**Christ Church Lille Sunday 26 April 2020** 3rd Sunday of Easter

**Welcome and Introduction**

Good morning, thank you for joining me for this act of worship. There is a song to open worship which I hope you will enjoy, as well as a hymn to close and there are two Bible readings this morning all of which you will find in the accompanying text on the website. Don’t forget that Sunday Club have plenty of activities prepared on their own page on our website.

It is the Third Sunday of Easter and over the next few weeks we will be using Paula Gooder’s book ‘This Risen Existence’ thinking about what the resurrection means for us and for the way we live our lives. Obviously, I cannot do justice to each chapter in 5 minutes, but it will set us thinking!

**Call to Worship**

*You may wish to light a candle*

As God’s people we have gathered in God’s presence, separated by distance but united in God’s love, let us begin by a moment of quiet, settling our hearts and minds.

In the name of the Father…

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

We gather as people on a journey.

Speak to us, God!

Continue creating us!
Inspire our hearts.
Enlighten our minds.
Guide our actions. Amen.

**Song: My Lighthouse, my lighthouse** (complete with actions!)

[**https://youtu.be/OaW\_4MWSE6I**](https://youtu.be/OaW_4MWSE6I)

As we come to a **time of penitence,** let us keep a short silence

Come, Holy Spirit of God,

***All***   **and search our hearts with the light of Christ.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind,

and with all your strength.’

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

***All***   **Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

*We reflect for a moment:*

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

***All***   **Lord our God,**

**in our sin we have avoided your call.**

**Our love for you is like a morning cloud,**

**like the dew that goes away early.**

**Have mercy on us;**

**deliver us from judgement;**

**bind up our wounds and revive us;**

**in Jesus Christ our Lord.** *cf Hosea 6*

**Amen.**

May almighty God,

who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,

bring *us* his pardon and peace, now and for ever.

***All***   **Amen.**

 **Readings**

**Acts 2.14a, 36–41**

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

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.

This is the word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

**Luke 24.13–35**

13  Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. 18 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?’ 19 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, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 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. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 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. 24 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.’ 25 Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28  As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 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. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 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?’ 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, O Christ.

**Homily**

What does Easter mean? If we look beyond the empty tomb and astonished disciples, what is the Easter message and what difference does Easter make to our lives? In this Gospel story, something life changing happens.

Something that many of us enjoy is sharing a meal with someone. Over shared food we can relax, chat and share more of our lives and thinking than we would do in other circumstances. Hospitality is key in many cultures, not just hospitality to those we know, but particularly to strangers.

Normally the stories about hospitality in the Bible remind us that it is essential to welcome strangers for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it*. (cf Hebrews 13:2 “2Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”)* But in this passage of Scripture, Jesus changes things around a bit, as usual…. The two disciples tell Jesus what has happened over the past few days and of their hope that this man would be the one to redeem Israel; they told him that they knew the women had been to the tomb that morning and found it empty. What they **couldn’t do** was link their understanding of Scripture, their tradition, and see that the empty tomb was the fulfillment of God’s promise. As they walked along the road together, Jesus explained Scripture to them and their hearts burned within them, yet it was only when they shared table fellowship, when Jesus took the role as host and broke and blessed the bread, that they finally recognised Jesus, who was their beloved friend and not a stranger.

The two disciples were transformed through their encounter with Jesus on the way and we now discover that this transformation happened through hospitality. Yes, the disciples recognised Jesus as he broke bread and blessed it, but only because they had already lived that with him many times. It was in Jesus’ action, and not just in his words, that recognition took place. And that breaking of bread was only possible because they had first offered hospitality to a stranger. Only after they had listened to him explain Scripture to them, only when they wanted to offer him, give him something, were they able to receive what he offered. It is the paradox of true hospitality that in giving we receive and in welcoming strangers we find friendship, and that in meeting the needs of a stranger, Jesus meets with us.

Something that is important to us here at Christ Church is the offering of time and attention to the many people who come to meet us. We come from many parts of the world to form a gathered community. During this time of confinement, members of our church are joining us in worship wherever they are in the world, across the time zones. And as we congregate in a different way, we are building a new sense of community, of connectedness, that goes beyond the geographical boundaries of our church building, and where the Gospel is still shared and the bond between us strengthened.

My prayer is that together we discern God’s leading in this time aside, that we discover a new way of being church. May we nurture this new life as we listen to Jesus explain Scripture to us, as we break bread together, as we share our knowledge of Jesus with our friends and as we live our life in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Prayers**

**Prayers about the outbreak**

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**For those who are ill**

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**For hospital staff and medical researchers**

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who are caring for the sick, and your wisdom to those searching for a cure. Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**For the Christian community**

We are not people of fear: we are people of courage. We are not people who protect our own safety: we are people who protect our neighbours’ safety. We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity. We are your people God, giving and loving, wherever we are, whatever it costs. For as long as it takes, wherever you call us.

**Collect**

Risen Christ,

you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:

strengthen us to proclaim your risen life

and fill us with your peace,

to the glory of God the Father.

**Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom ,the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

We are drawing towards the end of our time together in a few minutes, here are a few…..

**Notices**

You will know that in France we continue in lockdown until May 11th. We don’t yet know when churches will be able to open again, so please keep an eye on our newsletter and website.

All of our gatherings happen on-line so please join in by asking church office for a link to the video Zoom meetings, we look forward to seeing you!

You may also like a pdf booklet of prayers for use during the coronavirus outbreak which is available as a free download and the link is on the paper version of this service.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/Prayer%20Book%20Digital%202%20April_0.pdf>

May I again say thank you **to each of you who continue to give to the church either online or by bank transfer? The building may be closed, but the mission of the church continues as we take time to discern God’s leading and direction for us all.** You may not be able to add to the collection plate, but you can still contribute using one of the methods on our [Giving page](https://christchurchlille.fr/about-us/donations/). It’s simple and it really helps, thank you.

You can also just scan this QR code

I am very aware that some of us are struggling financially **and** with the length of time in lockdown, please do not hesitate to call me for a chat over a cup of tea 😊

**Words of Commission and Benediction** (inspired by Luke 24:13-35)

Go now as those who have met with Christ

in the morning of this day.

Go now as those who hearts have burned within them,

as the Scriptures were explained.

Go now as those

who have been touched by resurrection.

And may the blessing of God

be upon you, body, mind and spirit,

as you leave this place,

Amen.

God bless, and don’t forget our hashtag, #stayhomestaysafestaypraying

**Closing hymn: All my hope on God is founded**

<https://youtu.be/W3LCGh02Vew>