

Brooklands Church of the Nazarene

25 April 2021
Issue 57

Pandemic Times

Friends

*"I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord!"
Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem." (Psalm 122:1-2)*

As we continue in these days of 'virtual church,' it is my prayer that our experience of worship be only 'virtual' in the sense that it is online and assisted by technology; and with the help of the Spirit, full, true, and no less received by God. We remain so thankful to the technical team who have worked so hard and for so long to ensure we remain connected.

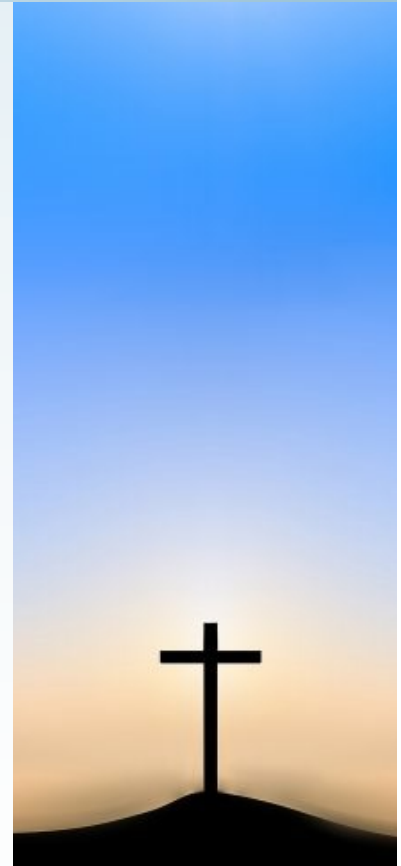
Having said this, as I mentioned last week, we do have capacity for a limited number of people to be with us in the sanctuary on Sundays. There is mask wearing and distancing to keep each other safe and some have already taken up on the opportunity to be here. If you would like to join us please speak to myself or Mark Bolton and we'll ensure there is space.

Scripture speaks of being part of the family of God is to *"Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn"* (Romans 12:15). We as a church mourn with the Walker family following the death of Marie, David's mum. The funeral will take place on Wednesday at Altrincham Crematorium and will be conducted by Revd. Karl Stanfield. Please be in prayer for David, Jean and the whole family.

We are also given reason to rejoice as a church with Dean and Simona Stanfield (and Mia!) as they are expecting a second child. Pray for Simona and baby's good keeping in the weeks and months ahead.

Our Pastoral Assistant, Lucy, is preaching this morning as we continue on our Easter season series, 'Encounters with the Resurrected Jesus.' May we know the truth of the resurrected Christ breaking in to our lives these 2000+ years later.

Every Blessing,
Mick



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Church District Assembly 2021

The Church of the Nazarene British Isles South District Assembly took place last weekend, and because of the current Covid-19 situation, delegates attended virtually, using Zoom.

We send our congratulations to Reverend Carl McCann, who was re-elected as our District Superintendent.

We were also pleased to see Katie Cameron and Jez Smith awarded District Licenses to serve as pastors in the Church of the Nazarene. You will remember Jez and Suzanna attended Brooklands a few years ago, when Jez was studying at NTC. Jez is now pastoring at Bolton Brownlow Fold Church.

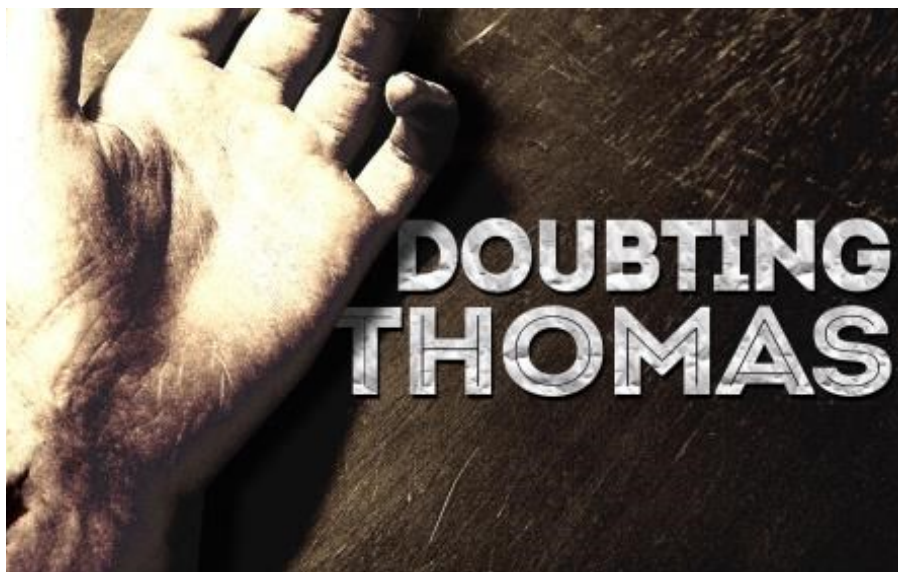
Katie is very familiar to us. Katie also attended Brooklands when she was studying at NTC. She and Scott moved to Norfolk a couple of months ago, and Katie is pioneering a new church work in the Norwich area.

We must continue to remember Carl and Lauren, Jez and Suzanna, and Katie in Scott in our prayers as they serve the Lord in their different situations.

“Congratulations to Revd. Carl McCann, re-elected as District Superintendent”

Daily Reading and Prayer Guide

Date	Reading	Pray for
Monday 26th April	Luke chapter 17 verses 1-19	Matthew, Charlotte and Joshua Purves
Tuesday 27th April	Luke chapter 17 verses 20-37	Adriana, Philip, David, Joseph, Peter and Rebecca Richmond and Grandma
Weds 28th April	Luke chapter 18 verses 1-30	Mark, Rebecca, Charlie, and Laney Rotherham
Thurs 29th April	Luke chapter 18 verse 31 to chapter 19 verse 10	Nick, Ada and Joshua Savu and family
Friday 30th April	Luke chapter 19 verse 11-27	Dean, Simona and Mia Stanfield
Saturday 1st May	Catch up	Karl and Ingrid Stanfield and family
Sunday 2nd May	Luke chapter 19 verse 28 to chapter 20 verse 8	Terry and Sheila Strong and family



Encounters with the Resurrected Jesus (2)

John 20 verses 19 to 29

Jesus Appears to 'Doubting' Thomas

Our speaker this Sunday is Lucy Frost. Lucy is continuing the series started last week by Pastor Mick.

Sermon Notes for 25 April 2021

This week we are continuing our series on encounters with the Resurrected Jesus. Often after Easter, churches move on to other sections of the Bible, but I am really enjoying that we are continuing chronologically.

But first a little detour. Its 72AD in Madras (now Chennai) in India. We watch as one of Jesus' earliest followers is killed for his faith. This man had travelled from Palestine to India, spreading the Gospel to many Jews and Hindus living there. He established the first church in India and several others, creating the first Christian communities in India. Today there are said to be 24 million Christians in India. All from the faith of one man who accepted God's missionary call, and with the help of the Holy Spirit spread the Good News. His faith was so strong that he was willing to die for it and indeed did. People like this, with such immense faith are very inspirational. They can also make us feel quite inferior. Most of us have periods of doubt or even lose faith altogether. So, it is a relief to realise that this man had doubts on occasion. In fact, you have all read about this man- he is the most famous doubter in history. This man of immense faith is known the world over as 'Doubting Thomas!' Learning of his story is a reminder to us that we are all works in progress. Thomas's faith started off shaky, but it became mighty. Although he has been much maligned in history God actually used his doubts to strengthen the resurrection accounts and give God glory.

We next see the disciples assembled at a secret location. They were all there except Thomas. Jesus appeared to them and they were overjoyed. Why wasn't Thomas with them? Although Thomas is mentioned in the other Gospel accounts by name, everything we know about him is from John's Gospel. We learn about his character and this perhaps explains his absence.

We first encounter him as word reaches the disciples that Lazarus, Jesus' beloved friend is dying. Jesus tells the disciples they must travel to Judea to be with Lazarus. The last time they were there, people wanted to stone Jesus to death. In returning he would be placing himself in grave danger. Yet it's Thomas who says 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' (John 11:16). Thomas was worried and expecting the worst, but he was still ready to follow Jesus.

We next see Thomas in John 14. Jesus is explaining to the disciples that he is going away and will prepare a place for them. None of them understand but it's Thomas who is honest and brave enough to question Jesus; "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (14:5) This gives Jesus the opportunity to say one of his most famous quotes; "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (14:6).

Thomas was sensitive, a worrier, he was cynical but also honest. If he didn't understand something he said so. While the other disciples wanted to be together to try and work out what had happened, he hung back but eventually joined them. They had just seen Jesus and they were overjoyed. What courage it must have taken for Thomas not to go along with their accounts but instead question them and admit he wanted proof.

In Thomas's time there were many false prophets and Messiahs as there are today. I think that is why God supplied over three hundred prophecies in the Old Testament to provide assurance that Jesus' really is the Messiah. I have no doubt that the devil also tries to use doubt and scepticism to his benefit too. He would have been desperate to prevent them understanding and believing. He wanted to prevent them bringing glory to God and spreading the Good News. Still to this day the enemy wants to prevent us being in a right relationship with God and achieving fulness of life.

Encounters with the Resurrected Jesus (2)

John 20 verses 19 to 29

Jesus Appears to 'Doubting' Thomas

Sermon notes continued...

In his book 'Doubting Towards Faith' Bobby Conway writes that doubt is a process that can lead us in two different directions- towards God or away from God. What comes across in scripture is that God can cope with and indeed encourages questions. It's how we respond to the answers that matters. If we become mired in doubt, we can become paralysed or depart from God altogether.

How can we ensure we use our doubts in a positive way that lead us towards God?

Prayer

In Mark 9 we learn of the father and son with an impure spirit. The father brings the son to the disciples, but they are unable to exorcise the demon. So, the father asks Jesus for help if he can (9:22). Jesus has a dramatic response to the word if- that one little word reveals the father's shaky faith. Jesus wanted the father to believe completely. The father responds: "I do believe, help my unbelief!" (9:24). His cry is a prayer for help and with that Jesus is ready to perform the miracle. Spending time with God and bringing our concerns to him is so important. God can answer our questions and strengthen us.

Being Rooted in the Word

When Jesus was in the wilderness the devil tormented and tempted him constantly. Jesus kept responding by quoting scripture. When we are struggling, we often want a sign from God to reassure us and make us feel better. Sometimes we get one but often God wants us to return to His Word. It's there we are reminded of God's character, love and provision. It reorientates our thinking away from our distorted world view and towards God.

Trusting God's Promises

Because God is unchangeable His promises cannot be broken. Peter writes that when we face trials God "will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10). God readjusts our focus and thinking, strengthens us and establishes us on the firm foundation of His Grace.

I hope you have enjoyed learning about Jesus' resurrection appearance to Thomas. Pope Francis has said doubts are a sign that we want to know God better and more deeply. Thomas may have been the last disciple to have seen the resurrected Jesus, but he was the first to declare Jesus as Lord and God. I pray that as we continue exploring these resurrection narratives God will reveal Himself to us and strengthen our faith.

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At Brooklands, we are big enough to be part of a world-wide denomination, yet small enough to invite you to make our church your home. Please visit our website and contact us if you would like to get in touch or need more information on any of our events.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, we are holding weekly services on our YouTube channel, starting at 10:30 am each Sunday.

We look forward to welcoming you to our fellowship!

