

For Sunday 26th April

Dear Friends,

We hope you found last week's 'Recognising You – Resurrection Poem', that was read on Easter Sunday, a reminder to notice God's blessing to you in the ordinary things of every day which we usually take for granted. Perhaps each day you might write a list of things in which you can recognise God's provision for you – at a time when you can sit and reflect.

These times are certainly a lesson in deferred gratification – probably for the younger generations. If we're honest our instant society has probably made us all a little impatient too. For those of you whose eyesight is good enough that you're not having this read to you, perhaps you might read a psalm each day (or part of one if it's long). It may hold your feelings, bring you hope in God's character or simply voice your own praise as you look out at creation and see its splendour.

This last week we walked around the vicarage garden and noticing the white flowers wondered how many different kinds there were. We were surprised to find a dozen. Then we noticed for the first time a variety of bluebells we had not seen before, making three in all.

We're sure some of you are finding, after four weeks of lockdown, that this time is a little disorienting and that the loss of your usual routines strange. As others have done, it is some times good to take a break from the news. May be it's also a good time to establish new stay-at-home routine if you haven't already.

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD (Psalm 27:14).

Peter & Rosie





Thought for St James'

One of the benefits for me about being self-isolated is that I get to enjoy my garden more. Never before has it looked so neat and tidy! It's springtime and the weather has been sunny and warm. Spring is my favourite season. Everything is waking up after the long winter. The bulbs are in flower and the buds and blossom are beginning to emerge on the trees, all signs of new life.

We have remembered Jesus' death at Easter and his glorious and triumphant rising from the grave, never to die again. Just as a seed when buried in the ground produces a new living plant, so Jesus had to die in order to rise from death to new life. When we trust in Christ we die to our

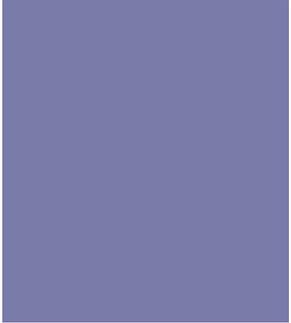
old life and are born again to a new and eternal life in Christ. The Apostle Paul says, "anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Cor 5:17).

Plant take time to grow, mature and produce fruit, so too disciples of Jesus need to grow to maturity in order to bear fruit for Him. So, stay close to Jesus, 'abide in Him'. When we do this with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can rise above our circumstances and enjoy the rich life that Jesus offers.

As we enjoy seeing new life in the garden, may we reflect on our new life in Christ and offer Him grateful thanks.

Clive Sprawson 





The Road to Emmaus

Read Luke 24:13-35. Some thoughts on Sunday's scripture

I challenge you to hear the Bible story with more questions – not just ones that challenge the facts, more the kind that ask, “How does this relate to me?” “What can I learn from this story today?” “What is God saying to me?”

As these bewildered Disciples start home for Emmaus they are deep in conversation not only about the previous 48 hours but also, probably about the experience of the last three years. They would have had hopes and dreams. Undoubtedly, from what we can read of the story presented in the gospels, some of these were misguided.

After what was the most incredible weekend in all history I'm sure there were lots of questions

the crucifixion, the eclipse of the sun, the earthquake, people rising from their graves and the tearing of the Temple curtain...

Are you puzzled by their lack of insight? or do you identify with them in your own journey of faith? Perhaps sometimes you feel disappointed with your own inability to grasp what others seem to speak so fluently about; that you seem to have got nowhere at all in grasping the big story about God. Take heart. Faith requires you to hold without full understanding, to place your trust in the sovereign purposes of God and to receive Jesus as your risen Lord and Saviour. ✨



Emmaus Road Poem

Two travellers trudging
the long road from Jerusalem.
Their sorry faces are bent,
reliving the sad event
that sent them scurrying.
"What next?" they wonder.

The stranger comes alongside,
and he is told the sad tale,
but far from sympathizing
he starts scolding them;
too slow of heart,
too slow on the uptake,
not enough faith.

They did not know him;
but their hearts burned.
What quality was in that man
that sparked interest
rather than resentment;
hope rather than anger?

Only at the dinner table
is the unseen traveller
on every road revealed;
Jesus stands among us.

Suddenly fortified,
the travellers take to the road
fuelled with good news,
for all generations:
"We have seen the Lord!
We have seen the Lord!"

Carol Penner ✨