

Worship at Home—11 April 2021
Second Sunday of Easter

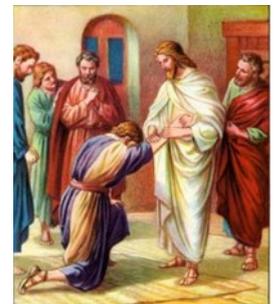
Worship Leader—Grant Gordon
Scripture Reader—Bill Wood

Call to Worship

We gather with joy, for Easter continues. Locked doors have been opened and fear has turned to peace.

We celebrate the presence of the Risen Christ among us. Doubts have been erased and uncertainty has turned to faith.

Let us rejoice and be glad! Let us offer our prayers and our praise with humble, hopeful hearts.



HYMN—Crown him with many crowns—CH4 459 (Words on page 8)

Prayer of Approach, Confession and Thanksgiving

God of vibrant life, of rich soil and roaring sea, of fruit and flower, of seed and crop, of starry sky beyond our knowing, of gentle beauty in the pastel sunrise bringing us the new day, we thank you Lord that early in the morning, a voice in a guarded graveyard and footsteps in the dew proved that you had risen, that you came back to those and for those who had forgotten, denied and destroyed you.

We thank you for the message of Easter, for the assurance it brings of your triumph over death. The proof it offers that love will always have the last word and that Easter is not for the few but for all, not just the disciples, but the whole world.

Lord Jesus Christ, it is hard sometimes to believe in the face of frustrated hopes and broken dreams, of sorrow, suffering and death. We too, like Thomas, can find ourselves doubting, wanting irrefutable proof

before we dare accept what we are told. You appeared to Thomas and gave him the assurance he wanted but you also told him that those who have not seen but still believe are most blessed of all.

Yet even as we delight in Easter's promise we confess we have not always lived it out. Forgive us Lord for the times when we have felt it has just been too much bother or we have been gripped by the fear of doing what we know to be right in the face of public opinion. Forgive us when we cling to our personal agendas, seeking our interests before the needs of others. In our humanity we stumble, we fail, we hurt and fall short of acknowledging how blessed we are.

Turning to you now Lord we offer our confession, trusting in your forgiveness. Let us in silence confess our failings and acknowledge our part in the pain of the world This prayer we ask in the name of the Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

READING from John 20; 19—31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

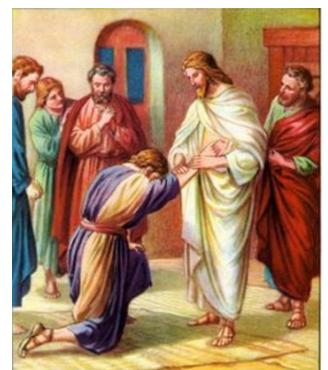
Now Thomas (also known as didymus) one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "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."

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

Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"



Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The Purpose of John's Gospel

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD. THANKS BE TO GOD AMEN.

BELIEVING WITHOUT SEEING

Let us Pray. Loving God, breathe Your Spirit upon us that we may receive Your Word, familiar though it may be at this Easter season, afresh and anew. Take my lips and speak through them; take our minds and think through them; take our hearts and set them on fire. This we ask in Your name. Amen.

If we are Christians Easter is for us the biggest moment in life, or it should be. Easter is our definitive day as it casts its beautiful shadow across every facet of every day of every year. Yet for many people Good Friday is far easier to understand than is Easter Day surrounded as it is with a certain reticence, for no one had a cine camera on Easter Day, no one took a picture of Jesus walking out of the tomb, we simply have people to testify that the man who was dead was now experienced as alive. I have heard it explained that Easter is not a jigsaw that we can put together when we manage to get all the right parts in the right order and in the right place. Easter is a wonder to be experienced, and if we let it, this wonder will change us. It will open us up to believe, even though we cannot explain it.

If we put the resurrection appearances in the context of Jesus' ministry, a ministry centred on care, compassion, kindness and love, all the appearances that take place in the Gospels are to restore broken relationships, not to win affirmation and support and approval of the resurrection. As she wept outside the tomb with her heart breaking in a thousand pieces Mary Magdalene heard the voice "Mary" and she knew that the one who was dead was alive. Here was Peter that broken reed, that big mouthed man who was so certain of his conviction and yet when the cock crowed in Jerusalem on that early morning there was a man who died a thousand deaths for he said "I don't know who you are talking about," and ran to safety and security and betrayed that he even knew Jesus. But, in Mark's version of the resurrection when Mary Magdalene was told to tell the disciples that Jesus would see them in Galilee, Peter's name was specifically included in that message. And that message of inclusiveness is not diminished by the passing of the years for even today no one is excluded from the all-embracing love of Jesus.

The Sunday after Easter takes us each year into a room full of frightened adults. These men had just witnessed a violent scene: the execution of their leader. A psychologist of our day might say that they were traumatized. The doors were locked, the bolt had been pushed home, the key had been turned

because their fear was palpable and well founded. Rumours were abounding of a roundup of the followers of Jesus so that order and respect for the authorities would be restored. To this day Christian minority communities around the world experience similar things. The holidays of Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter are favoured times for vicious terror attacks on defenceless worshippers with maximal public scare effect. Coptic Christians in Egypt, Pentecostals in Pakistan, Episcopal believers in Northern Nigeria, they all know times when it might be wise to stay at home. And only on Palm Sunday past a Roman Catholic Cathedral in Indonesia was attacked by a newly married couple suspected of having militant links.

And for ourselves have you ever tasted the colossal safety that closing your own front door behind you can bring? Nothing is different, the problems are as great as ever, the world won't go away, but the door is locked and stands between us and whatever is out there and when we are terrified, that is what matters. So it was when the disciples were terrified that Jesus came to them, when they were afraid, when they felt that all they believed in was lost. And sometimes we need to hear that message of reassurance. It is not when we are at our best; not when we are strong; not when we are full of good humour and confidence and effectiveness; but when we cannot cope, when we are at the bottom of the pit, when we don't know where to turn too, when we are afraid, when we feel furthest from God, the crucified and risen Christ comes to give hope instead of despair.

Since lockdown began in March last year many people have faced terrible times. The death of loved ones, and not being able to say their goodbyes. The diagnoses of serious illness, and not being able to talk things through with their nearest and dearest face to face. Intensive Care Units being close to being overrun with Covid patients. The spectre of unemployment, of businesses collapsing. The wasted lives and opportunities of young people whose lives are stalled because work is hard to find and education is restricted. The toll on mental health—including loneliness, suicidality and not coping well with stress—are worse now than at the start of the *pandemic*. *Is it little wonder that* people have been angry with God, shaken their fist at God, questioned God, doubted God, even walked away from God because there appears to be no word for them, no comfort, no hope. Yet, of all the disciples of Jesus, Thomas is perhaps the one with whom we today have most in common for we live in an age of scepticism where questioning and doubting are part of everyday life at all levels of business and society. And some may say no more so than now as we head towards the election of a new Scottish Parliament on 6 May.

So let us return to the story when one week later the disciples were all together; their heads were still swimming; their hearts beating faster than they ever had. They were living on adrenaline. Thomas must have been flabbergasted. He had not been with the others when the first Jesus sightings had taken place. Had their imagination ran away with them, he might have thought. Dead men stay dead especially when they have been beaten, crucified and struck with a spear. Especially when the only person Thomas had ever met who could raise people from the dead, is the one who died on the Cross. If Thomas had said it once he had said it a dozen times and finally so exasperated had he become that he said, "Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my



finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” There is an uncompromising honesty about Thomas for all he wanted was what others already had—evidence. And when he met Jesus at that second appearance in the Upper Room the marks of Jesus’ authority were plain for all to see. His hands and his side bore all the insignia Thomas needed. This was crucified majesty; but it was still majesty for all of that. Thomas’s reaction was authentic: “My Lord and my God.” If locked doors are as nothing, might not faithlessness and fear themselves come to submit to his mystery and his majesty? If locked doors are as nothing, might not even the darkness of human hearts be lit up by His mystery and His majesty?

Christ did not criticise or belittle Thomas for his doubts. Rather, he affirmed Thomas in his doubting, and helped him move beyond it to faith. He understood Thomas’ initial scepticism. Perhaps Christ was saying to Thomas: “Doubting is nothing to be ashamed of. Doubting is okay. Doubting is a part of life”. This is true for us. Having doubts about our faith, or about anything, is nothing in itself to be ashamed of, or to be escaped or hidden from. For us, in our uncertainties, Thomas can be the patron saint. Thomas is the one who can give us courage to face our doubts. Indeed, Thomas’s experience calls us to make the links between the wounded world and our faith. In the wounded we are called to see the Christ.

When our hearts and minds are open to the wounds of our world today, we begin to see, in a hundred new ways, the meaning of the first Easter. Never just a “spiritual” message, but something far more significant. A transforming and living God who has entered completely into the human condition, the reality of which reminds us that the masses huddled in misery and squalor in refugee camps across the world are not just masses, they are people, and that the driven and fanatical suicide bombers are people, and that the homeless who walk our streets are people, and that it was for people that Christ lived and Christ died and Christ was raised.

And when the world looks around for the signs of the risen Christ, what does it look at? It looks at you and me. And what does it see? Does it see lives centred on Christ’s ministry of care, compassion and love? Does it see people able to acknowledge the broken places in their lives, the meaningless places, the hurt places, the diseased places? It takes a particularly big kind of personal greatness to be able to acknowledge fault and failing—and mean it. None of us likes to do that—but I imagine there’s not one of us who, in the past week, hasn’t got something to be sorry about. An unkind thought, an unkind word, a selfish action. In these days after Easter, Jesus says to you and to me—“Tell me, be honest with me, be honest with yourself. And look and see what I can do for you.”

The place of the Gospel is the world. It is the place where the Word becomes flesh, where we come face to face with the tragic record of Good Friday that goes on and on and where we are challenged not to betray the master, but instead gladly accept and respond to his discipleship call.

So do we truly believe in a bright and amazing God who has been to the depths of despair on our behalf, who has risen in splendour and majesty; who decorates the universe with sparkling water, clear white light, twinkling stars and sharp colours, over and over and over again? The message of this Easter season is that God walks where we walk, our wounds are His wounds, our lacerations His lacerations, He hurts when we hurt, He cries out when we cry out in pain. And in a spirit fractured, heart-broken world the risen

Christ can fill the void, bring meaning into our meaninglessness, lift from our shoulders the burdens that we can no longer carry, roll away whatever stones keep us imprisoned and when we present ourselves at His door we will find it open, and standing there with outstretched arms to embrace us is God himself, the very same God who is with us every moment of our lives. For all of us, every single person can say:

Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Yes, he is risen, and let the people say "he is risen indeed." So be it. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

The Lord calls us to draw close and examine the wounded hands and feet of the Risen One and to know the depth of his love for us. Let us therefore approach God in confidence as we pray for a needy world.

God of all, of all people, times and places we open our hearts to your world and all its people, bringing our hopes and our fears, ready to be transformed in our thoughts and our actions. After more than a year of pandemic, teamed with the sorrows and suffering of racism, on-going gender-based violence, persistent environmental apathy, and a myriad of other ills and injuries, the world is in need of resurrection.



Resurrection God, we pray for all those divided from others, by political, social or historical barriers, the places in the world where conflict and violence are rife, Yemen, Syria, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Myanmar and the many others who are no longer the focus of our attention. Merciful God bring meaningful peace, healing and reconciliation where none exists at present.

Resurrection God, where there is isolation and indifference, abandonment and alienation, longing and loneliness, fill the emptiness with life and love. For the many who find life unbearable, the deeply distressed and depressed, those in overwhelming and unrelenting pain, those who draw near to death and those who mourn, bring them comfort.

Resurrection God, for places where nature has been harsh and we have been thoughtless in caring for your creation we pray that the United Nations' Climate Conference in Glasgow later this year will bring clarity of thought and action in how to avoid dangerous climate change.

Resurrection God, roll away the stones of injustice and inequality and at a time when our country heads towards an Election on 6 May we pray for all who are standing as candidates, may they seek the good of others rather than be concerned with self-advancement, and for those who will cast their votes, may they too look beyond self-interest to the wider needs of our country as a whole.

Resurrection God, we thank you for your church, in all its diversity and especially we thank you for the technology that enables us to worship on-line. Lord,

where your church is in danger—protect it;
where your church is too comfortable—disturb it;
where today your church stands with the poor—affirm it;
where your church hides behind the rich—confront it;
where your church proclaims its risen Lord—fill it with your love

God of all, of all people and places, we also carry in our hearts the names of many people who need our prayers and in the silence we bring them before you now

Resurrection God, we bring these prayers before you in the knowledge that you can create light out of darkness, hope from cracks of despair, even life out of death and so grant us the spiritual strength you alone have to offer us, the peace you can give us as the world cannot give, the wisdom and assurance we only find in being our truest selves before you our maker, redeemer Lord and King. These prayers we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour who taught us to pray saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.
Amen

HYMN – To God be the glory – CH4 512 (Words on page 8)

BLESSING:

Let the grace, the power, the example and the love of the Risen Christ, renew, inspire and shine from us. Go in faith, to walk his way, and make him known to his glory.

Amen.

St Luke's Leprosarium Lenten Appeal

Our Lenten Appeal has once again shown the incredible generosity of the Currie Kirk congregation.

Between us we have raised an amazing £1,700 for St Luke's Leprosarium in South India.

So thank you all so much for your fantastic support.

Hamish Leal



CH4 459—Crown him with many crowns

Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne;
While heaven's anthem drowns
all music but its own:
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for to be
your Saviour and your matchless King
through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life
triumphant from the grave;
Who rose victorious from the strife
for those he came to save;
His glories now we sing
who died, and reigns on high.
He died, eternal life to bring
and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of peace!
his Kingdom is at hand
from pole to pole, let warfare cease,
and Christ rule every land:
A city stands on high,
his glory it displays
and there the nations 'Holy' cry
in joyful hymns of praise.

Crown him the Lord of years!
the Potentate of time,--
Creator of the rolling spheres,
majesty sublime!
All hail! Redeemer,--hail!
for you have died for me;
Thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity!

CH4 512—To God be the glory

To God be the glory, great things he has done
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son, who
yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory! Great things he has done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God;
for every offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Praise the Lord!

Great things he has taught us, great things he has
done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son: but
purer, and higher, and greater will be
our joy and our wonder, when Jesus we see.

Praise the Lord!



Currie Kirk Guild

We had a wonderful meeting last Tuesday when we were treated to “The Life and Music of Ella Fitzgerald” brought to us by Derek Blyth. The only thing that could have improved it would have been more songs but time was against us. It is fascinating to learn about the struggles that people go through to succeed in their chosen professions.

This Tuesday, 13 April, we will have our normal coffee and chat at 11am—please join us if you can.

The following Tuesday will be the AGM which normally signals the end of our Guild session. This will be an evening meeting. If you have any items for inclusion on the agenda, please let me have them **by 13 April**. All necessary materials will be emailed or delivered to each member.

Don't forget any donations for the project—The Boy's Brigade—can be given either to Mary Thomson or left at GCH and Nina will deliver them.

It is heartening to hear how many of our members have received their second vaccination or been given a date for it. They seem to be rolling them out sooner than expected.

So look after yourselves and take care of each other.

Louise Lamont Guild President

Kirk Contacts

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email currie_kirk@btconnect.com if you need anything.

We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden.

Website: [//www.curriekirk.org/](http://www.curriekirk.org/) or [//www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/](https://www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/)

All sermons from Currie Kirk can be found on the Kirk's website and on YouTube—search Currie Kirk

Seeing is believing

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

Prepare yourself...

Lord Jesus, we often have questions.
(raise one hand in air)
We don't always find an answer,
(shake head)
but we know we can trust you
with the worries inside us. (hand on heart)
Help us always to look to you (point to eyes)
when we are unsure.
Amen.



Question...



What would you ask Jesus if you had the chance?

Challenge

Look up some optical illusions online. Can you work out what is really going on?
You could try creating your own optical illusion. Here's a link to a simple one you could make at home: <https://www.science-sparks.com/make-an-optical-illusion/>



Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in John 20:19-31. You can read them in a Bible or find them here.

You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage. This video by Saddleback Kids is a helpful way to see the story: Jesus appears to Thomas. You could try drawing a comic strip of the story. Draw a scene for each part of the story, showing what you think are the most important parts of each scene.



Talk together...

- * How do you know if something is true or false?
- * Do you ever question if someone is telling you the truth? What would convince you that what they are saying is true?
- * Is it important to test things? Why/why not?
- * What things are difficult to test?

Thomas wanted to believe Jesus had come back to life, but he needed proof to believe it. It mattered so much that he needed to know and see for himself. Thomas didn't assume that what the other disciples told him was true, he wanted to experience it first-hand, and he did.

- * What was Thomas's reaction after he saw Jesus?
- * What are some doubts you have/have had about God?
- * What signs help you believe in God? For example, someone's kindness, the beauty of nature? If someone asked, what is your "evidence" for your faith?

Play together...

Two truths and a lie: Invite each person to tell 3 stories or facts about themselves. 2 of these should be true and one should be false.

Can you work out which is the lie for each person?

Call my bluff: Have a list of unusual, uncommon words. In two teams (or individually) give each team one of the words. They must give the true meaning of the word and two or three false but believable meanings. The other team has to decide which they think is the true definition. An example/online quiz can be found here:

<https://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz/quiz1852241535cc8.html>

Pray together...

Write down some of the doubts or questions you have for God.

Then write down what you know to be true about God.

Pray:

God, just like Thomas, we sometimes doubt and have questions. Sometimes we want proof. Help us with these things that test our faith. Remind us of who you are and help us to remember the truth, even in the midst of doubts.

Amen.

Make something...

Banner: On a large piece of paper or roll of paper write the word 'believe'.

Use whatever craft materials you have to decorate the banner. Perhaps include some pictures or words or symbols that represent things that help you to trust in God.

Put your banner on display and let it be a reminder to you that even when we doubt or have questions, God is always there and we can trust him.



Praise together...



I've got no doubt
This I believe (The creed)
He will hold me fast