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**Broomhill Hyndland  
Parish Church**

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*"Lighting the Way"*

for **Sunday 11 April 2021**

Welcome to another service in our Easter season.

My thanks to all those involved in making Easter Sunday as special as it was. Our service was streamed and at a last glance had 154 hits. As I intimated also last Sunday, my thanks for all who journeyed with me during Holy Week - I hope our 'A Game of Thrones' was enjoyed by all.

The lockdown and subsequent legal restrictions on the opening of buildings resulted in a dramatic rise in online worship and other content, with 92% of churches offering some form of weekly material, so the CoS reported.

Increased online and social media activity has allowed congregations and Church leaders to reach substantially more people than they did prior to the pandemic. The report is titled "Adapt and be Flexible - the Mission Doesn't Stop - The Scottish Church and the COVID-19 Pandemic"

It concludes that leaders have been faithful to their calling, preaching the Word in season and out of season and bearing witness to the love and faithfulness of God at a time of "unprecedented disruption and suffering."

This Sunday is often known as Low Sunday: after the heights reached on Easter Sunday, nothing was going to compare for both the disciples of old and the current ones. The Church itself has often had 'high' days, principally the major festivals and the key moments of our faith, and very much 'ordinary' days like the run from Pentecost to Advent.

There is still time to support the Heart Team on the Virtual Kiltwalk and the Moderator of the General Assembly is also participating, raising awareness and funds for Christian Aid who celebrate 75 years this May.

In and out of season, I wish you every Easter blessing,

George

***Bookings for 18 April are open next Friday from 10am until 3pm.  
Telephone 07851 591 503.***

### **Sunday 11 April - Easter 2 (Year B)**

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday and dip into the Old Testament and Epistles, the readings for this Sunday are: Acts 4: 32-35; Isaiah 65: 17-25, Psalm 133: 1 John 1: 1-2:2, John 20:19-31.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here: SOGP 7 Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord; 417 Now the green blade riseth; 432 How often we, like Thomas; 412 The strife is o'er, the battle done.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on John but please read and ponder the suggested Scripture and see how it connects and what it says to you.

**Rest in His arms ..... read, reflect, rejoice...**

### **CALL**

Resurrected God,  
though we have hidden ourselves in a locked room  
and huddled together as ones who build barriers,  
send your Living Word through our locked doors  
and into our guarded hearts  
that we might be witnesses of your grace  
and couriers of your goodness.  
By the power of your Holy Spirit,  
grant us the trust to believe the Gospel,  
not because we see it  
but because we have been seen by it  
and transformed through it. AMEN

### **PRAYER OF APPROACH AND LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
the disciples failed at first to believe in the empty tomb,  
dismissing it as so much nonsense,  
and we too are hesitant to believe sometimes,  
fearful of indulging in wishful thinking  
in what seems too good to be true.

Lord, we believe.

Help with our unbelief.

The Apostle Thomas refused to accept that you had truly risen,  
insisting he would not accept it until he could see you for himself,  
touch and feel your wounds,  
and we too struggle with doubt,  
with questions to which we cannot find the answers.

Lord, we believe.

Help with our unbelief.

Your followers on the Emmaus road  
and Mary in the garden failed to recognise you though you stood by their side,  
and our eyes can be closed to your living presence  
here with us now.

Lord, we believe.

Help with our unbelief.

Yet you greeted your disciples in the upper room;  
you showed yourself to Thomas:  
you spoke to Mary and you made yourself known through bread and wine.

Lord, we believe.

Help us with our unbelief.

Across the centuries you have likewise met with your people,  
guiding and nurturing  
and inspiring through your Spirit.

You have changed history, changed lives, changed us.  
We praise you this day.  
Lord, we believe.  
Help with our unbelief.

(The Lord's Prayer - together we say...)  
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 debts as we forgive our debtors,  
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever. AMEN



Let us turn to God's Word, found in John 20: 19-31  
'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'

..Why don't you sing one of your Easter favourites if you are reading the Reflections!

## **PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

Loving God, we praise you again for this season and the assurance that it brings that nothing can ever finally overcome your love. Teach us to hold on to that truth, and so to live in each moment in the knowledge that, whatever we may face, your love will see us through. In the name of the risen Christ we pray.  
AMEN

## **REFLECTION**

Pam has a new job!

I tell you this because she has handed back the company car and now 'my' car has become 'our' car! Now, every time that I climb into MY car, I have to adjust the mirror back and move the seat. She hasn't done this yet but she's about to tune in her mobile phone so that legally she can answer the phone whilst driving.

This is MY car.

MY car – full of Italian paraphernalia – Italian cushions in the back seats, Italian boxing gloves on the gear stick and an Italian cross hanging from the mirror.

'I'm getting used to Danielle,' she said, using the name I have for my car. 'I think Danielle prefers me to you,' trying to wind me up, 'Oh, and I've set up the Sat Nav as well' said smarty pants, 'the TomTom works.'

The most exciting thing in the world had happened – Jesus had risen from the dead and what did the disciples do, they hid behind the locked doors. The women had told the disciples what they had seen but they were stunned, uncertain and unsure and afraid.

So they hid behind locked doors and locked minds.

A mere seven days after shouting, 'Alleluia' and wishing to sing, 'Jesus Christ is Risen today,' John invites us to face our doubts, speak of our fears and yearn for more of the intimacy of the Risen Christ. In some ways you can understand why the disciples have reacted this way: after the high comes the low; the sugar rush of the resurrection has brought them down; they are hypoglycaemic and along comes Thomas who exclaims, 'Unless I see him for myself, I won't believe.' What a reaction to the possibility of resurrection!

To be a witness to the empty tomb I want to see it too.

If it is real, I want it to be real for me.

I think there is a lesson here – that on how we live our lives in the light of the resurrection, people should be looking at us and saying, 'I want some of that!' Here is a man who would not settle for anyone else's resurrection experience but stuck around in the hope of having his own. Do we portray the empty tomb experience that others near and far become envious enough to say 'I want what you have too' ?

Are we the Sat Navs; the TomToms guiding people to the Risen Christ?

As we know, the disciples will respond and at the time of Pentecost because they make, through the Holy Spirit, the joy of Easter more accessible in each other's languages, people then do say 'these men are drunk on something, I'll have that too'. As I said, how many people look at the Church and want to taste and see and know that God is good?

It is easy to criticise Thomas but it is hard for us all to apply that joy in our lives, especially when our lives are marked with pain, loss, uncertainty, death. Thomas reminds us that it is okay to waver at times, even after the Resurrection: that living it out isn't always easy, and that doubting is part and parcel despite everything. Perhaps that is why the early Christians were known as 'The Way' because it is not a destination, it is a journey. It's a journey in need of a TomTom. All of us in a relationship know that relationships have fits and starts, good days and bad days.

All who have illness and health issues know that it is a daily battle and a lifelong road to walk. Though we are resurrection people, we are people in pain. The world around is still wounded; the scars that we are carrying from last year will stay with us; the experiences of Covid; the challenges to the police force; Myanmar; unemployment; the problems of inequality; riots once more in Belfast.

It is a journey and Thomas knows and shows that too. Like me and 'MY car' it becomes personal and if he is going to share on that journey he needs to experience it for himself. So here they all are, the disciples gathered together, needing a Sat Nav.

They did not know the way forward. They needed a map to find direction. They had forgotten what Jesus had taught them. Despite the fact that Thomas was accused of doubting, all of them did.

Only Thomas touched the Risen Christ.

Only Thomas concentrated on the wounds.

Oh, Tom, Tom.

Let's not be hard on Thomas. We are fixated on the wounds of life. We watch the news daily, nightly, and we hear stories...

Fixated by the wounds.

And we do it in the Church. We can tell all who will listen when the pews were heaving with children. We can destroy in an instant an idea because 'we have done it that way before' or 'it didn't work'. We can be pleased with the money in

the accounts believing mistakenly that we are successful. We can be like Thomas, fixated by the wounds –

instead of looking at the power of love's redemptive work.

Perhaps we are the twin of Thomas, for we touch the wounds of life that are unsustainable rather than looking at the power that liberates us.

In that famous chapter in John, 14 it is Thomas who asks the way, uncertain of the journey ahead. He was looking for a map and he discovered that Jesus was his navigational guide. Dear friends, Tom the Doubter and we who are Thomas (TomToms), trust in Jesus because he knows the way because he is the way.

Stop focussing on the wounds and look to him for he is the truth and the life.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Holy God,

we continue to hold on to the celebration and triumph of Easter.

As we look back over the past year,

we realize that many of us can identify with Thomas's doubt.

"Can we be the church, the body of Christ,

when we can't see the body gathered in our sanctuary?"

Yet Christ has opened our eyes to his risen body that can't be confined by walls and is not diminished by precautions and social distance.

As we make our gifts to you,

we affirm the Resurrection power that we have seen,

and so we say again, "Alleluia!"

In the name of Jesus, we pray. AMEN

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Behind closed doors... afraid.

That was how your disciples found themselves that first Easter evening.

Risen Lord,

You appeared and said,

"Peace be with you."

In the world today so many places lack peace –

those places where lockdowns are in place;

people indoors struggling with relationships;

a lack of space and freedom applying added pressures.

Those wrestling with emotions because they have not been able to be beside some of their loved ones

as they would have liked at significant moments –

from birthdays to serious illnesses.

Those patients, residents and staff

in hospitals and care homes, in so many places around the world

where staff are stretched, where resources are scarce,

where illness either threatens or dominates:-

those suffering the pain of bereavement,

those living in places of turmoil where wars still rage,

those people and situations uppermost in our minds  
which we lift up to you now in this silence....

Silence

So many places lack peace –  
breathe on these situations.

May your peace offer some respite in the midst of today's concerns  
and may it point to better days to come.

As well as peace

You gave the Holy Spirit;

God is present with us in all we do.

May we be guided by that Spirit, to offer help and convey peace  
wherever that is possible.

Hear our prayers,

through Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour. AMEN

## **SENDING HYMN**

### **BENEDICTION**

On that first Easter evening Christ spoke –

“Peace be with you.”

On the next Sunday evening,

with Thomas present also,

Christ spoke –

“Peace be with you.”

Words for those Sundays

and words for today –

“Peace be with you.”

And the blessing of God,

who sent His Son,

who spoke those words,

who inspires us still,

be with you all

now and evermore.

Go in Peace...

and may the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be with you all..

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