

Prayers: God of compassion, in this time of uncertainty and distress, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful and lift up all who are brought low. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We pray especially for:

Sick: Lolita Alvira, Dawn Forey, Hanna Librato, Jack Mannix, Marion Mason, Ken Peters, Sue Ralfe and Sam White.

RIP: Inez Bennett, William Swanwick (father) and Billy Swanwick (son).

May we walk as children of light this Easter and always. Amen.

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The Parish Office is closed but Karen is replying to emails:
parish@stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk

**Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say
Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer
in their homes every day.**

St John's Church

Alternative Pew Sheet

19th April 2020

Welcome!

The Church of England continues to follow Government advice. Sadly it is not possible for services, baptisms, weddings and funerals in church to take place. We also have to keep the church closed.

This is the fifth edition of our alternative pew sheet. We are committed to keeping in touch with everyone at St Johns and offer some resources: [here](#).

If you need any help or assistance from Matthew or Jonny, please be in touch (see page four).

**'Come to me,
all you who are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest'
Matthew 11:28**

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk

Please do check our website for future updates

St John's

The Second Sunday of Easter

The Collect

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Acts 2:14a, 22-32](#)

[Psalm 16](#)

[1 Peter 1:3-9](#)

[John 20:19-31](#)

Sermon (by Frances Westcott)

It's been a strange Easter, hasn't it? Usually we have had a busy Holy Week with daily services, a walk of witness and on Easter Day the wonderful Dawn Eucharist and beautiful flower decorations on the cross. This year we have had none of that.

The Sunday after Easter Day is traditionally called Low Sunday, possibly as a corruption of 'Laudes', the first word of part of an old liturgy, but more likely because everything seems rather flat after the exciting events of Easter. Today, we might be feeling rather flat for a different reason. But we have a wonderful Bible reading to uplift us – the post-Resurrection appearance of Jesus to his disciples and the story of Doubting Thomas.

At first, the disciples are huddled together behind locked doors for fear of the Jews but suddenly Jesus appears, showing them his wounded hands and side. How wonderful for them to experience this! Then he commissions them to go out into the world. He breathes on them and they receive the Holy Spirit.

Thomas was absent for all of this. He must have had a miserable week, missing out on seeing the resurrected Jesus, not receiving the Holy Spirit and clearly not believing that Jesus was alive.

St John's

He must have felt so isolated – an isolation we can sympathise with in our present circumstances. Nevertheless, he remained faithful and was with the other disciples a week later. When Jesus asked him to put his finger in his wounds, Thomas didn't need to. He made the incredible leap from not believing in Jesus's resurrection to recognising that Jesus was divine. Only Thomas made the simple and moving response, 'My Lord and my God.'

The reality of the Resurrection is probably the most important aspect of Christianity. Without it, we merely have, in Jesus, a wonderful role-model and ethical teacher; he would not have given us the hope of salvation and would have died to no purpose. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, 'If Christ has not been raised, ...your faith has been in vain (v. 14)' and 'If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people to be most pitied (v. 19).'

The end of the Thomas story addresses us particularly. Jesus uses the situation to reach out and speak directly about the resurrection to each one of us and to succeeding generations. 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have come to believe' (John 20:29).

The resurrection is such an extraordinary thing to accept and yet over the centuries so many have accepted it. Tertullian, one of the early church fathers, said of the resurrection, 'It is certain because it is impossible.' There was clearly something in it!

Jesus was aware of our human nature – that, like Thomas, we want empirical proof before we can believe. He has reached out to us to let us know that he understands that his resurrection is difficult to accept but that, if we can accept it, through faith, then we are blessed indeed.

Alleluia, Christ is risen
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Amen.