



St Margaret's Church

Together we aim to:
Worship God, Proclaim Jesus,
Grow in the Spirit

In Contact

John 20: 19-31



Restored relationships

April 11th 2021

The last year has put pressure on relationships like never before. Even in the best of times there are a multitude of reasons why human relationships flourish, falter or fail. In difficult and testing times those reasons become even more pressing and at times overwhelming. We all know that restoring a faltering relationship can be very tricky indeed. How can relationships be restored?

What about the relationship between Jesus and the apostles which was abruptly interrupted by Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion?

On the evening of the first Easter Day the disciples were hiding from the Jews and an extraordinary thing happened: Jesus came and stood among them. I wonder what they thought he would say. Would he reproach them for deserting him when things got really difficult? But he said *'Peace be with you'*. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. This really was a new beginning for them. Jesus welcomed them unconditionally and, because of that, their relationship to him was restored. Jesus completely changed their lives. As indeed encounters with Christ today and a new relationship with Him still change the lives of those who turn to Him in faith.

But Thomas wasn't there and he wasn't going to believe a word of it. Like many today, if he were to have faith Thomas wanted evidence. A week later Thomas was with the disciples. Jesus came and said *'reach out your hand and put it in my side'*. The moment of decision has come for Thomas: *'stop doubting and believe'*, says Jesus. His doubting was the obstacle to a restored relationship with Jesus and Jesus challenges him. He was awestruck: *'My Lord and my God'*. Thomas saw and believed. At that point he entered into a new and personal relationship with Jesus. He trusted Jesus with his life in a new way. Jesus says *'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'*. I guess we are a bit like that when we trust in Jesus. For us it is not just agreeing with the facts; it is entering into a new and personal relationship with our Lord and Saviour.

There may be times when we drift away from Jesus when other concerns take over, when our love for him grows cold, when our relationship with him is not all that it might be or should be. But Jesus is always ready to welcome us back. He could easily have written Thomas off but he didn't.

Thomas was challenged and called by Jesus to faith just as we are. Thomas responded and said *'My Lord and my God'*. May we be those who in all the uncertainties we face likewise respond *'My Lord and my God'*. By his Spirit may he be as real to us as he was to Thomas, and day by day may we know and experience the reality of his love for us and a living relationship with him.



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Bible Verse for 2021:

I am about to do something new; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43: 19



Daily Hope is a free phone line which offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

APCM 2021

In accordance with Diocesan instructions, we are intending to hold this year's APCM on Sunday 25th April at 12 pm, following the morning service. Due to the current government restrictions, **church members can only attend online via Zoom**. These arrangements may change nearer the time depending on the government and Church of England regulations.

Details of how to join online will be provided nearer the time.

Next Week:

Peter Miller will be looking at 'Restored Disciples' as we join the two disciples in Luke 24: 13-35 on the road to Emmaus.

GIVE IT UP:

This is the last week for anyone to give money saved during Lent to St Anne's Hospice and Francis House. Please bring your gift to church or the Rectory an envelope marked "LENT GIFT".

Baptism

At 2pm on Sunday 11th April we welcome Lucia Hallam and her family to church for her baptism. Lucia was born in April last year during lockdown. Her older brother, Levison, was baptised here. So please pray for her and her family.

April 11th to 17th Please Pray for:

- ◆ People living in Burnage Lane, (Mauldeth Road to Green End), Fair Oak Road & Dernford Avenue.
- ◆ Good attendance at Monday evg prayer meeting shared with Levenshulme churches.
- ◆ Seeking for, & openness to, new things God is going to do amongst us. (Is 43.19)
- ◆ "Message" Community Groceries in Wythenshawe & Salford sharing message of Jesus.
- ◆ TearFund's projects bringing hope to many to adapt to virus difficulties world-wide.
- ◆ Barnabus helping those who have become homeless & still sleeping rough.

Television & Radio this week:

Sunday:

BBC 1 - 10.30am: Sunday Morning Stories. Kate Bottley shares inspirational stories rooted in faith, hope and spirituality.

BBC 1 -13.15pm Songs of Praise: Aled Jones explores the fascinating history of Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire, and Yolanda Brown meets Emerald O'Hanrahan, who plays Emma Grundy in BBC Radio 4's The Archers.

BBC Radio 4 - 8.10am: Exploring the rich story of the Road to Emmaus for Low Sunday, with Rev Philip Blackledge and Claire Nicholson of Holy Trinity Scottish Episcopal Church, Melrose. Readings: Psalm 42 and Luke 24: 13-49.

Help is available if you need it: **Call 0800 234 6123**

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm & Saturday: 10am to 2pm