

Prayers: Meet us, Lord, on the road to Emmaus, guide us on the path towards our destination, and renew our strength as we continue to walk and commune with you. Open our eyes, so we see the signs of your presence around us; open our hearts, so we may receive your peace and love; and empower us to pass on to others the grace you have shared with us so freely. We pray especially for:

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

RIP: Inez Bennett, William Brignell, Sheila Fitzgerald, Lynn Gomes, William Swanwick (father) and Billy Swanwick (son).

May we know God's presence in our lives. Amen.

Who's who		
Rector	The Revd Matthew Stone	020 8954 3876 Email: rector@stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk
Assistant Curate	The Revd Jonny Rapson	07557 808527 Email: jonny.rapson@london.anglican.org
Safeguarding Officers	Mark Lynch Louise Gregory	07982 906833 07504 527118
Children's Champion	Sue Wright	07958 499682
Vulnerable Adults Champion	Sheila Oliver	020 8954 4976
Churchwardens	Mark Lynch Jane Prentice	07982 906833 07976 388958
Deputy Wardens	Susan Jones Graham Nicholson	07864 846148 01923 226969
Treasurer	Jenny Neve	07989 378840 Email: jenny.neve@gmail.com
Data Protection Compliance	The Rector	020 8954 3876

The Parish Office is closed.

Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in their homes every day. Join them [here](#).

St John's Church

Alternative Pew Sheet

26th 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 sixth 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 opposite).

**"And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."
1 John 5:20**

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 Third Sunday of Easter

The 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. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Acts 2:14a, 36-41](#)

[Psalm 116:1-7](#)

[1 Peter 1:17-23](#)

[Luke 24:13-35](#)

Short Sermon (by The Rector)

It is easy to picture the story. Two confused and anxious disciples of Jesus walking along the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, not a long journey, but one taking about three hours to walk. As they were walking along they talked about all that had happened in the previous few days. How they had all been so excited anticipating the future, how Jesus had been arrested and put to death, their hopes dashed, and then these strange rumours of his being seen again. Perplexed and worried they couldn't make sense of it all.

Then as they journeyed they were joined by a stranger. As they poured out their hearts to him, he explained to them the scriptures. How the prophets had foretold all of this. How the expectations of the ages had been fulfilled in Jesus. And still they couldn't recognise what this stranger was saying. It wasn't until they went into the house at the end of their journey and he sat down with them to share a meal that they recognised him as he broke bread. Their companion on the way was none other than Jesus himself. Yet as they realised that he was with them, so he vanished from their sight. Their immediate response was to want to share the news so they rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the apostles that Jesus was with them.

As we go on our journey through life there are times when we are equally confused. It can be hard to make sense of what is going on

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around us, especially at the moment when we are in lockdown. When our world is falling apart, our plans for the future dashed, our hopes shattered and disillusion set in, then it is hard to see what God has to do with it all. When we experience sickness and suffering, as we sit by a loved one and wait for death, as we witness poverty and injustice, we think "Where is Jesus now?" "What is he doing about all of this?"

Those early travellers to Emmaus felt the same. It just didn't make sense. And sometimes our lives don't make sense. It reminds me of that old saying about not being able to see the wood for the trees. We are too close to the situation to be able to understand what might be going on. Our eyes are too clouded by emotion to enable us to see clearly. This was the case with the two disciples walking to Emmaus.

What those early travellers discovered was that even though they thought that they were alone, that Jesus had left them, the reality was somewhat different. **He had been there on the journey with them.** He was the one who was making sense of the situation, was interpreting all that had happened and was placing it in context. It was only when they gathered around the table and broke bread together that they realised that he was there with them.

The central act of the Christian Community is the Eucharist, the breaking of bread. For two thousand years Christians have gathered around the Lord's table, sometimes in great cathedrals, sometimes in prisoner of war camps, in hospitals and in people's homes, on the battle front and in country churches. The thing that all these locations have in common is the people who are there in Christ's name – his body, the church, bringing with them all the joys and sorrows of life. We bring our thanksgivings and our fears and anxieties. We carry those whom we love and pray for those who have harmed us.

It is a disappointment that we cannot break bread together at the moment. Perhaps we, like the two disciples walking to Emmaus, need reminding that **Jesus is already with us.** Death could not hold him, the veil tore before him, he silenced the boast of sin and grave. There is no rival, there is no equal, now and forever our God reigns. This is our God who was with us before Covid-19 and is with us now. Amen.