

The Parish Church of St Mary Oldswinford



Sunday April 11th 2021

Easter 2

www.stmaryschurcholdswinford.org.uk

www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchOldswinford.

Contacts: Revd John Flitcroft 01384 395410 st.mary.os.priest@btconnect.com
Roger King 01384 379800 st.mary.os.reader1@btconnect.com
Parish Office 01384 441003 st.mary.os@btconnect.com
Judy Hall 01384 377349 st.mary.os.warden2@btconnect.com

Services in church and being broadcast this week.

Sunday April 11th at 10.00am A Service of Holy Communion in church led by Rev'd John Flitcroft **Preacher:** Roger King **Warden:** Tony Tatford **Stewards:** Sue Tatford and Barbara Grainger **Reader:** Chris Day **Intercessions:** Maggie Abbotts **Zoom Manager:** John Sutton **Bellringers:** Ray and Jean Drew

Thursday April 15th at 10.30am A service of Holy Communion BCP in church led by Rev'd John Flitcroft **Preacher:** Roger King **Stewards:** Chris McCullagh & Elaine Buchan **Reader:** Jill Finney **Zoom Manager:** John Sutton

The church will be open between 9.00am—4.00pm Monday—Thursday and 9.00am—12 noon on Friday, 9.00am—4.00pm on Saturday this week.

Both of the services above will be broadcast on Zoom and Facebook. Please get in touch if you need the meeting ID and password for Zoom.

THE EGGSTRAORDINARY STORY TRAIL

The trail is still in place until 16th April. Please encourage people to follow the trail of eggs from Mary Stevens Park to discover the story of Easter and find some posters with fun activities to do along the way. To see the route of the trail scan the QR code shown below using your phone. A great activity to do with children. There's even a reward of an egg at the end of the trail. (while stocks last)

You may want to bring a stone with either a prayer on, a name of a loved one or one you have decorated to put in a special place at the end of the trail. A huge thank you to everybody who has been involved in the construction and organisation of this event.



Collect for this week:

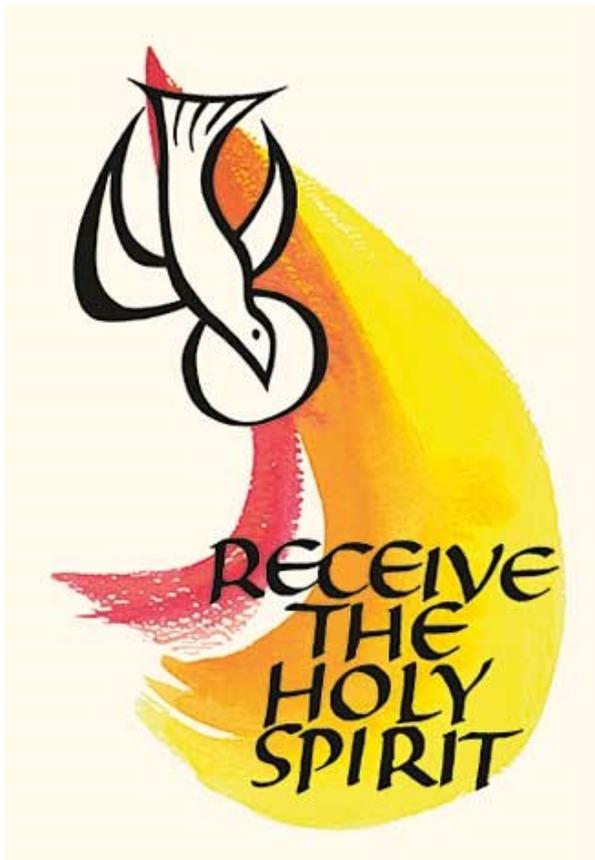
Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification; grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

The New Testament 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.

This is the Word of the Lord
THANKS BE TO GOD.



The Gospel Reading

John 20 : 19—31

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

GLORY TO YOU, O LORD.

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord
PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST.

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**

We invite you to offer prayers for

Worldwide Church:

The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean. Also Aalborg in Denmark with Bishop Henning Toft Bro

Churches Together: St Michael and All Angels Church Norton.

From our Diocesan Prayer Diary..

New Stewardship & Resources Officer

Last month, Chris Boden started in his new role of Stewardship and Resources Officer, taking over from Alison Maddocks. Chris will work with parishes across the Diocese to support them in their financial stewardship and help them to offer a clear and compelling vision for generous Christian giving.



For the past 10 years, Chris has been a brother in the Society of St Francis, an Anglican Order based at houses around the country, including at Glasshampton in our diocese. Most recently he worked as Provincial Bursar for the Society and was responsible for all financial, legal and building maintenance aspects of the charity, including how to best use their finances for mission and ministry.

Chris said: "This is an exciting role to be taking on at this time. The Diocese is going through a time of change and finances need to be a part of that; but it's important that issues around money are seen in the context of our mission and ministry. My role will be very people-focussed, talking with parishes to understand the challenges they're facing, which have been made more acute due to the pandemic, and helping to find new and creative ways of dealing with these."

Please pray for Chris Boden as he navigates his new post of Stewardship & Resources Officer in these challenging times. Pray for wisdom as he works with parishes to support their financial stewardship.

The work of St Mary's:

For all those who will stop and visit the exhibition outside church and be reminded of the Easter story and what it means for us today. For all those enjoying a break from work and school this week.

Those living in: Drew Road and Carlton Avenue

Local Community: The Ark Centre in Stourbridge

Among those who are ill:

Bob Bowen, Dorothy Gibson, Valerie Partridge, Pamela Peacock and Martin Raybould

We continue to pray for:

Peter & Angela Viner, Helen Hunt, Susan Haskew, Norma Wren, Mary Joyce Tolley, Sam and Natalie Jones, Audrey Tranter, David Johnson, Colin Millward, Roy Peacock, Josh Raffan, Ian Moore, Judy Taylor, Joe and Ros Yeates, Rory Macintosh, Elian Irvine-Boden, Martin Aston, Ruth Hardy, Anna Scudamore, Jonathan Bryan, Noah Cantius, the May family, and the Rogerson family.

Those in nursing home care:

Dorothy Gibson, Melitta Ling, Brian Drew and Betty Shore.

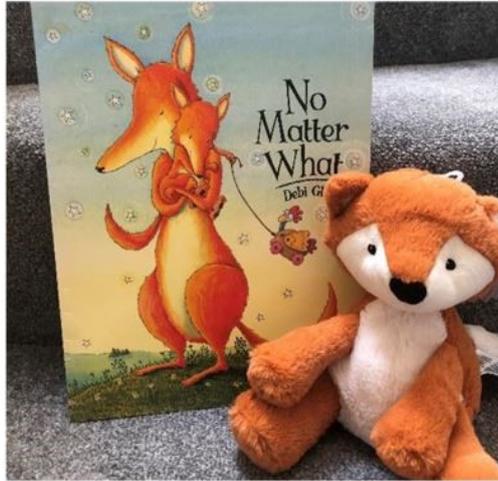
The departed:

Miriam Skipton. All those who have lost their lives to Covid 19 this week. All those who we remember with love through our floral displays in church

Prayer 

Even At Our Worst

'Keep loving one another as love covers a multitude of offences'- 1 Peter 4:8



No Matter What by Debi Gliori

In this book Small is feeling very grumpy and challenges Large as to how much Large truly loves him. Will Large love Small in all circumstances? When he's really naughty? Feeling dark and grim? Or far away?

'Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things' 1 Corinthians 13:7

The Bible tells us that even in our worst moments, God loves us unconditionally (Romans 8:37-39). God made a way for us to always return to Him, Christians know this as salvation. Jesus died for us so that nothing could ever come between us and God again. Even when we're naughty, think we are ugly or feel far away.

We also read in the sad and difficult book of Job (in the Old Testament in The Bible) that true love can withstand all grief, loss, pain and tragedy. The book of Job shows us that love is true and real and won't fade away just because life is hard

This month you could:

- Enjoy this book together.
- Cuddle up with your child and chat about how much you love them.
- Tell them what in particular you love about them most.
- Which love language do your family members most appreciate?
<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/2018/06/the-five-love-languages-defined>
- Your child might like to dress up like the different characters in the book.

We believe in the power of prayer

A prayer for you to pray for your child Lord Jesus, bless our child/ren to love without fear and condition, to forgive when it's not deserved and give when it's not fair. Amen.

A prayer we commit to pray for you as parents Loving father, bless this family with the ability to love unconditionally and in the hardest moments. Help them to realise what Jesus gave up so that they could know love and life. Amen.

If you do not have this book, borrow it from the library or watch a re-telling of the story on [YouTube](#).

Next month's book will be: "The Rescue Party" by Nick Butterworth

If you no longer wish to receive these monthly emails please reply "unsubscribe".

Sermon podcast by Rev'd Jo Musson using Acts 4: 32-35 and John 20: 19-31



I'm sure many of you - like me, have close relatives or friends who do not believe in God.

Religion may be a topic on which you have lively debates.

But it might also be something you've learned not to discuss. When I think about what faith means, I understand how they feel. It is a difficult concept isn't it? That someone could come back to life after dying.

I'd like to share something of my own journey to faith with you.

When I went to college to train for ordination, having been out of education for over 20 years, the first essay question I had to answer was "Convince Richard Dawkins that belief in God is different from belief in Thomas the Tank Engine"

It was the most mind bogglingly frustrating essay ever and in my family, that essay became legendary!

For a whole month TTTE was all I could think about, to the extent that I was threatened with a Thomas the Tank Engine toy for Christmas.

I knew that believing a toy was real, was nothing like believing in God but finding the right 2000 words to say that was so difficult!

Well today we are thinking about another Thomas, Thomas the disciple. Like Richard Dawkins, another doubter. Poor Thomas, he gets such a bad press, but I like him, probably because he always seems to ask the questions I'd want to ask myself!

Like at the last supper, it was Thomas who asked how could they possibly know the way to where Jesus was going if they didn't know where that was?

And in today's reading, Thomas demands that if he is to believe Jesus is risen from the dead, he has to touch his wounds.

It reminds me of how one of my daughters, when she was about 3 yrs old, wanted to know what the glowing light bulb in her bedside lamp felt like – so she touched it and to her cost she found out!

Thomas needs to touch. Touch the wounds. Only then then will he truly believe. Once he has felt the wounded hands, he cries My Master! My God! Jesus makes it clear to Thomas though that proof was a privilege not a right.

This passage in John's gospel is said to be the equivalent of the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. Whereas in Acts the Holy Spirit comes in wind and tongues of fire, here in John, the HS comes when Jesus breathes over the disciples. It's funny how that image takes on new significance in these times of covid!

When Jesus breathes the HS upon them, they are empowered to be his body on earth, to take the gospel to the whole world.

And you can see the results in the reading from Acts ch 4. The new Christian community lived as one big family, sharing everything and ensuring no one went without. What a pity we find it so hard to live out that model in the world today.

Faith requires more than imagination, it is a two-way relationship with God that gives us a purpose in life, that sustains and inspires us to become better people, living our lives for the benefit of others and sometimes paying a costly price. Tradition has it that Thomas travelled to India where he established many churches, and was eventually martyred.

I really identify with this description of Jesus breathing the HS upon the disciples. After my confirmation (at the age of 37) I felt God's presence in and around me for days afterwards, like the Holy Spirit was breathing through me, and with every breath I was breathing out God's love.

My life changed dramatically, although there was nothing particularly wrong with my life before, it was like I had been living life in black and white. Now I had stepped out of a dark and enclosed box, into a vibrant multi-coloured world. So much so that rather than telling people I went to church I was able to say I am a Christian. I was in love with Jesus, and I wanted to commit my life to him.

This Easter, ask yourself, are you a church-goer or a disciple? Do you have any questions you're dying to ask? If you're not sure, pray for Jesus to reveal his wounds to you, to breathe the HS upon you and roll away the stones in your life so that you can discover the glorious light and love he has for you. And then take courage from Thomas and share your story with your loved ones. Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Questions to reflect on:

1. If you could time travel and be physically present at any event in the Bible in order to strengthen your faith which one would you choose?
2. Where are you in that locked room when Thomas touches the wounds on Jesus' hands?
3. If you haven't already, identify five people – close friends or family members – who are not Christians and pray for them to be filled with faith.