

Dear friends

Today is the Third Sunday of Easter, and our video worship for today was filmed at Baxterley Church. There will also be services today at Merevale at 11am and Baxterley at 4.30pm; assuming the weather stays fine, the service at Baxterley will be outside in the churchyard, where we will be able to sing (keeping socially distanced of course).

<https://youtu.be/hGRRClhBLn4>



## Worship for the Third Sunday of Easter

A Service for the Third Sunday of Easter, from the Kingsbury and Baxterley Group of Churches. The service was filmed in Baxterley Parish Church.

[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/hGRRClhBLn4)

Attached is this week's newsletter and also the text of the sermon that Carole is preaching today. Please note that the Zoom Bible Study this week will be on Tuesday at 7pm rather than Wednesday. All are welcome to join in. Over the next few weeks we are exploring the first letter of Peter, which has wonderful things to say about our Easter faith.

As ever, do please get in touch if I can help in any way or if you would just like a chat. If for any reason you would prefer not to receive these weekly emails, just let me know. It is my intention that we will continue to produce video worship and to send these mailings for as long as people find them helpful.

With my prayers and blessings

John

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**Reflection for Easter 3 (18-4-21) Year B**  
**Readings: Acts 3. 12-19 & Luke 24. 36b-48)**

Last week we had the story of 'Doubting Thomas' from St. John's Gospel. This week it is the story from St. Luke's Gospel of the first encounters of Jesus with his disciples following the resurrection.

The first encounter with the risen Christ in Luke is when Cleopas and friend meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus and this is what the disciples are talking about when Jesus appears to all of them in our reading today. They were taken by surprise at Jesus appearance amongst them and they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus asks them why they are frightened and why did they doubt? He was not a ghost, he had flesh and bones and even asked them for something to eat! To my knowledge ghosts don't eat earthly food! .....

In some ways, we can understand why the disciples were frightened and were in a state of doubt. They had just lost their leader, they were in mourning for the person they thought would be the earthly king of the world, the one who would overthrow the Romans, and peace and justice would abound. Yet here they were, afraid of persecution for just having known and followed this person called Jesus. Grief and the sense of loss must have been huge, almost unbearable.....

I've not had the experience of seeing the 'ghost' of a person I have lost, but I have had the experience of seeing, out of the corner of my eye, a well loved pet after they have died, usually sitting in a favourite place. The first family dog we had was a dachshund called Sophie. I was born at home and Sophie was allowed to lick me minutes after I was born, so I had a very special affinity with her. She died when I was nine or so (Dachs don't usually live beyond 8 or 9), but after that I frequently 'saw' her sitting on the mid-step of the stairs – we had stairs that went up then turned back on themselves for the second short flight. Sophie when she was alive would sit on the half-landing in the sunshine that streamed through the window. I didn't 'see' her again after we moved to a different house where she had never lived. Those of us who have had pets may well have had the same experience. Then when we turn to look, the image of the animal disappears. This is what is meant by the Oxford Dictionary definition of 'ghost' as being a 'memory' as opposed to the definition of 'ghost' as being the spirit of a deceased person. It appears that the mind plays tricks on us – we sometimes so desperately want to see a beloved pet or loved-one again, that our minds project the picture of a memory for us to 'see'.

The disciples thought they were seeing a 'ghost' as in the spirit of a dead person – they too must have been desperate to see the man they had come to love, just one more time - but Jesus was not a ghost in that sense, neither was he a ghost in the sense of a memory. He was real! Alive! Properly risen from the dead and alive again. This is something that is very difficult for us to get our heads around because it is not something that we can understand by drawing on our own experiences, and it may well have been the same for the disciples – something they couldn't understand. Something they had no real previous experience of – and yet, they had seen Jesus bring Lazarus and also Jairus' daughter back from the dead – to be fully alive again, so maybe the experience of seeing and speaking with the risen Christ shouldn't have been quite so disturbing for them. Jesus yet again opens the scriptures for them, again explains that he had to suffer and die so he could rise on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins was to be proclaimed in his name to all nations starting in Jerusalem. That the disciples were the witnesses and it was they who were to start the process of spreading the good news.

In the 2000 or so years since that time, Christianity has spread throughout the whole of the world – and it continues to be spread by us who are the present-day disciples

of Christ. We mustn't stop – if the original, relatively few, disciples were brave enough to do this work, then we, a considerably larger amount of people, should be able to do the same. It just takes a little courage.....

which is a quality Peter had in our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. We haven't heard the bit of the story today where a man is healed. Peter said he had no silver or gold to give the man some alms, but what he did give, he gave in the name of Jesus Christ—then he tells the man to stand up and walk. The man who is healed has been unable to walk since birth, but when the Israelites are wondering and staring because of this miracle in today's reading, Peter goes into the full speech of how they had rejected Jesus, had him crucified, and had been given a murderer – Barrabas – whom they had asked for in exchange. How they had killed Jesus, the 'Author of life' – I love that phrase – but God had raised Jesus from the dead. That Peter and the other disciples were witnesses to this....

Peter asking the man to stand and walk 'in Jesus name' had healed him. If we remember from John's gospel when Jesus was teaching the disciples, he said, 'Very truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.' Proof of the pudding as it were! A very definite pointer that all who truly believe, then and now, Jesus will do whatever is asked for in his name. It may not be done in the way we imagine, or in the time frame we have in mind, but we have the assurance that our prayers are listened and responded to, in Jesus name.

Peter then goes on to give the Israelites hope - that their sins can still be forgiven if they just repent and turn to God.

Peter was a brave man, and it is no wonder that Jesus saw in him the qualities needed to be the rock on which the church would be built.

Peter and the other disciples had got over the shock of seeing a 'ghost', and they came to understand that Jesus was not a ghost, but was really alive and with them again. Now I don't know enough about ghosts and such things to say whether they exist or not, but there is one ghost that as Christians we really do believe exists – and that is the 'Holy Ghost'. The Holy Spirit – and it is the Holy Spirit that gave Peter the courage to go out to spread the good news of the gospel, and it is that same Holy Spirit that will give us the courage, bravery, skill – whatever we want to call it – to also show forth in *our* lives what it is to repent and turn to God so that all the wrongs we do *will* be forgiven.....

The third verse of the hymn Christ Triumphant – is very poignant during Eastertide, where it says 'death is through the cross defeated, sinners justified' – the word justified in this case—theologically—meaning 'declared or made righteous in the sight of God', in other words, *forgiven*.

Through our faith in the Risen Christ, all things are possible and all things can be forgiven. So let us put our belief solely in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.

## **Keep Singing from Sarah**

Hello everyone,

I hope you are keeping safe and well.

Please find some music to accompany 18th April - Third Sunday of Easter.

205 - Glorious things of thee/you are spoken - [Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken \(Abbot's Leigh\) - YouTube](#)

305 - danced in the morning - [LORD OF THE DANCE - YouTube](#)

754 - Ye choirs of new Jerusalem - [Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

672 - Thine be the glory- [Songs of Praise - 1 Thine Be The Glory - YouTube](#)

extra.....

[Author of life divine McDowall - Author of life Divine - YouTube](#)

Ego sum panis vivus Palestrina - [Palestrina Ego sum panis vivus - YouTube](#)

On the journey to Emmaus Haugen - [On the Journey to Emmaus - YouTube](#)

[Ralph Vaughan Williams - O taste and see - The Cambridge Singers - YouTube](#)

Two were bound for Emmaus Hurd - [Two Were Bound for Emmaus - YouTube](#)

Lo, I am with you - [Lo, I Am With You - YouTube](#)

The Carter House has seemed super busy this week with the girls back to school and after school activities, they were able to restart tennis and karate in real life and although some meetings such as Guides and music lessons remain online there seems to be lots to get used to again in going out and about. We have not ventured too far yet as we are happy to let restrictions ease slowly but it has been good to be able to see the girls more able to be active again and enjoy time with their friends.

Tom was happy to receive his second vaccine with minimal side effects and although I am still working from home for the foreseeable future I have now been able to book a slot to go back to work to collect from my desk some of my work notes and belongings which were left behind when we thought it would only be a few weeks away. Little did we know

We hope you have all been enjoying the sunshine and managing to keep positive this week too.

Hoping to see some of you soon and sending thoughts, prayers and best wishes to those who we are still unable to see.

Love from  
Sarah and the family xxxx