

Prayers:

Eternal Saviour, we thank you that out of your abundant love you dwell in our frail and anxious hearts. Help us to rest in your presence even in the midst of trials and suffering. May we hold fast to the hope that, through your sacrifice on the cross, you have prepared a place for us to abide with you. We especially pray for:

Sick: Lolita Alvira, Dawn Forey, Ruth Gillespie, Hanna Lebrato, Jack Mannix, Marion Mason, Ken Peters, Sue Ralfe and Sam White.
RIP: Edwina, Inez Bennett, Beryl Duhig, William Swanwick (father), Billy Swanwick (son) and Dennis Whitten.

May we always abide with you as you dwell in our hearts forever. Amen.

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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

10th May 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 eighth 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).

**"Do not let your hearts be troubled.
You believe in God; believe also in me.
My Father's house has many rooms;
if that were not so, would I have told you
that I am going there to prepare a place for you?"
John 14:1-2**

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 Fifth Sunday of Easter

Collect

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Acts 7:55-60](#)

[Psalm 31:1-5](#)

[1 Peter 2:2-10](#)

[John 14:1-14](#)

Short Sermon (by the Revd Jonny Rapson, Assistant Curate)

This verse in our Gospel reading speaks a great deal to our current circumstances in a time where there is so much uncertainty and anxiety. We may even think that such a line from Jesus is flippant about the struggles we face. Not letting our hearts be troubled is easier said than done.

This would be a meaningless statement if it came from anyone else. However, this statement comes from Christ, "the Way, and the Truth and the Life". Therefore it is not meaningless because it comes from someone who can be deeply trusted when we feel anxious. Jesus certainly doesn't expect us to forget about all the things that make us anxious. Instead, he asks us to abide with him in the uncertainty.

The Greek word for 'rooms' in verse 2 only appears in two slightly different forms in the New Testament, both in St John. The first form is here in verse 2, which our Bibles translate as 'rooms' (μοναί, monai). The second is in 14:23 where it is translated as 'home' (μονήν, monēn). Jesus says 'anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.'

What this additional verse tells us is that this word is not about a physical place with walls, a sofa, or a kitchen. It is instead talking of a deep and profound presence of God in our lives where he dwells within us. In both instances in John's Gospel, it reminds us that God

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is present in our hearts this day, and we will one day be fully present with him. So the many rooms that Jesus speaks of in Chapter 14 are not about nicely laid out rooms. Instead, it is about our home in the presence of "the Way and the Truth and the Life." The perfect home, in the presence of God, was made for us by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. When Jesus says he is going to prepare a place for us, this preparation is not made in the heavenly realm, it is made on the cross. It is made in the tomb. It is made in his resurrection and conquering of death.

So the reason that Jesus, more than anyone, can mean the words 'do not let your hearts be troubled,' is because he is with us and has made a home in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. We have hope not because all the anxieties suddenly vanish - but because God is profoundly present in our lives in a way more profound than we can understand.

We all know our homes well, we know where everything is and the purpose of each room. In the same way, Christ knows us so well, because he has made a home in our very being. But Christ goes even further than that, he has prepared a place for us all whereby we will be in his never-ending presence where pain and suffering are no more. He prepares a place for us out of love and care that can see us free of suffering and living in wholeness and completeness with him. And although we will not see our anxieties vanish overnight - Christ remains with us. Holding and guiding us in all that we face. This week we remember the 75th anniversary of VE day, where out of the ashes of war, hope was finally found. So too may we find hope in the presence of God in our lives. When we feel overwhelmed. When the worries and the anxieties build up to a point where we struggle to focus on life, this Gospel reminds us of two vitally important things. Firstly, it tells us that God is not only with us, but he dwells within us. Secondly, it tells us that God loves us so deeply that he has prepared a home for us in his endless presence. So do not let your hearts be troubled, open up to the God who dwells within you, and has prepared a place for you in his kingdom out of commitment and love for us all. No matter what, no matter where we are, or who we are, we always find ourselves welcomed home, by the God who dwells in our hearts. Amen.