



Connection

Sunday 18th April 2021
Third Sunday after Easter



Collect

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.

Reading: Acts 3: 12 – 19

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, 'You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. 'And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah[e] would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

Reading: Luke 24: 36b-48

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts. Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?'. They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Post Communion Prayer

Living God,
your Son made himself know to his disciples
in the breaking of bread;
open the eyes of our faith.
that we may see him in all his redeeming work;
who is alive and reigns, now and forever.

Amen

Reflection

This week's Reflection is by Nigel Taylor, Rector in the Kidderminster Ismere Team, a recording of the Reflection can be found on the Worcester Diocesan website at:

<https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/your-faith/prayer-worship/sermon-podcasts/easter-3.php>

The disciples in the reading from Luke were on a high-speed journey of discovery following the resurrection of Jesus. Their minds were full of questions and the answers were taking their breath away.

I remember a short journey I took with my children a few years back on a rollercoaster in Disney Land. It was advertised as the fastest rollercoaster around and I have to say my personal experience would support that. Sitting in the carriage next to my son, the smell of burgers from a nearby stand wafting over us, the sight of a dark tunnel ahead with flashing lights, the sound of loud rock music all around and the feel of the hard seat, the cold handlebar and tight seat belt all preparing me for an unknow journey. The music became quieter, and a countdown began. 3...2...1 and we exploded down a runway, head thrown back, air squeezed out of my lungs the taste of fear in my mouth. I recall my head spinning as I tried to understand what was going on as my body experienced new forces and I gasped for breath. Then it was over, and we were coasting to a halt. The journey over but an event I would never forget (or likely repeat) and the basis of many retellings of the experience whenever we meet as family and reminisce on that holiday.

What is the point of this story? Well in our reading from Luke today, the disciples are having a once in a lifetime experience on their journey, and the encounter between them and the risen Jesus is centred on senses. Jesus knows that our understanding and our memory relies on the engagement of our senses. The initial reaction of the disciples as Jesus appears amongst them is that he is a ghost. He then engages each of their senses to take them on a journey of understanding. He invites them to look at the scars on his hand's feet and side, then to physically touch him to confirm his physical presence. This proceeds into his expression of the physical need for food with him telling the disciples he is hungry and as the fish is cooked the aroma would have filled the space engaging the disciples in the familiar memory of the encounter they had experienced so many times before. Then they watch as he tastes and eats the fish. Finally, the disciples are ready to listen to Jesus as he 'opens their minds to understand the scriptures'. In other words he has prepared them through engaging their senses to have a renewed and deeper understanding of scripture and to know that the way forward is based on his word and the ministry, in the name of Jesus, of repentance and forgiveness to all.



This gives me the image of a cycle of faith development that the church is called to follow. It starts with engagement of God's people on a journey beginning with their senses through physical action. To some degree this happens in a church service with the visual symbols such as cross, holy table, candles and architecture. The familiar sounds of a service with music and singing and the voices, the possibility of incense or the smell of coffee brewing ready for fellowship the feeling of the hard pew or the chair and the hymn book being held and the taste of the wafer or bread when Holy Communion is received. It involves helping people to have new experiences or else familiar experiences with a new depth or perspective: being creative in worship and ministry and taking risks. This process is a preparation for listening to the Word of God and developing and understanding to prepare the church to go out and put the Word into actions, building relationships, walking alongside people on their journey and being visibly present in the community. From these further experiences of action the hunger for more understanding grows and the scriptures are open further. The journey out delivering the love and forgiveness of God grows deeper and so the cycle continues. God has equipped us with senses to do that work. For some of us, certain of our senses have deficits or may even be absent, but we still have our other senses to experience the presence of the living God and enable us in whatever small way to be part of this faith process. Never forget that God loves each and every one of us and that our senses are a way of engaging with that truth.

I wonder if you make time to use your senses to feel the presence of God around you: the smell of newly mown grass on a cool breeze, the taste of favourite food, the sound of a stream or spring rain, the feel of tree bark or the soft fur of a pet, the sight of a loved one in a photograph.

I wonder where you are on your journey. Are there ways you can engage the senses you have to deepen your understanding of God's presence in your life.

Requests for Prayers



We pray for all those who are sick everywhere and for those who have asked for our prayers and for their carers: Roy and Margaret Putnam, Edward Bunn, Brian Bolam, Wendy Dufty, Yvonne Seward and Andy Caddell.

We continue to pray for: Percy and Sharon Blizzard, Jackie Pickford, Clive Hunt.

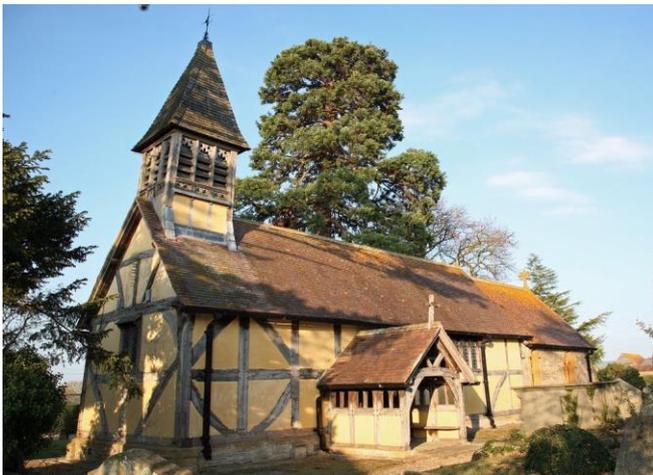
We pray for those who are in residential care: Sheila Bigland-Gibbons, Barbara Milton and Rita Sheppy.

We pray for those who have died everywhere: For those who we know and for those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. Eileen Fincher, Michael Connelly, Ronnie Compton, Captain Anthony Greenwood, Betty Kirkpatrick, Margaret Sutton, Pat Hiden, Don Dufty and David Finch

If there is someone or something that you would like to pray for please email us at eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com

Church Services

The church services this week will be at:



10.30am St Peter's Chapelry, Besford (HC)



10.30am St Peter's, Little Comberton (MP)

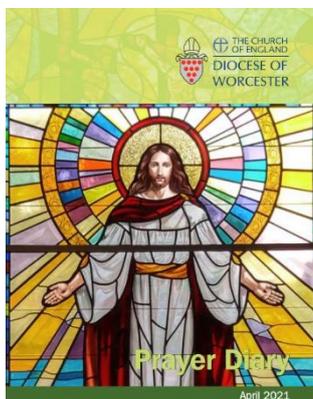
April and May Services

25th April

09.00am Chapel of Ease, Bredon's Norton

10.30am St Barbara's, Ashton Under Hill

Date	Church	Time	Minister
2 nd May	St Mary's Elmley Castle	10.30am	Canon Roger Spiller
	Holy Trinity, Eckington	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
9 th May	St Faith's Overbury	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
	St Giles, Bredon	10.30am	Reverend Catherine Lack
16 th May	St James' Defford	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
	St Peter's, Little Comberton	10.30am	Canon Roger Spiller
23 rd May Pentecost	United Group Service, St Mary's, Elmley Castle	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
30 th May	Chapel of Ease, Bredon's Norton	9.00am	tbc
	St John the Baptist, Beckford	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies



News from the Diocese

Prayers and diocesan news can be found at www.cofe-worcester.org.uk

Reverend Allison Davies

Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group

