

Bexley Team News

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood
St James, North Cray
St John the Evangelist, Bexley
St Mary the Virgin, Bexley

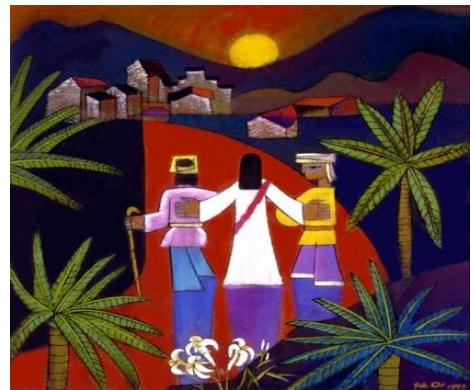
Sunday 26 April 2020 Issue 6

The Third Sunday of Easter

PUBLIC WORSHIP HAS BEEN SUSPENDED IN ALL CHURCHES & PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Collect

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.



Bible Readings for this Sunday

Old Testament Reading Zephaniah 3 v14-20
New Testament Reading Acts 2 v14a, 36-41
Gospel Reading Luke 24 v13-35

A Moment of Revelation – A Reflection on Luke chapter 24 verses 13 to 35

Of the four gospel writers, it is only Luke who gives us an account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. It's a great piece of storytelling set clearly within the whole Resurrection picture. It contains elements we find in other Resurrection accounts, the delayed recognition of Jesus, a meal, the reference to fulfilment of past predictions.

The two disciples are going to the village of Emmaus, walking away from Jerusalem, talking about all that has happened that first Easter Day, that first Day of Resurrection. As they walk and talk, Jesus 'came up and walked along with them'. The Greek phrase used implies that Jesus 'drew near', and from that we can surmise that he overtook them on the road. There is a delicious story-teller's irony in the words of the travellers when they wonder how their companion could possibly be ignorant of everything that has been happening in Jerusalem – and remain themselves ignorant of who he really is! Again there is wonderful irony in the fact that the travellers invite Jesus to join them, and yet it is he who acts as host of the meal as he takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it and gives it to them to share. Once they have recognised him in that moment, they make their way back to Jerusalem, back to their companions with another story of their meeting with the Risen Lord.

Reverend Sam Wells, vicar of St Martins-in-the-Fields was on the radio this week, reflecting on the idea that when we emerge from the current days and weeks of Lockdown we will somehow 'go back' to normal, whatever that was. But, Rev Sam argues, you can never truly 'go back'. The future will never be the same

as the past because that is not and never has been God's story. In the Kingdom of God, the mistakes of the past are moments of learning and growth, and our failures simply the beginning of a better story in the days to come. The Bible does not promote 'going back', it invites us to a future that is bigger than the past.

I loved a cartoon that someone sent me. The devil and God are facing each other across the world. The devil says "With COVID-19 I closed your churches" and God replies "On the contrary, I just opened one in every home!" I think that is so true, as we have created Sacred Spaces in our living rooms, in quiet corners in our homes and our gardens. Thank you all for the conversations I have had recently with you as you have shared with me your stories of faith and your perception of God at work in your lives. When the time comes for us to meet in our church buildings once again, we should not forget what God has invited us to learn through these last months, but cherish it, and share it, and have the courage to imagine something more for the Church's future, than just more of the past. The two on the Emmaus road do go back to Jerusalem, but they go with a different truth, a renewed relationship with their Lord, and a fresh story to share. Rev'd Ren

Prayers

Loving Father, As we journey with our disappointments and broken dreams, come we pray and meet us in the risen Lord Jesus. Give us the eye of faith to see you at work, hearts that are open to receive all that you have for us and may we too be ready to share the Good News of this Easter season. Amen

Keep us, good Lord under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you. In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake. Amen.

The Church of England has published a booklet of 'Prayers for use during the coronavirus outbreak'. It can be found on line and downloaded.

On line worship resources

Rochester Cathedral is sharing daily prayers and occasional services. Rochester Diocese offers a weekly Reflection and Beacons of Hope. The national church is producing a weekly Sunday service - available online and on the radio - plus much more. Churches across the Diocese are producing reflections, youth content, recorded and live services - have a look around on Facebook and YouTube, or search A Church Near You for live streams across the Diocese.

COVID-19 in our companion dioceses

Our Companion Dioceses of Harare in Zimbabwe, and Kondo and Mpwapwa in Tanzania, are currently enduring their own lock downs as they face up to the coronavirus. Having spoken this week with the respective bishops in those countries (Bishops Farai, Given and Jacob), Bishop James observes that 'The response needed to combat Covid-19 in these countries brings far greater hardship than we are enduring in the UK'. Bp James is encouraging us to pray and where we can, to give to our brothers and sisters in these dioceses.

Around and about

Remember the VE Day celebrations planned for 8-10th May? The Royal British Legion and others are working to develop a virtual programme that allows VE Day to be appropriately marked and the contribution of that generation to be suitably acknowledged. The aim is to allow veterans the opportunity to celebrate the day and give the current generation a chance to reflect on the service and sacrifice of WW2 generation. Look out for further details.

St Mary's, Bexley

We regret to announce the death of Joan Clifford who passed away on 9th April. Joan's funeral will take place at Eltham Crematorium on 4th May at 3.30 pm. The family are hoping that the service will be live streamed. Also the death of Angela Payne on 19th April funeral details to be announced. Both Joan and Angela's families are planning to have memorial services at St. Mary's when this becomes possible.

St John's, Bexley

Earlier in the week Edward recorded a video reflection for St George's Day. This can be found on the St John's Website. Suspended Sermons are posted each Sunday at fatheredwardbarlow.wordpress.com Social Media- engage with us via Facebook ([/stjohnsbexley](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsbexley)) and Twitter ([@stjohnsbexley](https://twitter.com/stjohnsbexley)).

Help offered/needed

If you or someone you know **needs help** or if you **can offer assistance** please contact-

St. Mary's Bexley contact Christine Wood 01322 270942 chrisawood2003@yahoo.com

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood- contact Rev'd Ren or Kevin Clarke 07791582546 kacrat@btinternet.com

St. James, N Cray- contact Rev'd Ren or David Stevens 0208300 0867 davidstevens112@aol.com

St. Johns, Bexley- contact Revd Edward Barlow contact details below

THE BEXLEY TEAM CLERGY

Team Rector: Reverend Ren Harding	renharding@hotmail.co.uk	01322 528923	07836644782
Associate Priest: Revd Sue Twynam	susantwynam@btconnect.com	01322 559501	07952 468127
Team Vicar: Reverend Edward Barlow	fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com	01322 521786	
Team Vicar: Reverend Clive Wood	revclivewood@gmail.com	01322 270942	07982 392809