

St Francis Weekly News for The Second Sunday of Easter 19th April 2020



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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

Last week we were pleased to announce the arrival of Revd Winnie – and this week it would appear that like many of the clergy he is not averse to a spot of chocolate!

Throughout Easter Day and for most of this week Revd Winnie and Eeyore have been seen to be picnicking on Easter eggs.

The furry two are proving very popular with our younger passers by – I wonder what their next treat will be.... [suggestions welcomed!]



EASTER GARDEN

The Easter Garden that was set up for Eastertide has proven to be very thought provoking – and a bit of a challenge. Within a few hours of putting out the plants for the first time, most had disappeared!

By the afternoon of Easter Day all that was left was a nice little green plant and two potted miniature roses. Oh dear... although the tomb is supposed to be empty – this was not quite what I had in mind. My first reaction was to feel a little put out and not very complimentary toward the person or persons unknown now in possession of several rather nice pot plants.

But then I thought, 'oh well, perhaps they needed cheering up'

Undeterred, a couple of days later I tried again – this time I reverently placed a little plastic pot of cut flowers alongside the remaining plants; and very pretty they looked too.

Alas, lo and behold, two hours later not only had the flowers gone, but one of the miniature roses had gone as well.

'Right!' I thought to myself, 'very clearly people are thinking that because the bread and bread products on the table outside the church are all for free – the plants and flowers are also a gift'.

So, one clearly printed out notice about the purpose of the empty tomb and the garden, three yoghurt pots filled with cut flowers, a potted periwinkle and four branches of laurel later, I tried again.

This time everything apart from the laurel branches went.

Hmmm, I think the empty tomb looks lovely with just cut greenery around it!



An Ode to the Flowerless Garden

 Oh dear, what can the matter be?
The empty tomb has lost all of its finery!
The pansies, the palm tree,
the sweet, fragrant hyacinths;
sadly have all disappeared.

We're hoping they've gone
to someone who needs them;
who'll love them and tend them,
and carefully feed them.
Who through them will finally find
what they're seeking –
and know God's good gift
of free grace.



The Empty Tomb on Easter Morning

PRAYER STATIONS

Meanwhile, in the field at the rear of the church building, David Lechmere's prayer stations are thriving!

I say this with some relief because on Holy Saturday the daffodils were looking very sad indeed.

However, much to my amazement and great joy on Easter Day all the daffodils had not only perked up, but looked as though they were turning happy faces to the bright Sun that was blazing down on them. Now there's a beautiful Easter Day image to ponder upon!

If you are out for a walk, please do pop round to the back of the church and take a moment or two to prayerfully explore the area where the stations are situated. It is a lovely, peaceful spot.

If you would like to pray your way around the stations the psalms and prayers can be obtained by calling at the vicarage.

ST FRANCIS HEARTSEASE FREE FOOD



St Francis Heartsease Free Food >

PUBLIC GROUP · 303 MEMBERS

Easter week has been a very busy week for St Francis Free Food.

Thanks to our team of collectors, packers and deliverers we have provided food parcels for all the individuals and families who have made contact with us and asked for assistance.

Once again there has been a change to the way we are operating in that although we are still contactable through Facebook, we are not using this as a means to let the community know what we have on offer.

This is because we are now receiving direct telephone requests for help and referrals via Norwich City Council and other agencies. Sadly, therefore, we no longer need to advertise - those who have little or no food in their cupboards are coming to us; the food in stock just about meets that need.

However, there is one foodstuff that does pile in and pile up and that is bread and bakery products such as rolls and pastries.

When we were operating as the Community Fridge we found that very often huge amounts were going very stale and consequently only fit to give to 'the birdman'. However, we have found a great way to reduce the amount of this type of foodstuff we were previously passing on in this way.

For the past couple of weeks we have been putting it on a table outside the church building and allowing people to help themselves. Thankfully, we have found that all that we offer in this way soon disappears and is very gratefully received. Consequently, we now have very little left over and our wastage is practically nil.

Isn't that amazing?

PASTORAL CARE

ST FRANCIS FAMILY – NEWS FROM THE PEWS

As we shared last week, Sarah Housden has kindly offered to collate any personal and family updates from members of the congregation into a 'round robin' type update.

As from this week this will be included as part of the newsletter working on the principles that: it's good to keep in touch, up to date, and to find out how other people are finding their way through this new way of living!

If you have news to share – please contact me [Revd Janet: 07990 576118] or Sarah: sarahj.housden@gmail.com

As time passes by and we become more accustomed to our new routines, I would be very grateful if there is anyone who now feels that they could help with supporting someone who is unable to leave their home.

This might involve shopping for small items, doing a weekly 'big shop' at one of the local supermarkets, picking up prescriptions or simply being at the end of the telephone for a chat.

The way we are operating this type of support is on a 'one to one' basis – after an initial introduction the volunteer acts as an informal friend and contact, but does so in the knowledge that there is support and backup should it be required.

If you feel able to help in this way – please contact me [Revd Janet] either by a phone call, text or email.

WORSHIP & PRAYER

As has become customary in these very different days I will continue to celebrate Holy Communion at 10.30am every Sunday morning throughout the duration of the lockdown

Over the next few weeks, however, I will be making some changes as to how that happens. As from 19th April [the Second Sunday of Easter] I will be using the Book of Common Prayer liturgy for Holy Communion – and, all being well, the following week live stream that service via zoom.

If you would like further details as to how you can join in please feel free to contact me or Sarah Housden sarahj.housden@gmail.com [Sarah is our zoom expert!]

If you do not have a book of Common Prayer, please feel free to contact me to obtain a copy so

that you can join in at home. Or, if all things technical fill you with horror, please take comfort in knowing that the pattern of prayer and worship in the parish continues as it ever did. You are held in prayer and are brought to God's table with love.

On the subject of prayer [and zooming] on Wednesday evenings beginning on 22nd April Sarah will be hosting a homegroup [zoomgroup?] that will be exploring 'How to Pray'. This is a course written by Pete Greig and comes highly recommended.

A PRAYER FROM REVD ISAAC

God with us on the Heartsease

Dear Lord, have you walked these streets,
have you seen that the streets are empty?
Have you felt the anxiety in the air?

Dear Lord, have you seen
the people in their homes,
families gathered around one another.
Have you seen the rainbows in the windows?
Have you seen those that on their own and are
lonely with fear and anxiety for company?

Dear Lord, do you feel our pain,
do you sense the gloom
our anxiety and our dismay?
Can you hear our cries
and see the tears shed in the dark?

Dear Lord, can I ask why this is happening,
the world seems so broken.
Though the sun may shine and the wind may
blow there is still a sense of sorrow in the air.

Dear Lord, my favoured café is closed,
my one stop shut.
The school is empty, the playground quiet.
There are no services in the church there are no
toddlers to sooth.

Dear Lord, where are you? Where can I find you?
Are you down Salhouse Rd or Heartsease Ln?
Did you run down Witard Rd,
or walk through the towers at Watling Rd?

Dear Lord, I feel so tired and weary
and I must stay home,
I close my eyes and take a deep breath,
and when I open them again
I realise that you have been right beside me,
listening to me.

Dear Lord, help me to know
that you always hear my prayer. Amen.

Churches Together England



As our nation faces the unprecedented challenge of the coronavirus pandemic, Churches Together in England (CTE) is encouraging Christians across our nations to continue uniting in prayer, praying #PrayersOfHope in their homes at 7.00 pm each Sunday evening.

Following the overwhelming response which the National Call to Prayer and Action received on Mothering Sunday, CTE has prepared a candle poster for those who would like to place a permanent symbol in their front windows of Christ's light shining in the darkness. Visit www.cte.org.uk/prayersofhope

This poster has been made available due to our awareness of the potential fire risk posed by lighting live candles, particularly on windowsills. We are keen to avoid adding any pressure to our emergency service personnel, particularly at this difficult time.

'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' John 1:

A WORD FROM THE VICAR

It seems amazing to me how swiftly we settle into new ways of being.

It now seems a long time ago when I last had the privilege of leading worship in St Francis Church building.

Although I miss it very much, I am now at ease with my new routine of prayer, worship and ministry.

Although I rarely leave the proximity of the vicarage and the church [a walk to the shop is a rare treat!] I seem to be more in touch with church and community than I ever was in the four and a half months or so I spent here prior to coronavirus turning our lives upside down.

I've met some of my neighbours, I've talked with countless people on the phone, I've even talked to people through the hedge! Facebook is no longer a mystery and I'm even getting to grips with Zoom, which I have to say I always thought was an ice lolly. [just goes to show how wrong you can be – although I have to say both leave me cold and set my teeth on edge]



But, needs must! And with many clergy meetings and other essential get togethers relying on this new technology, I have had to rethink my initial reactions and at least make the effort to get up to date. Especially as it will open a whole new world to me in terms of reaching out to a generation of people who take it all for granted...

It is too easy to get left behind when it comes to the modern world, but perhaps sometimes the traditional, old fashioned way of doing things are not so bad.

Just as I've been forced into the twenty first century way of being, so some of my grandchildren have been nudged into some rather older and more traditional pastimes and methods of communicating.

Royal mail, talking to 'next door' school friends over the garden fence, playing card and board games – taking time over meals and walks with grownups around the neighbourhood have all been embraced with enthusiasm.

'I'm bored' is a cry that most parents and caregivers are accustomed to, but it is a sign that children are lifting their heads out of technology and realising that there are other ways to spend their time. Thank God for that!

Over these past few weeks, boredom is not something I have been aware of – what I have been aware of is of being called into a different way of doing just about everything.

The way I live, the way I think, the way I interact with the people and the world around me – the way I worship.

I cannot help but think that God's hand is at work in all this – I cannot help but ponder upon the words of the prophet Isaiah that keep turning over in my heart and mind:

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” [Isaiah 43: 19]

This coronavirus pandemic that is sweeping through the world is a wholly natural and not unusual event – we have just been fortunate in recent years that our scientific skill has kept pace with the evolution of viral disease. We are just lagging behind a little with Covid-19.

A treatment and a vaccine will come, have no fear – but in the meantime as we grapple with this unseen foe we do so supported, upheld and entirely loved by our creator God.

Our God who will see us safely through, and who in the process will teach us all that God would have us learn – if we pay attention.

This is indeed a time to watch and listen – a time to learn; God has much to say to us as we journey through new experiences and unfamiliar territory. God is indeed doing a new thing with many of us.

As we zoom away, or simply chat over the balcony, garden fence or phone – perhaps what we are being taught is that people and our relationships with other people are important beyond all words; which is, I think, something God has been trying to tell us for some time.

Let's keep listening and watching – because I foresee a better world ahead if we pay attention and embrace this new thing God is doing!

God's peace and blessing be with you and yours

Revd Janet



St Francis Home School help



Printing service, free or cost price printing

Email tutoring or question service

(Most subjects to GCSE, English, History and Maths to A level)

Contact deborah@stfrancisheartsease.co.uk



St Francis Home School help is another service we are offering to our community we will print worksheets etc for those who do not have access to printers and Sarah Lechmere is volunteering to help with questions or tutoring where she can.

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: David B, Audrey, Paula, Gill, Karen, Maegan, John R, Colin, Lynn, Pete, Lauren, Fr Brian, David and Hazel L.

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Alma, Rosemary, Sheila, John, Joy, Molly, Shirley.

We remember with love all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

17th April Tom Farrell Earlham Cemetery

A PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

**The Church of St Francis
Heartsease**

**Heavenly Father
We ask your blessing upon us.
Hold the Heartsease Community,
and all the world,
in your arms of love.
Be with us.
Give us your strength,
peace, and healing grace.
Watch over us,
protect us from harm;
and keep in safety
all those who care for the sick
and attend to our needs,
in Jesus name we pray.
Amen**

PRAYERS FOR SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

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

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,
that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father. Amen

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

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

EXODUS 14: 10 – end, 15: 20 – 21

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back,
and there were the Egyptians advancing on them.
In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord.
They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were
no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away

to die in the wilderness? What have you done to
us, bringing us out of Egypt?
Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt,
“Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians”?
For it would have been better for us to serve the
Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.’ But
Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid, stand
firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will
accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians
whom you see today you shall never see again.
The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to
keep still.’

Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry out
to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you
lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over
the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go
into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the
hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in
after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over
Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his
chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know
that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for
myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot
drivers.’



The angel of God who was going before the
Israelite army moved and went behind them; and
the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them
and took its place behind them. It came between
the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so
the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit
up the night; one did not come near the other all
night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea.
The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east
wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land;
and the waters were divided. The Israelites went
into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a
wall for them on their right and on their left. The
Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after
them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and
chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in
the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the
Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into
panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that

they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'



PSALM 16

- 1 Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
- 2 I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."
- 3 As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.
- 4 Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.
- 5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.

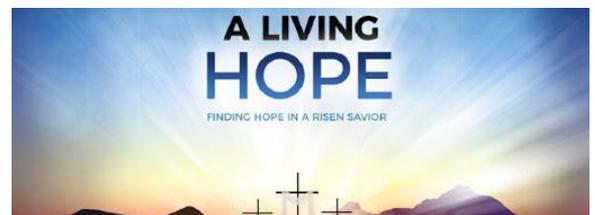
7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

8 I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.

10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.

11 You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.



1 PETER 1: 3 - 9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

ACTS 2: 14a & 22-32

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according

to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.



For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover, my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.”

‘Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

“He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.”

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

JOHN 20: 19-end

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.’

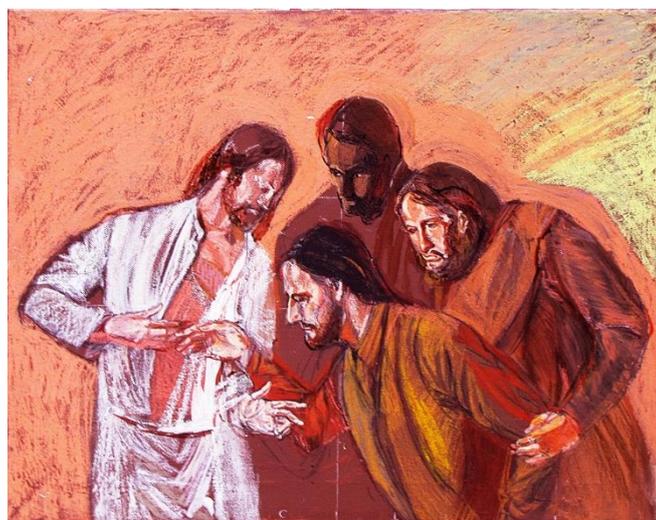
After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive 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.



Reflection for the Second Sunday of Easter

Today's Gospel reading tells us of the first interaction between the risen Jesus and his disciples. Although they have been told the tomb is empty, they haven't really "got it". We find them in a locked upper room because they are still a frightened bunch whose leader has been executed and they are worried that they might share his fate.

Into their midst comes Jesus, straight through the locked door and the first thing he says is "Peace be with you". This was probably very necessary because one can imagine their reactions as shock, amazement or even fear. The word for peace is a special one. It's not just the absence of noise, it's not just the cessation of an angry exchange; the Jewish word "shalom" suggests an active idea of peace, a peace that will give a complete feeling of contentment with no residual anxiety. The Apostle Paul refers to it as "the peace that passes all understanding",

So Jesus wishes them peace. He then deals with their doubts. He shows them his wounds, confirming that it is really him, not any sort of imposter. In Luke's account he actually eats some food to prove the reality of his bodily resurrection. He then breathes on them and says "Receive the Holy Spirit". There's something very special about the breath of God. In Genesis 2 we are told that humans are formed out of the dust of the ground, but brought alive by the breath of God. A few weeks ago the reading in Ezekiel 37 spoke of how the breath of God could bring life to a very dead set of bones.

In this way Jesus imparts new life and encouragement to his disciples.

Someone is missing. We don't know where Thomas was, but we do know that he is sceptical of what the others tell him and wants to see for himself. So a week later Jesus puts in another appearance and singles out Thomas, encouraging him to have a proper look so that his doubts are removed. Thomas immediate response is "My Lord and my God".

At the end of the reading we have John's postscript "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.

At this moment there are very many people in our community, in our country, in our world who are feeling just the way those disciples were feeling. Feelings of anxiety, helplessness, even anger. For many there will also be a sense of loss. Into this situation the risen Jesus can bring comfort, hope and peace. He can and will do it through his word, the Bible, through his followers, through just speaking a word of peace into our hearts.

He has been through every experience that human beings can suffer and has emerged on the far side of them, victorious over sin and death. Through his victory our relationship with God is restored and we can know that peace that passes all understanding. He can and will calm our fears, resolve our doubts, give us peace and equip us to follow him, offering us life in all its fullness if only we will turn to him

That's the glorious message of Easter.

David Lechmere

Reader



www.rufusmum.com
illustrated by chris hansen



The return of Jesus from the dead was all the disciples could talk about. Every one of them was so excited about it. Well, not exactly every one of them. Thomas wasn't excited, because Thomas had missed it. 'Unless I see the marks the nails made in his hands, I won't believe he's alive,' Thomas said.

A week earlier, Jesus had appeared to 10 of the disciples. They were gathered together, hiding because they were afraid they would be killed next. Although they were in a locked room, Jesus appeared and said, 'Peace be with you.' As the disciples rejoiced, Jesus said, 'As God the Father sent me, now I send you.' Then he breathed on them, saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. When you forgive people their sins, they are forgiven. When you find people guilty, they are guilty.'

Thomas was with the others in the house now. 'I'll only believe if I put my finger in the marks and my hand in his side,' he said. The doors were closed, just as they had been before, but again, Jesus appeared. He said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he spoke to Thomas: 'Look at my hands and put your finger in the holes. Put your hand in the wound on my side. Do not doubt, but believe.' Thomas was suddenly as excited as the rest of the disciples. 'My Lord and my God!' he cried.

Jesus asked Thomas, 'Have you only believed because you have seen me? God blesses all those who believe even though they haven't seen me.' This is why the story of Jesus was written down; so that people may believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. All who believe in Jesus will have life through him.

Glossary

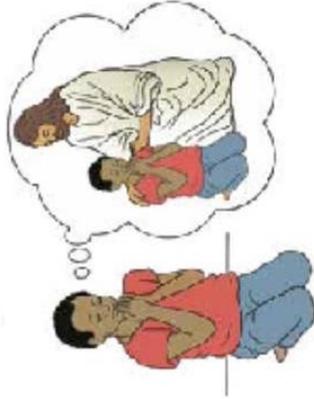
sins the bad things that people do, that go against what God wants; **Messiah** the 'anointed one', someone chosen by God to save the Jewish people, also a title used for Jesus.

Name



John 20.19-31

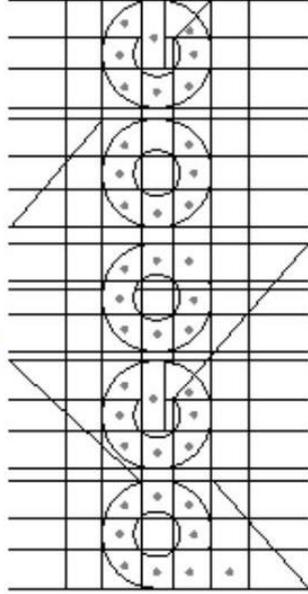
The disciples rejoice as they see and embrace Jesus after his resurrection.



Activity time



Colour in all the dotted sections to reveal a key word for this week. Think what it might mean for us to live with this word in our life.



Family time

Talk How have you seen God at work this week?

Do Make a decision to embrace each other more this week, and to embrace trying something new as a family, e.g. eat a new type of food or do a new shared activity.

Pray Close your eyes and give yourself a hug. Then, as you pray together, imagine that God is embracing you with his arms, sharing his love with you.



Look for the five small differences that make Thomas's embrace with Jesus look very different.



ROOTS children's Sheet

19-25 April 2020



Can you find the key words from today's passage in this word search?

s	w	z	d	y	l	m	e	S	t
w	e	r	o	y	s	v	p	b	
T	o	l	c	q	e	g	e	i	u
L	h	k	p	s	u	z	i	r	o
e	e	o	s	i	t	i	l	i	d
d	r	e	m	s	c	o	e	t	r
p	l	y	y	a	s	b	l	c	
b	o	y	v	v	s	s	i	w	v
M	e	s	s	i	a	h	e	d	z
a	e	c	a	e	p	m	t	J	i

peace
Jesus
Thomas
Spirit
doubt
believe
blesses
disciples
locked
Lord
Messiah



Doodles

Name

Colouring time

We all have an invitation to embrace Jesus when we pray.



St Francis Round Robin, Issue 2

The purpose of this informal Round Robin newsletter is to enable the people of St Francis Church to stay in touch on a personal level during our current separation as a congregation.

Please send your news, encouraging thoughts, photos and any ideas you'd like to share, for example of stay-at-home activities, to sarahj.housden@gmail.com to have them included in the next newsletter.

News from the Milnes

The Milne family are all doing ok. Pete has been working from home and has had to learn very quickly how to give lectures online! His foot is now being treated by a district nurse who visits us once a week. Despite having a bleed recently, it is looking much better. Thanks for your prayers.

Rosie has also been learning how to use technology to keep in touch with family and friends. Rob keeps his sanity by going for a walk in the woods every day. He has been composing more music on his computer, since he can't currently play face-to-face with others.



Margaret B. says:

Since I last wrote I have washed practically every in sight! I have also now managed to almost clear the shed of unnecessary items. I am continuing walks when not exercising in the garden, and still shopping once a week, taking certain items to a friend who is in complete lockdown. I'm not bored! I do hope everyone is coping and not experiencing any anxiety. God bless and stay safe xxx

News from Sarah H.

Working from home, sitting at a computer has become my new (not necessarily unwelcome) reality from 9 til 5 every weekday, so I try to do something different at the weekends. Being in the sunshine, mowing lawns and digging the garden make a refreshing change to the working week, and I have also been sorting out a few books to read over the coming weeks. I've just finished reading Pete Greig's *How to Pray* which I found uplifting and inspiring. I also like to keep a novel on the go now that I have more time to myself. Relaxation, exercise and creativity have become part of every week's activities, and I hope to keep these in place once restrictions on contact are lifted.

The Lechmere's 'visit' to Spring Harvest

This week David, Sarah and Deborah would normally have been staying at Butlins in Skegness to attend Spring Harvest. As the event couldn't go ahead, Spring Harvest put together an online version. As we would have normally been there, we prioritised it and spent each morning looking at the Bible passages and the evening taking in the celebration.

The theme of the event was looking at the book of Acts and the early church and how that leads us to become the "unleashed" church of today. Time and again the speakers referred to the fact that God gave them the theme two years ago and they could never have imagined how spot on it would be for the church of today where we are having to re-imagine things with our buildings closed.

The whole event has been really well organised, and all the sessions will be available on You Tube until at least the end of April. We would encourage everybody to have a look at what is available. If you don't have time to sit down for over an hour for a celebration, then you may find the 20-minute devotionals with Pete Greig helpful – we thought they were excellent.

If anybody has children or grandchildren, there are all age celebrations and age specific teaching. If anybody would like to access this but is not sure how to access You Tube, as long as you have a computer, we can help you with that I am sure.

News from Eleanor

I have been trying to grow some plants to remind me of the joy of new life and the love that God shows through his creation. So, here are some pots of micro herbs and cress that I have grown on my windowsill. I have also been spending as much time in my garden as possible, tidying it up, dividing up some plants and putting in new ones. We have just had a pair of blackbirds nesting in the garden and the young birds have just fledged, which is lovely to see. Eleanor



Thank you to all contributors and readers! Please send any news, encouraging thoughts, photos, book reviews or recommendations, and any activity ideas you'd like to share, to sarahj.housden@gmail.com to have them included in the next newsletter.