



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Sunday 4th April 2021 – Easter Sunday

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

TODAY'S SERVICES

9:15am	Holy Communion Service at St. George's Church	Revd Carol Pharaoh
11:00am	Holy Communion Service at St. Bartholomew's Church	Revd Carol Pharaoh

We pray for:

Those who are ill: Bob Benyon, Cassie Buono, Brian Cato, Christopher Davies, Christine Greenhalgh, Irene Halliwell, Jenny Harris, Keith Haworth, Mario Heaton, Edith Ibbotson, Joan James, Patricia James, Mike Johnson, Eileen Marsh, Norman Sidlow.

Those who have died recently: Lesley Glover

And on their anniversaries this week we remember: John Baxter, Joyce Davidson, William Evans, Arthur Fisher, Joan Gibbs, Henry Hallam, George Hibbert, Steven Horridge, Samuel Howard, Robert Hulbert, Barry Mansfield, Hetty Pendlebury, John Wild, Emma Wood.

This week:

Sunday services at St. George's and St. Bartholomew's will continue at 9:15am and 11:00am. Next Sunday's services will be Services of the Word led by Elaine Simkin [St. George's] and Alan Morris [St. Bartholomew's].

Organ music at St. Bartholomew's will be a mixed bag for Easter. Before the service we get Pachelbel's Choral & 8 variations on the tune we know as Salzburg [the Easter hymn "At the Lamb's high feast we sing"] – the tune moves between left and right hands and feet; the offertory will be a choral prelude on an Easter hymn by Healey Willan and you can probably guess what's coming at the end.

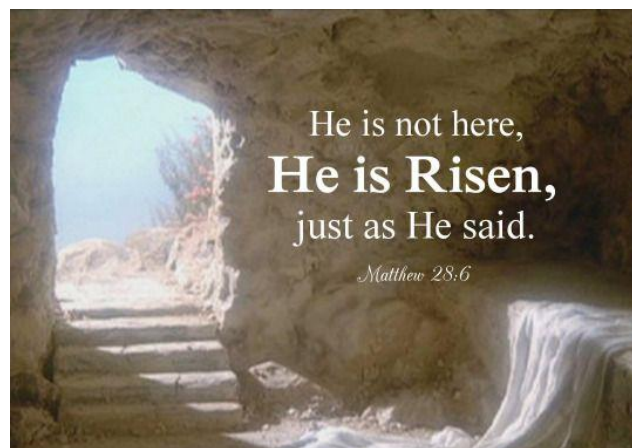
During the Easter season, we'll be looking at the Acts of the Apostles in the daily readings. Last year we came to this about half way through the book where St Paul was touring around founding churches in the places he visited. We're at the start this week with St. Peter looking at how the faith was first established. There will be plenty of notes along the way so that we know where we are when and roughly what's going on. It should tie in with our first Bible reading at the Sunday services which is always taken from Acts during the Easter season.

Informal Zoom Chat: please note that we are not running this today.

While services and attendance at church is limited, these pewsheets and on-line services will continue. Do keep any news, views and feedback coming. Please also check our Team YouTube channel for online services:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDx266HLh9ShYeBJnON8ODg>

Ed





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The Collect:

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

First Reading

Acts 10. 34 - 43

³⁴Peter began to speak to those assembled in the house of Cornelius. 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15. 1 - 11

¹I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ²through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you – unless you have come to believe in vain. ³For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them – though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or

they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Gospel Reading: John 20. 1 - 18

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes. ¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' ¹⁶Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' which means Teacher. ¹⁷Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Post Communion Prayer:

God of Life, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection have delivered us from the power of our enemy: grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



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Easter Day Homily: Revd. Carol Pharaoh

Introduction

Peter and I like to listen to the Dermot O'Leary Radio 2 show on Saturday mornings. Each week there is a mystery voice feature. An audio clip of a famous person speaking is played. The game is to identify the person by recognising the voice. There are only 2 guesses per week so often 'the mystery voice' is carried over to subsequent weeks. Sometimes, the game lasts for weeks and weeks. I find it really difficult. Sometimes you know the voice, but you can't quite bring to mind who the person is. If you were able to see a picture alongside the audio, it would be much, much easier of course.

The first Easter

Mary's journey, through Holy Week, Good Friday, Easter Eve to Easter morning, has been a lot of ups and downs. In today's familiar story, Mary is slow to recognise Jesus. She mistakes him for the gardener. Why might that be? Was it the dim dawn light? The entrance to the tomb was low down – Mary had to bend down – so perhaps, when she turned, she saw only Jesus' legs. Some scholars think that, after Jesus' rose again from the dead, his appearance had altered in some way. So maybe this was the reason she didn't recognise him. Certainly, Jesus was the last person she expected to see at that moment.

I have called you by name

It's interesting that Jesus became recognisable to Mary when he said her name. Then, she instantly knew who it was. She recognised Jesus now by his voice and she simply replied, 'Rabbouni!' which means Teacher, a Jewish title used to convey deep respect for the person. Mary had then the greatest honour as she was tasked to share the good news of Jesus' resurrection with the disciples and other followers of Jesus. This was a tough job to do, tougher than you might think. Try being a woman when you're the first to witness Jesus' resurrection. A woman's testimony was pretty worthless in those days, particularly to a bunch of frightened men who have just lost their Saviour, the one on whom they had pinned all their hopes. Never the less, Mary does as Jesus asks.

So, on this Easter Sunday, do we recognise Jesus calling our name? What would give away the voice of Jesus to us and how do you imagine it would sound? Perhaps an even more important question is, what would he say to us and what would he ask of us? Are we willing to follow him and do as he asks?

Easter

Our Easter celebration is a reminder that on this day everything changed. Jesus is alive, we have new life through him, and he is with us always. This is something worth getting excited about and sharing with others. We don't need to be clever, or have been taught how to speak in public. All we need to do is speak from our own experience. Which means that we will each want to share something different about Jesus. Do we have the same courage that Mary showed?

During Lent, some of us have been participating in a course called 'Faith Pictures' produced by Church Army. Throughout the course we have been encouraged to be a bit more confident in sharing our faith and what it means to us, with others. It's been a challenging course but well worth doing. In the final session, the course reminded us that God is already at work in the world, including all the different circles we move in – our homes, work places, schools and communities. God is working in people's hearts and minds, in ways that we may never have considered. It's inspiring to think that God might be preparing the way for us to have conversations about our faith. In a nutshell, all participants on the course, were



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encouraged to find out what God is already doing in the world and in people's lives and join in.

Conclusion

At a Confirmation Service we hear these words. N, God has called you by name and made you his own. Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.

It is in the power of God's spirit that we can achieve great things for him.

Hallelujah Christ is risen.... **He is risen indeed Hallelujah.**

Intercessions – Easter Day

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.
That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his
glorious and life-giving resurrection ...
we pray to the Father. **Hear our prayer.**

That isolated and persecuted churches
may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter ...
we pray to the Father. **Hear our prayer.**

That God may grant us humility
to be subject to one another in Christian love ...
we pray to the Father. **Hear our prayer.**

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter ...
we pray to the Father. **Hear our prayer.**

That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world ...
we pray to the Father. **Hear our prayer.**

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick,
the weak and the dying,
to comfort and strengthen them ...
we pray to the Father. **Hear our prayer.**

That, according to his promises,
all who have died in the faith of the resurrection
may be raised on the last day ...
we pray to the Father. **Hear our prayer.**

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people,
so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection,
we pray to the Father. **Hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant that, as his death has recalled us to life,
so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**





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1. Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia,
our triumphant holy day; alleluia,
who did once upon the cross; alleluia,
suffer to redeem our loss; alleluia!

2. Hymns of praise then let us sing; Alleluia,
unto Christ our heavenly king; alleluia,
who endured the cross and grave; alleluia,
sinners to redeem and save: alleluia!

3. But the pains which he endured; Alleluia,
our salvation have procured; alleluia,
now above the sky he's King; alleluia,
where the angels ever sing; alleluia!

Words: Despite it being one of the best known Easter hymns [no Easter Day service would be complete without it] no-one knows who wrote it. It's based on a 14th century Latin hymn by an unknown Bohemian author and first appeared in England in 1708 but has been much rewritten since.

Tune: Easter Hymn – and nobody knows who wrote this either.

An Easter message from David Walker, Bishop of Manchester



Last year will remain forever the one when the people of God were locked out of their churches on Easter Day. The UK Government had, three weeks earlier, issued regulations closing all places of worship across England. The Archbishop of Canterbury famously led an Easter service on line from his kitchen, with kettle and electrical sockets visible behind him. It was a physical expression of the fact that the focus of our prayers and celebrations had moved into our homes.

This last 12 months has seen a recovery of the home as a centre for worship; a rediscovery that 'church' is not merely a place that we go to, outside of which prayer is somehow unwelcome or unfitting, but a belonging we carry with us, into every aspect of our lives. It has been heart-warming to see the numbers of people taking part in worship from their homes, not only on Sundays but for daily prayer throughout the week. Nor has the return of religion to our homes been confined to the steaming of services; study and fellowship groups have flourished with the demands of travel replaced by the click of a mouse button, or the press of a finger. If, at the end of this pandemic, we have learned that God is as present and as central to our lives in a cluttered kitchen as he is in the most resplendent sanctuary, we will have learned well.

This Easter, most of our buildings are once more open. There are still significant constraints, to keep everyone safe from infection or infecting others, but the growing sense is of things slowly returning to normal. We can celebrate this Easter with added hope - the hope that, over the coming months, the most onerous of the coronavirus regulations will be lifted and life will recover a degree of normality. We will see much missed family members and friends again. We will begin to be able to travel for fun and leisure, not merely of necessity. Our Alleluias can be heartfelt.

So my prayer for this Easter season is that we do not, in returning to our gathering places, seek to lock God, or the practice of our faith, back out of our homes. Can we continue to join, as lay people and clergy, to pray together daily from the comfort of our living rooms? Can we continue to share and to study from home, the better to deepen our discipleship there? It's a fact of human nature that we tend to remember things better in the place where we first learned them. Can we become a people for whom the Risen Lord Jesus is not someone whose home we visit when regulations permit, but one who abides with us in the places we ourselves live and work? Therein lies the challenge and the promise for Easter 2021.

May God bless you richly this Eastertide.

And click here for: [A reflection for Easter Sunday from Archdeacon David Sharples](#)



In film terms, the Acts of the Apostles is “Luke 2 – The Sequel” with St Luke following his gospel of Jesus’ life with the story of the disciples and the early church from the Ascension [chapter 1] to the coming of the Holy Spirit [chapter 2] and then the disciples taking the word of God into the world. It’s more than just a record of travel – there are many well drawn, interesting characters to meet on the way; depending upon your generation it’s like TV programmes with Alan Whicker, Michael Palin or Simon Reeve.

- ACT 1 – Jerusalem [chapters 1 – 7]
- ACT 2 – Judea and Samaria [chapters 8 – 12]
- ACT 3 – the ends of the earth / the known world [chapters 13 – 19]
- ACT 4 – St. Paul returns to Jerusalem and then Rome [chapters 20 – 28]

The Book of Acts

Focus	Foundation of the Church										Founder of Churches									
Divisions	Spirit of the Church		Growth of the Church		Persecution of the Church		Expansion of the Church		First Journey of Paul		Second Journey of Paul		Third Journey of Paul		Arrest of Paul		Trials of Paul		Imprisonment of Paul	
	1	4	5	7	8	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	20	21	23	24	26	27	28
Topics	Peter				Philip				Paul											
	To the Jews				To the Samartans				To the Gentiles											
Place	Jerusalem				Judea & Sumaria				Uttermost Parts											
Time	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)				14 Years (A.D. 35-48)				14 Years (A.D. 48-62)											
Author	Luke the Doctor																			



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Who wrote the book?

The title of the book of Acts comes from the Greek word *praxis*, a word often used in early Christian literature to describe the great deeds of the apostles or other significant believers. This title accurately reflects the contents of the book, which is a series of vignettes chronicling the lives of key apostles (especially Peter and Paul) in the decades immediately following Christ's ascension into heaven.

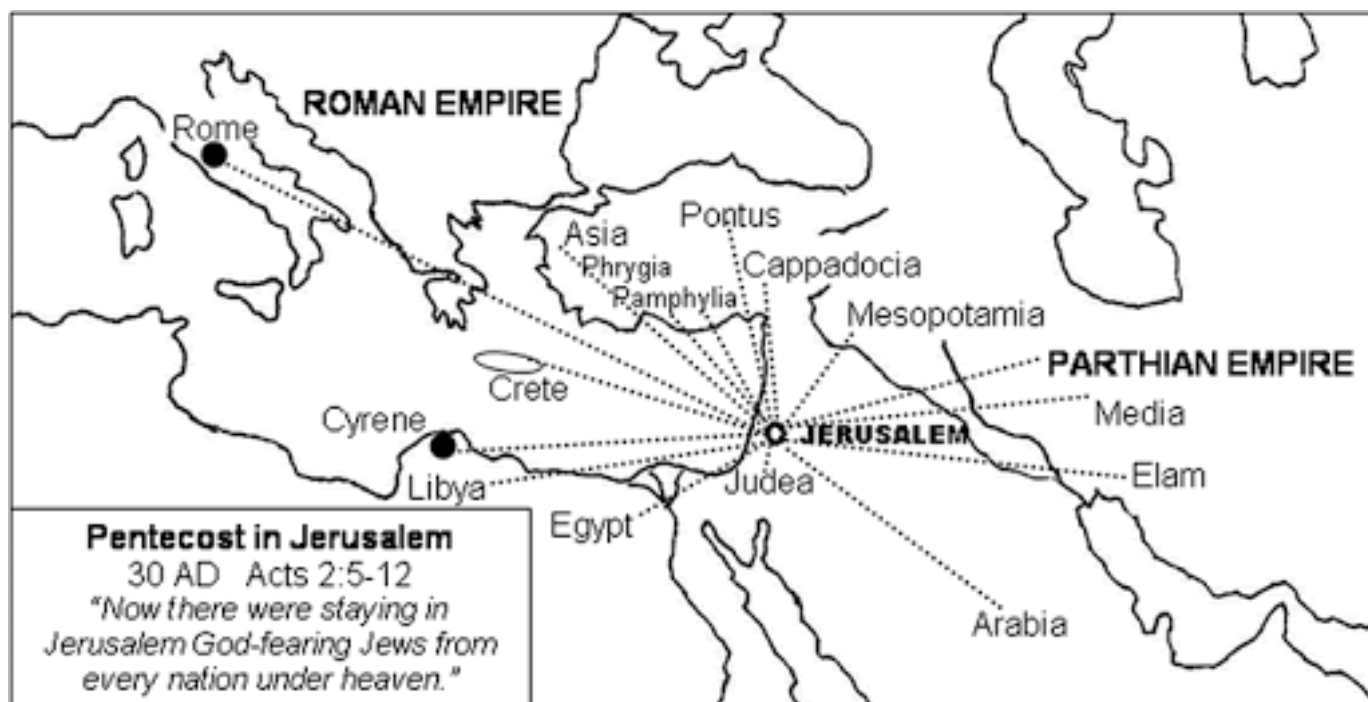
Luke's identification as the author of this work was unquestioned throughout ancient times. It shows a clear progression from the gospel according to Luke, picking up just where that book left off. An ancient prologue to Luke's gospel indicates that Luke was first a follower of the apostles and then became close with Paul. This is exactly how the book of Acts unfolds, beginning with Peter and ending with Paul. Luke even began to speak in the first person plural in the latter portion of Acts, as he travelled the Roman Empire alongside Paul ([Acts 16:10](#)).

Where are we?

Acts ends abruptly with Paul imprisoned in Rome, waiting to bring his appeal before Caesar. It is worth noting that in this history of the early Christian church, Luke mentioned neither Paul's death (AD 64–68) nor the persecution of Christians that broke out under Nero (AD 64). More than likely, Luke completed the book before either of these events occurred, sometime between AD 60 and AD 62, while Paul sat in prison, awaiting the resolution of his appeal.

Why is Acts so important?

Acts is the only biblical book that chronicles the history of the church immediately after Jesus's ascension. As such, it provides us with a valuable account of how the church was able to grow and spread out from Jerusalem into the rest of the Roman Empire. In only three decades, a small group of frightened believers in Jerusalem transformed into an empire-wide movement of people who had committed their lives to Jesus Christ, ending on a high note with Paul on the verge of taking the gospel to the highest government official in the land—the Emperor of Rome.





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Monday 5th April

Easter Monday Bank Holiday

Acts 2. 14 & 22 - 32

Peter Addresses the Crowd

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

²² “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— ²³ 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. ²⁴ But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ²⁵ 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;

²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹ “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. ³⁰ 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. ³¹ Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.’

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.



So, this section comes immediately after the coming of the Holy Spirit, when all those present from every corner of the known world, can understand the words that Peter is speaking, whatever their own language may be. Despite coming from many countries this is a predominantly Jewish crowd of pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem, to worship at the Temple. Many will have been present at the Passover 50 days before and seen the events of Holy Week first hand. So Peter’s speech is aimed at his Jewish listeners citing the Old Testament scriptures [v.25 – 28 from Psalm 16. 8 - 11].

Peter assumes that his audience will have heard Jesus preaching and teaching in their city and witnessed his crucifixion and resurrection. He wants them here in his first sermon to acknowledge the past so they can move into God’s future.

Psalm 16, written by King David & quoted here, is a great statement of hope and faith in God who sustains David as king; but David is also looking towards the future hope, one which was not fulfilled in his lifetime. Peter notes that David died and was buried, his tomb still existed as proof of this. But as he was a prophet and God had promised David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne, the words of God through a prophet must be true. So David was referring to his successor chosen by God and Easter proves that Jesus [whose family tree could be traced back to David] was this king. But the proof didn’t just lie in ancient texts but in the change the resurrection had on the lives of Peter and his friends.



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*Would we be counted
among the doubters
hiding in the shadow
cast by that cruel cross?
Or, when challenged,
like Peter
openly deny you?
There are times, Lord
when doubts assail
and the distance between us
seems to increase.*

*There are times, Lord
when sin has its hold,
like a barrier between us
that will not move.
Who is there we can turn to
when we feel so overwhelmed?
Who can roll away the stone
and reveal the empty tomb?
No-one but you, Jesus,
no-one but you!*

**I. Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment
Rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes
Where thy body lay.
*Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won!***

**2. Lo, Jesus meets us,
Risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us,
Scatters fear and gloom;
Let the Church with gladness
Hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth,
Death hath lost its sting.
*Thine be the glory ...***

**3. No more we doubt thee,
Glorious Prince of life;
Life is naught without thee:
Aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors
Through thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan
To thy home above:
*Thine be the glory ...***

Words: Edmond L Budry [1854-1932] written in 1884 following the death of his first wife. It first appeared in the YMCA Hymn Book in Switzerland in 1904 and was translated into English by Richard Birch Hoyle, a Baptist minister in Kingston-upon-Thames.

Tune: it was written specifically to fit the tune "See, the conquering hero comes" by G F Handel for his oratorio Joshua in 1746 and later duplicated in Judas Maccabeus.



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Tuesday 6th April

Acts 2. 36 - 41

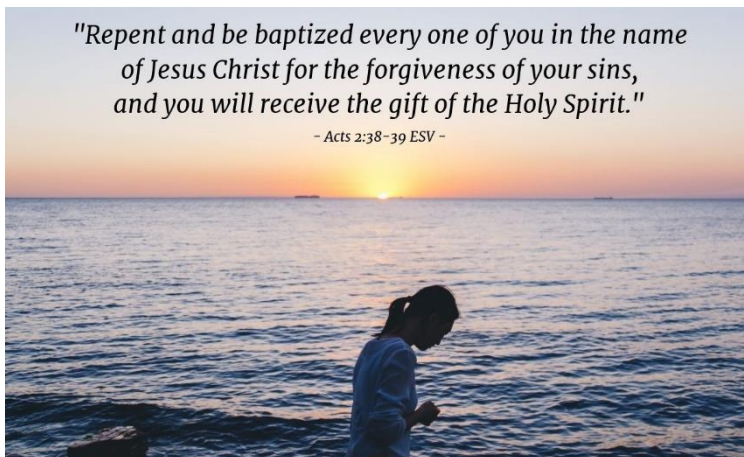
³⁶ Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

The First Converts

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸ Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." ⁴⁰ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

- Acts 2:38-39 ESV -



So, today we have the reaction to Peter's sermon of yesterday and what a reaction it is. There is unanimity from those hearing it, who ask "Brothers, what should we do?" In their new and crazy world, the only people who seem to have any answers are Peter and his friends. Rather than people to be mocked and ridiculed a few weeks earlier, they have now become "brothers." There is a small but radical shift of authority and leadership here from the High Priest, Jewish leaders and the Temple to Peter and his friends at the margins, the people who seem to know how to find salvation. More of this on Friday.

Paul recognises that he needs to offer them something to seal this change in their hearts and minds and provides a four step process [if only it had been three steps as with everything else in the church] which forms the basis for Christian initiation over the world today:

- **repentance**: admitting their mistakes
- **baptism**: a public commitment of their new faith
- **forgiveness**: freedom from the past, even for his listeners forgiveness for not recognising Jesus as Messiah
- **the gift of the Holy Spirit**: the guide for the future

The important message for Peter's audience is that this is not just for a select few but for everybody. To put it in perspective, 3,000 people in a day is the whole of Westhoughton in a week and a half.

Halleluia!
Jesus is risen!
He is risen indeed!

May this declaration
resound not only in these walls
but touch the lives
of all we meet
and forever be
the truth of which we speak.
Your love,

once sown within a garden,
tended for your own people,
neglected and rejected,
now spreads its sweet perfume
in this place
and wherever it is shown.

Halleluia!
Jesus is risen!
He is risen indeed!



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1. The day of resurrection!
Earth, tell it out abroad;
The Passover of gladness,
The Passover of God.
From death to life eternal,
From earth unto the sky,
Our Christ hath brought us over,
With hymns of victory.
2. Our hearts be pure from evil,
That we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal
Of resurrection light;
And list'ning to His accents,
May hear, so calm and plain,
His own "All hail!" and, hearing,
May raise the victor strain.
3. Now let the heav'ns be joyful!
Let earth the song begin!
Let the round world keep triumph,
And all that is therein!
Let all things seen and unseen
Their notes in gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord hath risen,
Our joy that hath no end.

Words: St John of Damascus [c.675 – c.749] as the first hymn in the Golden Canon for Easter Day. Coming from the Greek orthodox tradition, it's still sung at midnight on Easter Eve in Greek churches.

Tune: Ellacombe an 18th century German melody first published in a German book of hymn tunes in 1784. Film buffs may recognise the tune as the school hymn in the film "If."

Wednesday 7th April

Acts 3. 1 - 10

Peter Heals a Crippled Man

3 One day Peter and John went to the Temple area. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, which was the time for the daily Temple prayer service. ² As they were entering the Temple area, a man was there who had been crippled all his life. He was being carried by some friends who brought him to the Temple every day. They put him by one of the gates outside the Temple. It was called Beautiful Gate. There he begged for money from the people going to the Temple. ³ That day he saw Peter and John going into the Temple area. He asked them for money.



⁴ Peter and John looked at the crippled man and said, "Look at us!" ⁵ He looked at them; he thought they would give him some money. ⁶ But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you. By the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth—stand up and walk!"



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St Thomas

St George

⁷ Then Peter took the man's right hand and lifted him up. Immediately his feet and legs became strong. ⁸ He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk. He went into the Temple area with them. He was walking and jumping and praising God. ⁹⁻¹⁰ All the people recognized him. They knew he was the crippled man who always sat by the Beautiful Gate to beg for money. Now they saw this same man walking and praising God. They were amazed. They did not understand how this could happen.

You'll remember "Show and Tell" from schooldays. Luke likes to alternate between the two and having had the "tell" with Peter's first sermon and the reaction to it in the last couple of days, we get to a "show." It's the first big action scene after Pentecost.

It's a routine day – Peter and John are visiting the temple at the set time for prayer and the lame man is being carried along as was his daily routine. But these two paths cross for once and both sets of lives are changed for ever.

Rather than the embarrassing request for money, Peter tells the man to look at them but doesn't offer him the gold or silver that he wants but something better. The word Luke uses here for charitable giving is the standard Jewish-Greek term for mercy. Peter takes his hand and raises the man to his feet [Luke uses the same New Testament word as resurrection] not by his power alone but by the power of Jesus.

The healing of the lame man was visible to all and had a huge impact on the crowd. But his healing wasn't the end of the story, it gives Peter the chance to start on another sermon as we'll see tomorrow.

*When our faith
stands at the grave,
grieving
for a stone that's rolled away,
forgive us.*

*When our faith
is short of
understanding
though the truth is there to see,
forgive us.*

*When our faith,
beset by doubt, sees
no further
than an empty tomb today,
forgive us.*

*Bring to mind
the cry of Mary,
'I have seen the Lord!'
and grant us faith to believe!*

1 The strife is o'er, the battle done;
the victory of life is won;
the song of triumph has begun.
Alleluia!

2 The powers of death have done their worst,
but Christ their legions has dispersed.
Let shouts of holy joy outburst.
Alleluia!

3 The three sad days are quickly sped;
he rises glorious from the dead.
All glory to our risen Head.
Alleluia!

4 He closed the yawning gates of hell;
the bars from heaven's high portals fell.
Let hymns of praise his triumph tell.
Alleluia!

5 Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee,
from death's dread sting thy servants free,
that we may live and sing to thee.
Alleluia!



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Words: Another Latin hymn which can be traced back to 1695, translated into English by Francis Pott [1832 – 1900] and first published in 1861. We'll know him best for writing the hymn "Angel Voices, Ever Singing."

Tune: We usually go for **Victory** adapted by W H Monk from a Gloria to a Magnificat by Palestrina [d.1594]. The other option is **Gelobt sei Gott** from a tune by Vulpinus [1560 – 1616] but we tend to save this for "Good Christians all, rejoice and sing."

Thursday 8th April

Acts 3. 11 - end

Peter Speaks to the People

¹¹ The man was holding on to Peter and John. All the people were amazed. They ran to Peter and John at Solomon's Porch.

¹² When Peter saw this, he said to the people, "My Jewish brothers, why are you surprised at this? You are looking at us as if it was our power that made this man walk. Do you think this was done because we are good? ¹³ No, God did it! He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is the God of all our fathers. He gave glory to Jesus, his special servant. But you handed him over to be killed. Pilate decided to let him go free. But you told Pilate you did not want him. ¹⁴ Jesus was holy and good, but you said you did not want him. You told Pilate to give you a murderer instead of Jesus. ¹⁵ And so you killed the one who gives life! But God raised him from death. We are witnesses of this—we saw it with our own eyes.

¹⁶ "This crippled man was healed because we trusted in Jesus. It was Jesus' power that made him well. You can see this man, and you know him. He was made completely well because of faith in Jesus. You all saw it happen!

¹⁷ "My brothers, I know that what you did to Jesus was done because you did not understand what you were doing. And your leaders did not understand any more than you did. ¹⁸ But God said these things would happen. Through the prophets he said that his Messiah would suffer and die. I have told you how God made this happen. ¹⁹ So you must change your hearts and lives. Come back to God, and he will forgive your sins. ²⁰ Then the Lord will give you times of spiritual rest. He will send you Jesus, the one he chose to be the Messiah.

²¹ "But Jesus must stay in heaven until the time when all things will be made right again. God told about this time when he spoke long ago through his holy prophets. ²² Moses said, 'The Lord your God will give you a prophet. That prophet will come from among your own people. He will be like me. You must obey everything he tells you. ²³ And anyone who refuses to obey that prophet will die, separated from God's people.'

²⁴ "Samuel, and all the other prophets who spoke for God after Samuel, said that this time would come. ²⁵ And what those prophets talked about is for you, their descendants. You have received the agreement that God made with your fathers. God said to your father Abraham, 'Every nation on earth will be blessed through your descendants.' ²⁶ God has sent his special servant Jesus. He sent him to you first. He sent him to bless you by causing each of you to turn away from your evil ways."





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Solomon's porch was like a cathedral cloister today, a covered columned area located on the east side of the Temple's outer court.

Peter sets off on another sermon firstly to direct the crowd's attention to their real goal. "Don't stare at us," he's telling them. The healing was the action of God, the God of the bible and their shared history and heritage. He quotes [Exodus 3.6](#) in verse 13 – God who has acted throughout history has come to save his people through Jesus. The message of the apostles throughout Acts is that everything that they do is done in the name of Jesus.

Peter isn't subtle here; he tells the crowd that the healing was performed through the power of God, whose son the same crowd was calling for to be crucified just a few weeks earlier. But telling the people that they were wrong isn't the good news that Peter is bringing; he points out that it's the faith of the crippled man that has healed him.

Peter offers the crowd three explanations for their actions in [v 17 – 18](#) – they didn't know what they were doing, their leaders told them to do it and it was God's plan all along. But he still tells them that the excuses don't matter, they were still there and now need to change their lives around. He's not interested in punishment or revenge, just in getting a positive change of mind and heart, repentance and belief. Their future is more important than their past and repentance will bring them blessings. He links this to the promises made to them throughout the Old Testament history to Moses, Abraham and all the families of the earth [[Deuteronomy 18. 15 -20](#) / [Genesis 12.3](#)] but they have to choose to accept it.

Having addressed the crowd, we'll see tomorrow how Peter goes to the top and addresses the High Council.

*We thank you
that Easter is not about
a people,
but all people,
that your love
and your Salvation
are for all who confess
with voices, hearts and lives
that the tomb is empty*

*because Jesus is risen,
that we might know
forgiveness,
that lives might be
reborn
and your name
glorified
now and for eternity.*

1. In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

3. There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

2. In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live.

4. No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Words & Music: A modern hymn by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty which can be sung all year round but does fit in well with the Easter season.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Friday 9th April

Acts 4. 1 - 12

The Apostles and the Jewish High Council

4 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, some Jewish leaders came up to them. There were some priests, the captain of the soldiers that guarded the Temple, and some Sadducees. ² They were upset because of what Peter and John were teaching the people. By telling people about Jesus, the apostles were teaching that people will rise from death. ³ The Jewish leaders arrested Peter and John and put them in jail. It was already night, so they kept them in jail until the next day. ⁴ But many of the people who heard the apostles believed what they said. There were now about 5000 men in the group of believers.



⁵ The next day the Jewish rulers, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander were there. Everyone from the high priest's family was there. ⁷ They made Peter and John stand before all the people. They asked them over and over, "How did you make this crippled man well? What power did you use? By whose authority did you do this?"

⁸ Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, "Rulers of the people and you older leaders, ⁹ are you questioning us today about what we did to help this crippled man? Are you asking us what made him well? ¹⁰ We want all of you and all the people of Israel to know that this man was made well by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth. You nailed Jesus to a cross, but God raised him from death. This man was crippled, but he is now well. He is able to stand here before you because of the power of Jesus! ¹¹ Jesus is

'the stone that you builders thought was not important.

But this stone has become the cornerstone.'

¹² Jesus is the only one who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save anyone. We must be saved through him!"

If you've been with us since lockdown when we were looking through the Old Testament last year, this will come as no surprise. Time and again the prophets proclaimed the word of God, the leaders didn't like it and the prophets got into all sorts of trouble. Now it's Peter's turn.

This section is all about power and control. Peter & John see the Temple as a holy space where anyone can go to pray and experience the healing power of God. But the temple authorities see it as their space where they control all that is said and done. [Jesus had just the same problems in [Luke 20.1-8](#)]. The Sadducees were theological hard-liners, they thought that the resurrection has no place in scripture and weren't going to have anybody teach it in their temple. Luke's hint is that this is why they had Peter & John put in prison. Note the timeline – it's now night so the whole of chapter 3 to now happened in one afternoon and evening.

In [v.5](#) absolutely everyone comes out of the woodwork to try and stop Peter and John but none of them are in control of events anymore. The news of Jesus is out there; there are about 5000 men [not forgetting the women and children] already in the group of believers. The Sanhedrin were the highest court in Jerusalem covering political and religious power [they condemned Jesus to death in [Luke 22. 66-71](#) just a few weeks earlier, don't forget] and they want their power back. Peter is faced with the question of his life, "By whose authority are you speaking?"

The last time Peter was in the high priest's house, he denied knowing Jesus three times [[Luke 22. 54 – 62](#)] but now Jesus promise to him that he will have the words to say comes true [[Luke 21. 12 – 15](#)]. Peter's answer surprises them when he tells them that the power and authority isn't theirs or his but comes from Jesus whom they tried to destroy. The crippled man standing before them completely healed was proof that Jesus was far from dead and buried.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

The rejected stone [from [Psalm 118.22](#)] is a favourite text in early Christian writing underlining how the rules in God's kingdom are the reverse of theirs. The powerless, the despised or the unimportant have become the key to God's kingdom. It's the choice they and we have to make – the resurrection of Christ is a stone blocking the path to trip over or the cornerstone of faith and salvation.

So, how do the Jewish leaders react? That come tomorrow...

Rejoice!

*The stone is rolled away,
grave clothes neatly folded,
no more the smell of death,
behold the empty tomb!
Halleluia! (He is risen!)*

Rejoice!

*Scripture has been fulfilled,
the sting of death is gone,
the victory has been won,
behold the risen Christ!
Halleluia! (He is risen!)*

Rejoice!

*The curtain's torn in two,
our God invites us in,
Christ's sacrifice enough
to wash away our sins!
Halleluia! (He is risen!)*

1 Love's redeeming work is done;
fought the fight, the battle won:
lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er,
lo, he sets in blood no more.

3 Lives again our glorious King;
where, O death, is now thy sting?
dying once, he all doth save;
where thy victory, O grave?

2 Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Christ has burst the gates of hell;
death in vain forbids his rise;
Christ has opened paradise.

4 Soar we now where Christ has led,
following our exalted Head;
made like him, like him we rise;
ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

5 Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!
Praise to thee by both be given:
thee we greet triumphant now;
hail, the Resurrection Thou!

Words: Charles Wesley's hymn for Easter Day, published in 1739 making it one of his earliest hymns. When John Wesley made his famous collection in 1780, he missed it out altogether [*I'd love to know why*] and so it was about 1830 before it was widely known. It originally had 11 verses and this version we use starts at the original verse 2 – there are very few hymns that become well known after cutting the first verse.

Tune: **Savannah** from John Wesley's Foundry Collection of 1742.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Saturday 10th April

Acts 4. 13 - 21

¹³ The Jewish leaders understood that Peter and John had no special training or education. But they also saw that they were not afraid to speak. So the leaders were amazed. They also realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ They saw the crippled man standing there beside the apostles. They saw that he was healed, so they could say nothing against the apostles.

¹⁵ The Jewish leaders told them to leave the council meeting. Then the leaders talked to each other about what they should do. ¹⁶ They said, "What shall we do with these men? Everyone in Jerusalem knows about the miracle they did as a sign from God. It's too obvious. We can't say it didn't happen. ¹⁷ But we must make them afraid to talk to anyone again using that name. Then this problem will not spread among the people."

¹⁸ So the Jewish leaders called Peter and John in again. They told the apostles not to say anything or to teach anything in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, "What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? ²⁰ We cannot be quiet. We must tell people about what we have seen and heard."

²¹⁻²² The Jewish leaders could not find a way to punish the apostles, because all the people were praising God for what had been done. This miracle was a sign from God. The man who was healed was more than 40 years old. So the Jewish leaders warned the apostles again and let them go free.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter has found the words to convince the crowds in the streets but the Jewish leaders aren't shifting. They have a grudging admiration for Peter and John for their boldness and conviction, but to the educated elite of the Sanhedrin, Peter & John are just a couple of lowly outsiders with no special education, training or status. What strikes the Sanhedrin is that they have been with Jesus and that a man was healed in his name – it's as if they have suddenly made the connection between what's going on in the streets and the temple and the man they crucified six weeks before.

But what can the Sanhedrin do? For them it's all about public relations, the messengers and not the message. They think that if they can simply stop Peter and John talking about Jesus, the whole thing will just blow over and they can go back to being in control. Peter and John tell them, however, that they are under a higher authority – given a choice between the word of God versus the Sanhedrin, well they only have one option.

The Sanhedrin didn't feel that they could keep Peter and John imprisoned as that would upset the crowds [we know from the Passion story how volatile the crowds were and in Luke's writings the crowds are always up for trouble] – they had seen a man crippled for many years healed. So the Sanhedrin had to let Peter and John go with a warning and we'll see where that gets us next week.

*Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
to you be praise and glory for ever.*

*As once you ransomed your people from Egypt
and led them to freedom in the promised land,
so now you have delivered us from the dominion of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your risen Son.*

*May we, the first fruits of your new creation,
rejoice in this new day you have made,
and praise you for your mighty acts.*

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

1. Jesus lives! thy terrors now
can no longer, death, appal us;
Jesus lives! by this we know
thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.
Alleluia!

2. Jesus lives! henceforth is death
but the gate of life immortal;
this shall calm our trembling breath
when we pass its gloomy portal.
Alleluia!

3. Jesus lives! for us he died;
then, alone to Jesus living,
pure in heart may we abide,
glory to our Saviour giving.
Alleluia!

4. Jesus lives! our hearts know well
nought from us his love shall sever;
life, nor death, nor powers of hell
tear us from his keeping ever.
Alleluia!

5. Jesus lives! to him the throne
over all the world is given:
may we go where he has gone,
rest and reign with him in heaven.
Alleluia!

Words: Christian Gellert [1715-69] lecturer in poetry and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Leipzig. Based on John 14.19 ["Because I live, you shall live also"] each verse in the original ends with the words, "This shall be my confidence." In the translation by Frances E Cox [1812-97] that we use, this becomes simply "Alleluia!"

Tune: St Albinus H J Gauntlett [1805 – 76]

NOTICES:

ANNUAL MEETING: We are planning for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be on Monday 26th April at 7:30pm in person at St. Bartholomew's church. This may have to change depending on how slowly / quickly the lockdown measures are reduced and currently we are allowed to defer it until the end of May if necessary.

This is the meeting at which we present our annual reports and accounts and elect our church officers [wardens / deputy wardens / committee members].

As part of this we need to revise our electoral roll which effectively the membership list of the churches eligible to vote at the APCM. If you're on it already, that's fine – you just remain on. If you wish to join or you're not sure if you're on or not, either see me at one of the services or e-mail me here at westhoughtonparish@outlook.com and we'll get you a form to complete.

We're revising the roll between now and Sunday 11th April. After that, we can't add any names until after the AGM although we can make any corrections required.

Many thanks Ed.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Children's Society Boxes:

If you would like your box emptying, please drop these off at church and I will collect, empty them and forward the money onto the Children's Society.

The empty boxes will be returned to church for you to collect.

Thank you.

Christine & Andrew Jolley

01942 815820

Christian Aid Area Coordinator

After 37 years in the role, Brian Palin from St James' Daisy Hill is looking to retire from the role of Westhoughton Churches Area Coordinator for Christian Aid. If you are interested in taking on this important role, or know someone who might, from next year, please get in touch with Carol. Brian would be happy to speak to you about what the role entails.

This year Christian Aid Week is 10th - 16th May. Due to COVID_19, no house to house collections can take place. If you would like to do something else to raise some funds for this charity on behalf of our churches, again please get in touch. Thank you.

Church Attendance for School Places:

To register attendance, **please e-mail:**

bdhww.churchattendance@gmail.com

giving both your name / your child or children's names and the church you would usually attend. You will need to do this even if you attend a service and sign in. Only one e-mail per week will be counted [even if you would have attended more than once in any week]. Please do NOT use any other e-mail address to register church attendance as these will not be included. Thank You

Next Sunday: Second Sunday of Easter

Readings: Acts 4. 32 - 35/ John 20.19 - end

9:15 am Service of the Word at St. George's Church Elaine Simkin

11:00am Service of the Word at St. Bartholomew's Church Alan Morris

Do contact us if we can offer any help or support at this time.

Team Rector: Revd Carol Pharaoh 01942 859251 carol.pharaoh@gmail.com www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk

Team Vicar: Revd Angela Wynne 01204 468150 – revawynne@gmail.com

FACEBOOK – locate us by searching Westhoughton parish Follow us on twitter @Wparishchurch
@Westhoughtontowerbellringers

Material for the news sheet should be sent to Joan Warner by Wednesday morning 01942 818821 joan.warner35@outlook.com

To receive these pewsheets, newsletters or special events leaflets electronically, please e-mail

westhoughtonparish@outlook.com