



ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, SUTTON

26 APRIL 2020 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Please join me for our

Service on the 3rd Sunday of Easter at 10.30am

(or at another convenient time) by following the Order of Service and singing in your own home.

I will be thinking of you all and praying for you at The Rectory at the same time and longing for our future reunion in Church.



Christ is risen
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.
Frances

Duty Warden: John Kerr

Server: Henry Sawyerr

Musician: Pam Affleck

Sidespersons: Alistair Cruickshank, Kaushalya Jeyaraj Welcomers: Julie Barbour, Mary Meldrum

Sound desk: Jennifer Emptage

Refreshments: Margaret Ager, Doreen Kennett

Here is a view of St Nic's from The Rectory garden at 10.28am on Easter Day



St. Nicholas, Sutton
Worship on the 3rd Sunday of Easter
at 10.30am on 26 April 2020
led by Revd Frances Arnold, Priest-in-Charge

The Gathering

The Greeting

President

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Hymn This joyful Eastertide

Prayer of Preparation

We sit or kneel

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

1 Corinthians 5.7,8

**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

President

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon *you*,
pardon and deliver *you* from all *your* sins,
confirm and strengthen *you* in all goodness,
and keep *you* in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Glory to God is said or sung

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Collect

President says 'Let us pray'.

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

First reading Zephaniah 3.14-end

A song of joy

read by Julie Barbour

Second reading Acts 2.14a, 36-41

Peter Addresses the Crowd, The First Converts

read by Julie

At the end the reader says

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn We have a gospel to proclaim

Gospel Reading Luke 24.13-35

The Walk to Emmaus

read by Glynis Osborne

The reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *Luke*.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon *The Revd Frances Arnold*

Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days? (Lk 24.18)

First thing every morning I check the news on my phone. There is only one news item nowadays and it has been like that for well over a month. If I were to encounter someone in the socially-distanced queue at Morrisons, or in a (still novel) Zoom meeting, who asked what was going on – I would share Cleopas' exasperation! The irony is that the stranger on the road is at the heart of the events that the two travellers are discussing. And he is the only one who can help them to understand their significance.

The tragedy of the crucifixion was both devastating and puzzling for the two disciples on the Emmaus road, 'making them slow at heart to believe...the things about (Jesus) in all the scriptures.' Cleopas was puzzled: if Jesus had been the one to liberate Israel, he should have been defeating the pagan oppressors, not dying at their hands.

For us too, the suffering we see, hear about and experience during the pandemic raises difficult questions. That is understandable. The most difficult question for me now is how I can believe in God in the face of great suffering. Why doesn't God intervene when people are suffering? Why doesn't he rescue them? The question is a difficult one because, in the end, there is no answer to the problem of suffering that will fully satisfy us. But the tale of the two on the road to Emmaus can guide us through our fears and in our thinking.

The fact that Cleopas and his companion could not recognise Jesus at first seems to fit with the fact that they couldn't recognise the events that had culminated in the crucifixion as the story of God's redemption. In order to know Jesus, to recognise him, they, and we, need to see him within the wider story of God, Israel and the whole world. Cleopas and his companion needed their old teacher, now their risen Lord, to explain things to them, lead them forward and warm their hearts by applying scripture to the difficulties around them. They had been seeing the Hebrew scriptures as the story of how God would redeem Israel from suffering. They do indeed offer the promise of redemption; but the disciples needed to be reminded *how* this would come about. God would redeem Israel *through* the suffering that would be taken upon himself by Jesus, the Messiah (the embodiment of his people and their vocation) and Suffering Servant. The Hebrew Bible pointed towards:

'a fulfilment which could only be found when God's anointed took Israel's suffering, and hence the world's suffering on to himself, died under its weight and rose again as the beginning of God's new creation, God's new people.' [Tom Wright, *Luke for Everyone*]

Christians do not believe that God wills their suffering and it is too simplistic to say that it is a punishment for sin. On the contrary, the cross of Jesus means that God himself *shares* our suffering. He suffers alongside us. There, as St Paul says, 'in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.' (2 Cor. 5.19)

And Jesus walks alongside us. As they walked, Jesus prepared the minds of Cleopas and his companion for the staggering revelation which came to them as they watched him break bread in his characteristic way. This was not a repetition of the Last Supper, at which the two disciples had not been present. The memories which Jesus' action evoked must have been of other meals which he had shared with his friends.

This simple meal points forward to the breaking of bread which has become the central symbolic action of Jesus' people today. Let us take the time, in our current situation, to reflect on the sustenance that Cleopas and his companion received in a time of darkest despair and fear. They realised that they recognised Jesus in his breaking of the bread, because he had expounded the scriptures to them. Jesus came alongside them in their time of need, to guide them in their agonised questioning. And, as with Mary Magdalene and Thomas, he stayed just as long as they needed him, and then left them to follow him. **Amen.**

The Creed

We stand

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ
to hear us when we pray in faith.

Strengthen *Christopher & Jonathan* our bishops and all your Church in the service of
Christ,
that those who confess your name may be united in your truth,
live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Bless and guide *Elizabeth our Queen*; give wisdom to all in authority;
and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace;
that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

Lord, in your mercy...

Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbours,
that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy...

*We hold in prayer all those affected by the Coronavirus and especially our chaplains,
volunteers and NHS health workers, nursing and medical staff caring for increasing
numbers....*

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit ...;
give them courage and hope in their troubles;
and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy...

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ ...;
according to your promises,
grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy...

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Nicholas and all your saints,
we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Peace

President

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples
and said, 'Peace be with you.'

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

John 20.19,20

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Let us pray

**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.**

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants, give you most humble and hearty thanks
for all your goodness and loving kindness.
We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,
and that we show forth your praise,
not only with our lips but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Blessing

The God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**