

*Church of St Chad*  
*Hopwas*



*Morning Prayer in the*  
*Season of Easter*  
*11<sup>th</sup> April 2021*



*Following Christ in the footsteps  
of St Chad*



## **HYMN**

Jesus stand among us

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**



The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

## **PRAYER OF PREPARATION**

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom  
no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify  
your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**



## PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

Christ our Passover Lamb  
has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice  
by putting away all malice  
and evil and  
confessing our sins  
with a sincere and true heart.



*Silence*

Remember, Lord, your compassion and love  
for they are everlasting.

Lord, have mercy

**Lord, have mercy**

Remember not the sins of my youth  
or my transgressions, but think on me  
in your goodness, O Lord,  
according to your steadfast love.

Christ, have mercy

**Christ, have mercy**

O keep my soul and deliver me;  
let me not be put to shame,  
for I have put my trust in you.

Lord, have mercy

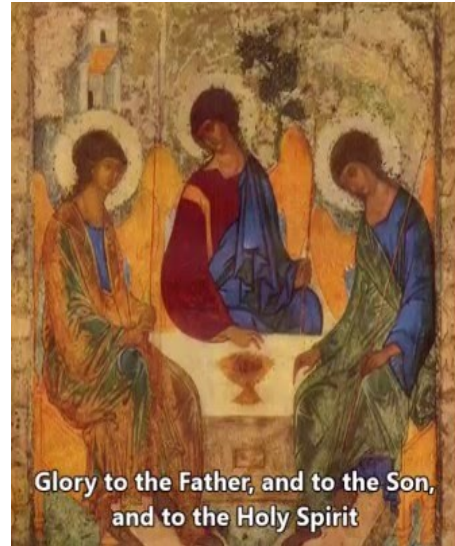
**Lord, have mercy**

May the God of love and power  
forgive *you* and free *you* from *your* sins,  
heal and strengthen *you* by his Spirit,  
and raise *you* to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

O Lord, open our lips;  
**and our mouth shall  
proclaim your praise**  
Let us worship the Lord.  
**All praise to his name**  
**Glory to the Father,**  
**and to the Son,**  
**and to the Holy Spirit:**  
**as it was in the**  
**beginning, is now,**  
**and shall be for ever**  
**Amen.**



## 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.**



**FIRST READING** Acts 5: 32-35

Now the whole group of those who believed  
were of one heart and soul,  
and no one claimed private ownership  
of any possessions,  
but everything they owned was held in common.

With great power the apostles gave their testimony  
to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus,  
and great grace was upon them all.

There was not a needy person among them,  
for as many as owned lands or houses  
sold them and brought the proceeds  
of what was sold.

They laid it at the apostles' feet,  
and it was distributed  
to each as any had need.

This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

**HYMN** Make me a channel of your peace

**GOSPEL READING** Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (20:19-31)

**Glory to you, O Lord**

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week,  
and the doors of the house where the disciples had met  
were locked for fear of the Jews,  
Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'  
After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.  
Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.  
Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you.  
As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'  
When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,  
'Receive the Holy Spirit.  
If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them;  
if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'  
But Thomas (who was called the Twin<sup>l</sup>), one of the twelve,  
was not with them when Jesus came.  
So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.'  
But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands,  
and put my finger in the mark of the nails  
and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'  
A week later his disciples were again in the house,  
and Thomas was with them.  
Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them  
and said, 'Peace be with you.'  
Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands.  
Reach out your hand and put it in my side.  
Do not doubt but believe.'  
Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'  
Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me?  
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.  
This is the gospel of the Lord - **Praise to you O Christ**

## SERMON

Today we meet again, Thomas; forever called the Doubter. And who, of us have never doubted. But the strange thing is the word doubt never appears in the original Greek language of John's Gospel. In the original language, Jesus says to Thomas: *do not be unbelieving, but believing*. Believing in this Gospel, is John's word for a relationship with Jesus. So, in my view, Thomas is given a name he didn't deserve. To believe in Jesus confirms a relationship between Jesus and the believer

Thomas wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared. In fact one might say that Thomas wasn't with the others when they were hiding in fear in the upper room. We are not told where he was. Perhaps he was outside just getting on with his life. Figuring out what was going to come next and just trying to cope with every thing. Because I think, Thomas is first and foremost, a realist. And for Thomas, reality came like never before on that day of crucifixion. Thomas watched as they nailed his Lord, his teacher and friend, to two slabs of wood. Jesus was dead, and with him all the hopes and dreams of the past three years. They too had perished.

So when the disciples come saying that they had seen Jesus, Thomas doesn't merely doubt them. He simply does not believe them. He completely and utterly does NOT believe them. If this is the case then it's not hard to see Thomas' next remarks in a different light. His demand to see and feel the mark of the nails in Jesus' hands is not a request for proof. Thomas is mocking the disciple's claims. He is deriding their notion of reality. He's taking the Mick. He makes that demand because he knows, Thomas knows it will never happen. It can't possibly happen. It's a request as absurd even as ridiculous, as what his friends are claiming. So what changes when Thomas is confronted by the risen Jesus? It's not that he is no longer a doubter. He never really was. What changes I believe is Thomas' perception of reality itself.



What changes is Thomas' perception of what is possible. Of what God can do. Even of what God can do through him. Through Thomas and through all Jesus' followers, even through you and me.

Jesus enters the room for the second time, a week later and Thomas is there. Jesus takes Thomas' mocking words and turns them back on him. Jesus does this not to humiliate or scold Thomas but Jesus does this to simply confront him with the possibility that Thomas' reality was just too small. His vision of what is possible is too limited.

It's easy for all of us, at times, to have a view or a outlook that is limited. I suspect that most of us, for most of the time sit with that view. Whether we our selves impose those limitations or that we feel others do. Because I also fall into a view governed by limitations. I am tempted to call it realism. This is when I need to have people around me to remind me of a grander vision.

A vision not defined by failure, but by possibility.  
A vision not governed by scarcity, but by abundance  
A vision not ruled by remembered offences  
but set free by forgiveness and reconciliation.

Is it possible to imagine that in and through the story of Thomas this morning, that we here at St Chad's are being invited into a whole new reality. Invited to see a bigger vision of what it means to be a community of faith. Having our view of the world challenged with the possibility of something more. Of a new reality? Especially in the light of the pandemic.

That new reality began for the followers of the Way, with what they saw that God had done in Jesus after he had been crucified. What happened at that first Easter not only changed the followers of Jesus forever, but changed the world. Our mission is not to enlarge our membership. Our mission is not to bring outsiders to accept our terms.

Our mission is simply to love the world as God loves the world. At times we may feel and act like those first disciples did. We too may feel like locking our doors and hiding away, to hide from a world in pain, a world in great need; to make our faith a personal, private thing that has nothing to do with the pain or the need of the world outside.

Whatever overwhelms us, God comes to us in the midst of our fear and says *Peace be with you*. Whatever doubts churn in our mind; whatever sins trouble our consciences; whatever pain and worry bind us up; whatever walls we have put up or doors we have locked, God comes to us and says *Peace be with you*. Our role is always to practise the task of living, loving and being. To seek Christ in every person and to love our neighbours as ourselves. We are called to be a people who have gone beyond all the boundaries that divide one human being from another. We are called to be a people committed to a journey beyond even our own knowing.

May the risen Christ always be with you wherever you may journey. **AMEN**

**HYMN**      The head that once was crowned with thorns

**THE CREED**      *Let us declare our faith .*

**Christ died for our sins  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he was buried;  
and was raised to life on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
afterwards he appeared to his  
followers, and to all the apostles:  
this we have received,  
and this we believe.  
Amen.**

*We Believe*

## PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

In faith and hope we pray that our risen Lord Jesus may give us all a new insight and a vision of what is possible and allow him to lead us into a new reality.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

Lord we ask you to bless and guide *Elizabeth our Queen*; and pour your blessing on Prince Philip, and the whole of the Royal family. Give wisdom to all in authority and direct our nation in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We give thanks for the continuing success of the vaccine rollout in the UK and are thankful that the new Moderna vaccine now enhances our roll-out plans. Help us to continue to be vigilant and aware of how fragile this recovery may be. We pray for guidance in planning Summer Holidays, especially if we are contemplating going abroad and we pray for the European Community as it once again fights against another surge of this awful virus.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the people of Myanmar as they struggle against an extremely violent dictatorship. We pray for the hundreds of families who have lost loved ones in this struggle. We pray for the people of Taiwan as they struggle with the aftermath of the train disaster and the loss of life that that ensued

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We pray for our Bishops, Michael and Clive, our Archdeacon Sue and our Rural Dean Gary and for the life of all of our churches. We pray for our Church Wardens Sue and Keith, for Roger our Verger and all who are involved and committed to the life and work of this church. We pray for a time when those in authority in our churches will finally get around to advertising for the post of Vicar of the parish of Tamworth.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, give them courage and hope in their troubles; and bring them the joy of your salvation.

We pray for the vulnerable and suffering among us as we remember them by name.

**Beryl and Roger, Audrey, Jack, Melanie Lees  
Lesley Fox, Jim, Barbara and Edwin Bott, Norma,  
Catherine and Eric, Dave Atkinson,  
Ann Thurgood, Michael Dalton, and Finn Collyer,  
and Sue Foster and for all their family and carers**

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We pray that the dying may know your comfort and peace and we remember those who have died recently including the families of Raymond Cross and John Taylor.

We pray for those whose anniversary of loss occurs at this time and for those whose loss is ever before them. Bless and guide them by your resurrection spirit and bring them the peace that only you can give.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

Merciful Father

**accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ  
Amen**



### **THE 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.**



**HYMN** Thine be the Glory

### **THE GRACE**

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all this day and forever more. Amen**

### **BLESSING**

God the Father,  
by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead,  
strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life;  
and the blessing of God the Father  
God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit  
Be with you and those whom you love  
This day and always  
**Amen**

## **St Chad's Church Opening Times for APRIL**

11 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	<b>Easter 1 Morning Prayer</b>
14 <sup>th</sup>	10am-4pm	Church open for Personal prayer <b>(Wed)</b>
18 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	<b>Easter 2 Morning Prayer</b>
21 <sup>st</sup>	10am-4pm	Church open for Personal prayer <b>(Wed)</b>
25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	<b>Easter 3 Morning Prayer</b>
28 <sup>th</sup>	10am-4pm	Church open for Personal prayer <b>(Wed)</b>

**The First Sunday** in the month will be a Communion Service sharing the Bread ONLY.

**Our next Communion Service will be:**  
**Sunday 2nd May at 10.30am**

**NB: Please note that ALL Covid protocols remain in place, including the wearing of face coverings. Unfortunately Hymn singing is still not allowed**

*On some evenings at 7.30pm  
we have a virtual "Coffee Evening" on Zoom*

*If you are able, and would like to take part  
Please contact:  
Keith Dawson (01827) 289406*



**STAY SAFE. STAY WELL**

**Please note**

Brian will not be available  
from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April until Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April

Services will go on as normal in Church.  
There will be no online services for these weeks.

If things are urgent in that time  
please contact one of our Church Wardens  
on the following Numbers:

Keith Dawson - (01827) 289406

Sue Rose—077910 340983

