



Touching points

John 20.1-18

Jesus died on Friday; it is now Sunday morning. In their grief, three friends visit Jesus' tomb and find him gone. Two leave, believing the body has been taken, but Mary remains, perhaps looking for something to hold onto in this difficult time, and Jesus is revealed to her. She runs to tell the other disciples that Jesus is alive.

Now read **John 20.1-18** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

And suddenly, the story seems to be over. Jesus, who promised so much, is gone. The dream is over. Jesus' closest friends are shattered. This wasn't the plan. Begally tried, brutally hung up to die and then shoved in a borrowed grave before the start of the Sabbath. The friends wait. What is there left to do? And then Sunday, time to properly treat the body which was so hastily buried two days before – and then what? Go back to what life was like before? Except that Mary doesn't find him in the tomb, as expected, instead she meets him – alive – in the garden.



How would you describe the mystery of Easter?

GIVE

Make some simple Easter cards.

You will need: A5 pieces of card folded in half, patterned paper, scissors, glue, chocolate Easter treats.

Take some patterned paper – or print out a patterned background from the internet – and cut out egg shapes from it, just a bit smaller than your card. Stick the egg shapes onto the cards. Buy some chocolate Easter treats and package them up with each card. Leave the cards and treats on your neighbours' doorsteps (out of the reach of pets). Pray that they would know the life Jesus brings this Easter.

WATCH

Take some time to watch a film about Jesus this week. If you're an adult, there are lots of options available including, *The Passion of the Christ*, *Mary Magdalene* and *Jesus of Nazareth*. If you have children in your household, you might enjoy *The Miracle Maker*. Very small children might do better with some shorter excerpts from Jesus' life – try these two short animations from Crossroads Kids Club:



Last supper:
crossroadskidsclub.net/last-supper/



or Easter:
crossroadskidsclub.net/gods-story-easter/

LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

Go into your garden, if you have one, or a local park. Find something that is newly growing – perhaps bulbs or blossom or other flowering plants. Have a really good look at how this thing grows: Does it push up, unfurl, spring out? As you quietly observe, ask God to speak to you about what Jesus' resurrection life looks like in your life, in this season. Perhaps you'd like to draw the life you're looking at and write down anything you sense God is saying to you. As a final act with your garden tray or page (that you've been progressing throughout Lent), add a representation of this thing to it. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the record you have made of your Lenten journey this year.



BAKE



Bake a traditional Simnel cake – this is fruit cake, topped with marzipan and decorated with marzipan balls, representing Jesus and his disciples. Try this recipe: www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/easter-simnel-cake

Bear in mind that one of the key ingredients of this cake is marzipan which is not suitable for those with nut allergies! An alternative might be a chocolate sponge topped with small chocolate eggs.



Find the most uplifting worship song you can, turn the volume up to 11 and dance like no one is watching!



Alleluia! Christ is risen!

A very happy and blessed Easter to each and every one of you.

This week's newsletter is somewhat longer as there will not be a newsletter for 11th April. I'm also enclosing some details from the diocese about lay training that is available to those who might be interested.

Our service for the 11th April will be in the community centre – can you book in as usual but this week contact Phil Welling as Rob is taking a week's leave.

Thought for the week...

I felt so embarrassed. We'd known each other for years. I walked straight past without saying a word. I didn't even see him/her. I don't know where my head was, except it wasn't on the street that day. 'Is that you, Alex?' said the voice from behind me. 'Sam, I didn't see you,' I said as I swung round. 'How did I not know it was you? I'm so sorry. I've got a lot on my mind at the moment. If you hadn't said my name I'd never have known.'

Perhaps you have had an experience like that. It's not that uncommon. Your mind is elsewhere. Or you see someone in a place, a setting, where you did not expect to see them. So, you don't make the connection, not at first. But then you hear your name...and everything changes. Even if only for a little while.

Having got to this point in an Easter Day sermon, the preacher may then ask us to imagine that we are with Mary at the tomb of Jesus – or even that we are Mary. That's all very well, and some people will find that a helpful thing to do. After all, experience is generally worth many words.

But in reality, we are here. We are in this place, thousands of miles and thousands of years away from that tomb, trying to make sense of something that much of the world around us dismisses as fantasy (or worse). Can we prove it? No. Can we show the evidence. No. At least not in a way that would satisfy a modern investigation.

And yet...here we are, in this place, thousands of miles and thousands of years away from that tomb, confidently proclaiming – as we do again and again – 'He is risen!'

We are in a touching place – a place where our lives touch a mystery that we cannot fully understand or explain. But it is a place where hope is real. A place where we catch a glimpse of a different world, a world where our God reigns, and things that we can only dream of, are



not only possible but actually happening. What was it he said? I have come to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed...

And if we believe – if our ‘He is risen!’ is more than just an Easter mantra – if we explore and follow through on the implications and consequences of what we proclaim today – then the future hope starts to become a present reality. And it all began when Mary heard her name called and went and told someone else of her experience. Who are you going to tell?

Daily Readings for week commencing 5 th April 2021		
Monday	Song of Solomon 1: 9-2:7	Mark 16: 1-8
Tuesday	Song of Solomon 2: 8-end	Luke 24: 1-12
Wednesday	Song of Solomon 3	Matthew 28: 16-end
Thursday	Song of Solomon 5: 2-6:3	Luke 7: 11-17
Friday	Song of Solomon 7: 10-8: 4	Luke 8: 41-end
Saturday	Song of Solomon 8: 5-7	John 11: 17-44
Daily Readings for week commencing 12 th April 2021		
Monday	Deuteronomy 1: 3-18	John 20: 1-10
Tuesday	Deuteronomy 1: 19-40	John 20: 11-18
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 3: 18-end	John 20: 19-end
Thursday	Deuteronomy 4: 1-14	John 21: 1-14
Friday	Deuteronomy 4: 15-31	John 21: 15-19
Saturday	Deuteronomy 4: 32-40	John 21: 20-end

*Pray for those in need...*Sally, Zena, Katie-Louise, Pam, Sue, Bryn, Evelyn, Shane, Pat, Heather, Dorothy, Mandy, Joyce, Pete, Ian, June and Juliette. *Please remember those who mourn the loss of loved ones at this time...especially Jayne and Dick.*

Lay training opportunities:

Stepping up: Reading the Bible

When and Where: Monday 10 May, 7.30pm on Zoom

It sounds straightforward, but reading in public is different from reading on our own. Never mind our anxieties about being heard, getting our pronunciations right, or coping with the microphone, when we read the Bible in church, we are also trying to help other people understand the reading. To do that, we need to understand it ourselves, and let's be honest, the books of the Bible are not always the easiest pieces of writing to understand.

This workshop aims to explore the practice of public reading of scripture. There will be opportunities to explore what people find helpful, but beyond that the workshop will look at the importance of public reading, offers an orientation to understanding the Bible, and gives some practical hints and tips for those who read it.

Book via Eventbrite: <https://bit.ly/3q643ec>



Stepping up: Leading the intercessions

When and Where: Monday 24 May, 7.30pm on Zoom

Praying is an important part of the Christian life. Leading other people in prayer is seen as one of the key privileges of the newly confirmed disciple. But how do we go from reading prayers that others have written, to putting things in our own words. What are the right things to pray for, and what are the better ways to phrase our requests and thanksgivings? This workshop builds on the experience that we all have as people who have been helped or hindered to pray by the ways others lead prayer. It will draw out some of the principles of leading clear intercessions, and offer a path by which people can grow in their experience.

Book via Eventbrite: <https://bit.ly/2O0rqsu>

Everyday Faith in Work

Where: Online

When: Either May 19 2021, 7.30– 9.00pm
or June 10 2021, 7.30 – 9.00pm

How do your faith and your work connect with each other? A lot of what is said and written about faith in the workplace is about relationships: treating people well, finding opportunities to share appropriately what we believe, bearing witness through our character and behaviour to the difference God makes in our lives.

But what about the nature of the work itself? If we are employees, what are the aims and purposes of the companies we work for? Is the business about making money or making useful products, and where does the balance lie? How does my workplace serve the economy, or build up the common good? How does its structure promote just and equitable treatment of employee and customer alike? How much of a pay differential should there be between CEO and the lowest paid?

Whether I am employed or self-employed, where do I, on a personal level, feel most fulfilled in my work and why? Do I see my work as a vocation to which God has called me? How does my faith help when things go wrong at work? These are more difficult questions, having no cut and dried answers, no obvious connections with what the bible has to say, nor any straightforward moral prescriptions.

This workshop is for people to come together to explore these and other questions, and how they might relate to their own work and workplace. There is no fixed agenda, other than an agreement to meet together and explore these kinds of questions, in the hope such a conversation will be supportive and stimulating. If enough people are interested, there may be opportunity to plan a continuing conversation.

The workshop is convened by Doug Chaplin, Discipleship and Lay Training Officer for the diocese and Dick Johnson, lead chaplain for Faith at Work in Worcestershire and lead chaplain to the Police and Fire Services.

Book via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/everyday-faith-in-work-tickets-144389941201>