



**The Smestow Vale Team Ministry**  
**St Benedict's and the Venerable Bede**  
**Keeping in Touch with our Church Family**

**Sunday 19th April**

**The Second Sunday of Easter**

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 in the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,

To the praise of God the Father. Amen

**Hope when life is difficult**

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.

*1 Peter 1: 3-9*

**Thomas meets the Risen Jesus**

When it was evening on 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.

*John 20.19–31*

## Thomas is Left out.

It has been a very strange Holy Week and Easter. Ever since, as a teenager, I was asked to be a server at my home church, I have followed the way of the cross from Palm Sunday, to Easter morning with my church family. This year it has been a very solitary experience and I can't help feeling that I have missed out. Something special has happened and I have only been able to experience it second hand.

Thomas missed out on that first Easter evening when the risen Christ appeared to the other ten disciples. Over the last three years they had become a close knit friendship group, a family. They had celebrated the Passover meal together, one of the few occasions during the year when Jewish families joined together in prayer and celebration. So when Peter and the other disciples excitedly tell Thomas about Jesus resurrection and that they have seen him, Thomas feels that he has missed out.

## Why me ?

Why me ? Why have I missed out ? What Have I done wrong ? Those questions must have turned over and over in his mind and I suspect that as he thought about them he becomes disenchanted, belligerent even. So much so that despite his friends excitement he comes out with those famous words " Unless I see the marks 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, but still with the other ten, Thomas is still feeling an outsider, then suddenly, seemingly from out of nowhere Jesus is there. Present, scared, but risen. Speaking, speaking to Thomas. Thomas sees and believes.

The last few weeks have challenged us all, you would be very unusual if the pandemic hadn't made you question your faith. Thomas asked questions but he stayed with those who could support him. May his example enable us to look to the future with hope and through our questions come to a renewed belief in the power of love revealed in the risen Jesus.

## Please remember those who have asked for our prayers

Sarah Stephenson, David Kingston, Lisa, Julia McCormick, Morgan, Michael Concannon, Carl Baker Heather Gent, Jean, Joan, and Margaret Hatton

## Those who have died recently and their families:

baby Felix Jones , Beryl Henshaw, Barbara Southwell , Barrie Mann, Roger Corns, Barry Powell, Philip Escofet, Barrie Bailey, Eric Bills

## Prayer during the Week

### Sunday:

Pray for those who see no hope at this time.

(John 20: 21)

### Monday:

Thank God for the recovery of health for so many sufferers from the virus.

### Tuesday:

Thank God and pray for those who risk their lives to care for others

### Wednesday:

Pray for those suffering at home or in hospital, and for their families.

### Thursday (St George)

Thank God for the Church in this country, and pray for those who are persecuted for their faith throughout Christendom. (John 15: 19)

### Friday:

Pray for all whose medical treatment has been paused because of Covid 19.

### Saturday: (St Mark)

Thank God for those who continue to bring us the good news of Jesus Christ.

## Prayer

Do you know any Key Workers who would value our Prayers ? please let Paul know, first names only if preferred, (prepbrown@gmail.com ) so that they can be included in my private prayers or on "Keeping in Touch"

## Thank You

To all those who are continuing to support our churches financially during this difficult time.

