen Lord.

**Prayers:** I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV)

Pray for the day ahead and its tasks

Pray for the nations

Pray for organisations

Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends

Pray for the Church

Pray for peace

**A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus:** Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

**Blessing to be declared over yourselves, COGS, the communities around us and our whole nation.** The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV)

### **The Notices:**

Our Staff, Ministry Leaders and PCC are all working from home and are keeping up to date using on-line technology. Do contact us if you have questions/concerns starting with Howard on 01420 563344.

