

Leeds URC Partnership



GEOFF'S WEST PARK NEWSLETTER

1st April 2024

Dear Friends

The magnolia blossom is out in the park.



Take a closer look. There is no doubt it is magnolia blossom. Enjoy it while you can still see it. It won't be there for much longer. Beside the small lake two swans closely guard their nest. Are there any eggs on the nest? A friend says there are 4 eggs this year. Do I need to wait until the mother swan gets off the nest and see them for myself?

Or should I trust and rely on what my friend's seen and has already told me?



Caravaggio's 17th century painting reminds us of the story of doubting Thomas, who would not believe what the other disciples told him. Thomas needed to see the risen Jesus for himself. When he did see Jesus he then believed in the resurrection. Today we can discover how to live in the light of Jesus' resurrection from what has been passed on by previous witnesses. Jesus



says: 'Blessed are those who have not seen him but still come to believe.' This knowledge and faith are shared by Christian communities as they show how they believe in Jesus, and grow by offering love, care, and a generous welcome in Jesus' name.

As the season of Easter unfolds may we continue to discover how to live in the light of the resurrection. May our thoughts and prayers reach out to needs of the world as we continue to pray for our families, friends, and neighbours.

Every blessing

Geoff

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Prayers & readings for Sunday 7th April

Living as a generous community

³³ With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

³⁴ 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. ³⁵ They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Acts 4:33-35

John 20:19-31 Jesus appears to the disciples

¹⁹ *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.'*

²⁰ *After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'*

²² *When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'*

²⁴ *But Thomas one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ 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.'*

²⁶ *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.' ²⁷ 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.' ²⁸ Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' ²⁹ 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.'*

As doubt gives way to faith Jesus' followers come together to build caring communities offering generous hospitality and support.

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! Psalm 133:1

Generous God, who shares our life, pouring out the Spirit of Jesus, open our hearts and hands to reach out to one another, and to those we live or work among in caring and service, love, and compassion. Amen.

Prayers of confession and forgiveness

Lord, forgive us for: our greed and self-centeredness; our failure to see the needs of those around us; our failure to be generous with our time: our failure to share when we have more than enough: for our failure to love as you have loved us. For these and all our failings: *Lord, forgive us.* The Lord, our God, is merciful and kind to all, and says to each one of us who has confessed their sins, failings, and shortcomings: 'My child, I love you, I live with you; your sins are forgiven.' Amen.

Lord, the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ has given us new life and renewed hope. Help us to live as a believing community so that we encourage others to believe in your resurrection through our words and deeds. Continue to strengthen us through the power of your resurrection. Amen.

Rev'd Sujeeth Kumar

We pray for those without the shelter of a home, with no roots to a place, who are constantly forced to move on, change direction through war or violence, political unrest, prejudice, religious hatred.

God, in whom we believe: Bless them.

We pray for those who mourn the loss of family or friends. We pray for the lonely and those in need of care and healing.

God, in whom we believe: Bless them.

God, in whom we believe: Bless us so we can bless others in your name. Amen

Lord, your generous love was showered upon us in Jesus. Help us to be generous to those among whom we live or meet. Guide us in building and becoming a generous community, as we seek to put our faith into action. We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.