A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

On the day of Pentecost, Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd, ‘Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.’ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added to their number.

Acts 2.14, 36–41

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

On that same day, two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ Jesus asked them, ‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Jesus.’ Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.


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Churchwardens: David Simpson & a Vacancy
Readers: Farhad Hedayat & Flis Banks
Pastoral Visitor (SPA): Sarah Castle
Director of Music: Tom Theakston

Sunday 26 April 2020
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Collect
Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope: strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Post Communion
Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in all his redeeming work; who is a live and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.

Green Prayer
Creator God, who placed this planet and all its resources into our care, encourage those who now remind us of our responsibilities, both to you and future generations, to do all that is necessary, whatever the cost, to save this world that we call home, so our children and theirs might not look back, both in shame and anger, at what we, in denial, have failed to do. Amen.

Prayer by John Birch -https://www.faithandworship.com

Alleluia
He is Risen

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FOR OUR PRAYERS

Those who are ill or in need: Tony Stokes; Michael Green; Jenny Smith; Sarah Pitman; Hilary Brazier; Joyce Smith; Sachin Shah;
Pray also for those who have the COVID-19 virus and those who are working to treat them, particular those members of Christ Church who work for the NHS.

Those who have died: Rufus Crompton; Jolene Naylor; Revd. Simon Crawley. We also pray for those known and unknown who have died from the COVID-19 virus

Those whose anniversary of death falls this week: Teresa Hockaday (2018); Margaret Thomas (2006); Nancy Freear (2015); Gayle Gash (2011); Paul Garrard (2018)

Link Parish of St Francis of Assisi, Barham Green, Zimbabwe

NEXT SUNDAY 3 MAY 2020
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

I don’t know about the other car drivers amongst you but I always find it much easier to drive forwards than to reverse! In the same vein, I often find it is a mistake to revisit a place where I used to live or work. Yes, of course looking back is what we human beings do so much. It’s quite natural. But it is often a mistake. St Paul suggests this for us all – ‘One thing I do: forgetting what is behind and reaching out towards what is ahead.’

In the Sundays after Easter, we read accounts of ‘what happened next’ to the disciples of Jesus after the resurrection. Last Sunday, we reflected on the account of the appearance of the risen Jesus and the reaction of ‘doubting’ Thomas. This week we move on to another account, this time from Luke where we read the story of ‘what happened next’ on the road to Emmaus. Of the two disciples walking the seven miles from Jerusalem and talking as they went until unexpectedly, they were joined by a stranger who talks with them in considerable detail about the events and who turned out to be their risen Lord. It probably isn’t surprising that they don’t recognise him and that it was only when “he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.” Then, as Luke records it, “their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus”. But Jesus disappeared from sight – and so these two rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the Eleven what had happened on the road and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread.

This account from Luke should give us great hope and encouragement, particularly if we read it in conjunction with our first reading from Acts. This tells the story of the early church a little later on as Peter, their new leader, empowers the disciples to look ahead, to move forward – with the result that 3,000 were baptised in one day. These two readings remind us that we have to be people who are constantly looking ahead, moving forwards to what is before us, rather than constantly looking over our shoulders at the past. The exciting and sometimes scary fact is, of course, that we often do not know what lies ahead – which is why the human in us usually prefers to look back to the past – it feels safer and less daunting. Yet the story of the road to Emmaus together with the first preaching of Peter should encourage us to do three things:

Always to move forwards;
Always to move forwards together;
And always to move forwards together in faith and hope and love.

I remind you again of what Paul says: “forgetting what is behind and reaching out toward what is ahead…” Well, maybe we should not necessarily forget everything that is behind, even if we could – but more perhaps try to learn from what has happened in the past, to build on it and then to move forward. Jesus of Nazareth has never gone back on his promises. He is the one constant in the lives of all faithful Christians who still trust his word. He promised to his disciples: “I am the way and the truth and the life”.

Finally, note something important in this story – the disciples and Jesus were walking together, side by side, along the road. Give thanks today for those who are walking with us on our Christian pilgrimage – those who have helped us in the past and those who continue to help us follow the right path today. Someone penned these words which you may find helpful and which I leave you with this morning:

Don’t walk in front of me – I may not follow.
Don’t walk behind me – I may not lead.
Walk beside me – and just be my friend. Amen.

ZOOM CHURCH SERVICE AT CHRIST CHURCH will take place every Sunday morning at 10am. A link to click on will be sent out on Thursday, together with the Order of Service and this will also be re-sent at 9am on Sunday morning as a gentle reminder!

SUPPORT IN THE LOCAL Community

Merton Council, the local NHS and the local voluntary sector led by Merton Voluntary Service Council (including Merton & Morden Guild, but mainly Age UK Merton, Wimbledon Guild and Commonside Trust) can help local people with shopping, telephone befriending etc. https://www.mvsc.co.uk/CoronavirusSupport

MORRISONS: In addition to the list circulated recently by email, Morrison Food Boxes are set boxes of food delivered to your door by DPD. One couple took advantage of the service last week. They ordered the ‘Meat Eaters Food Box’ at 11am on Monday and it was delivered 24 hours later and was excellent value.

PARTNERING IN PRAYER WITH A ROCHA KENYA

Pray for the staff in these sad and difficult times as they try to adjust and come up with new strategies. Most of the staff are now working from home and those who can’t are on leave. Please pray for staff to be calm and to be able to rest. Pray that God will give wisdom to the management at A Rocha as they try to work out how to continue their work in conservation and education. They are praying for Christ Church.

BEING IN TOUCH

We are a very friendly and sociable congregation. It is very hard not to see each other week by week. Do keep in touch with those you know in the congregation. If you are able to, do pause wherever you are at 5.55pm each evening, just as the 6pm news starts, and hold everyone at Christ Church up to God in a moment of quiet prayer? Eternal Father, look with love on your people of Christ Church and pour upon us the gifts of your Spirit. Although we are apart, draw us to you and to one another, so that by our growing love and unity we may bring healing and life to all. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.