

Greetings to Christians Together in Orleton

Welcome to this week's Sunday Sheet. I hope that you are feeling connected to our Christians Together Community through this weekly sheet. Please let me know if there are other things to include.

Good health and best wishes, John jsberry47@gmail.com

Sunday 26th April Easter 3

Acts 2: 14a, 36 – 41

1 Peter 1: 17 – 23

Luke 24: 13 – 35

Sunday's Gospel Reading: Luke 24: 13 – 35

The Walk to Emmaus

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

A Reflection on the Gospel from Matthew

Clearly the story of the encounter on the road to Emmaus was a well-known, precious and trusted narrative, indeed, more than that, it was one of the reasons why the early church didn't give up completely. We hear expressed within it the state of depression and sadness in which, quite reasonably, the disciples found themselves after Good Friday, sadness and depression which is then transformed into joy, a new understanding of what has happened, and a burning desire to share the news.

Without a strong, reliable and shared belief in the resurrection there is little reason why the small group (and after the crucifixion it was a very small group) should not have reverted to ordinary Judaism. Nor why Paul, as Saul, would have needed to persecute them. Nor why Paul, as Paul, should have dedicated his life to broadening the gospel and the people of God to include the whole human race. Paul, of course, understood his own encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus as a resurrection appearance: this was the basis on which he claimed the title of apostle. To us, his experience seems a little different from the gospel resurrection appearances; but the important thing about his Damascus road encounter was that it too was a *recognition* encounter. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting'. Paul accepts the identification of the speaker, and the rest is history. Or rather, the rest is Christianity, as we know it.

To go back to the earliest gospel, the central question and pivot in Mark's account is 'but who do you say that I am'. That is really the only question we have to answer. It is the essence of the questions put to us at baptism and confirmation. Confronting it is the persistent and repeated consequence of reading the New Testament. It's pretty much the Big Idea of Mark's gospel, that he wilfully keeps his true identity secret, at least from those outside his close circle of friends. And even they mostly don't get it, to the extent that we sense a growing tetchiness in Jesus' repeated attempts to explain himself to them. Mark's gospel, the earliest, is constructed symmetrically around three recognition stories: the baptism, Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, and the words of the centurion at the cross. [Mark 1.9-11; 8.27-30; 15.39-40]

So this morning's gospel, an unusually complete little piece of narrative, is not just an Easter story, but one that goes to the heart of the gospel. Here we have a recognition-story which may suggest that everything has been leading to this event, the resurrection.

If we answer, with Peter 'you are the Messiah', or, last week, with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God', then the only supplementary question is what are we going to do about it? And then, in recognition, saying with the good thief on that other cross on one side, the cross of ordinary life, 'Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'

A Prayer from Stan

Lord God, the road to Emmaus sounds like a good idea right now, except that we're locked down at home. We pray that the risen Jesus will meet with us anyway on the road that we walk with him, and with those who are alone at mealtimes,

opening our eyes to your truth,
filling our hearts with your grace,

that we might all be people of hope and faith in testing times.

In the name of Jesus - risen Christ, friend, companion, healer, Amen

My choice of Hymn today is The Churches One Foundation

<https://youtu.be/OQv4EAwMFoQ>

Please remember that Church and Chapel are now closed every day.

Good health and best wishes, John jsberry47@gmail.com

Matthew's Life in Lockdown!

Like most of us in these strange times, the clergy also have a challenging time keeping abreast of their 'flock'. Our vicar, Matthew Burns is busy in all sorts of ways and asked me to include the following:

"I have been keeping busy with the Home Safe Scheme, and with the foodbank, I've been through Orleton a few times and have been keeping a look out for gardeners to talk to at the required 2 metre distance! I'm looking at setting up some Zoom services, with a paid account people can also phone in to the service, no internet is required. This allows for a more participatory service than watching a YouTube video or live stream on Facebook." Details to follow.

The Parish Giving Scheme

The PCC of St. George's is planning to introduce a new method of receiving regular donations to support the life and work of our church. The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is a 21st century solution to offset one of the greatest threats to parish income which is static giving. Donations made through this scheme use a Direct Debit. This can be made on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. Each donation is restricted to a parish church.

In the next few weeks, members of the electoral role will receive details of the Parish Giving Scheme with an invitation to change their current method of giving to the new scheme.

If you have any questions about the scheme and how it will help St. George's meet its current expenditure needs please contact Mark Simmons (Churchwarden) or John Berry (Treasurer).

As always, thank you for the support that many in the Parish give to St. George's to keep the church alive and available to the whole community.

Live Streaming of Worship

Each Sunday there is a live streaming to Facebook of a service from a church in the Diocese.

Date	Leader
26 April	Lizzie Hackney 10am
3 May	Revd Sean Semple 10am
10 May	Revd Chris Moore 10am

Community Support during the Coronavirus crisis

School Lunches

Ann Jones and the team at Orleton Primary School are offering a *meals on wheels* for anyone in the village. This is a lunch and pudding and costs £2.50 including delivery.

To order a lunch please ring Orleton School between 10 and 11am any day on 01568 780 366. The school will tell you what is being served over the week.

The team are hoping to carry on serving meals over the Easter holiday and possibly afterwards.

Orleton Good Neighbour Scheme

The Orleton Good Neighbour Scheme can collect prescriptions from the surgery and shopping for you for FREE from the Village shop and from supermarkets and other shops in Leominster and Ludlow. Just ring 07825 484 289

Village shop delivery of shopping

The Village Stores and Post Office is offering a FREE delivery service of its usual range of food and other goods. Please call them on 01568 780263

The Boot takeaway meals

The Boot Inn is offering both takeaway food service and a FREE delivery service of food supplies and household goods from their regular suppliers, with no minimum order. Please call them on 01568 780228 if you are interested in either offer.