

For your devotions ...



"A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples; if you love one another." (John 13 v34-35)

### A Prayer for Ourselves & Others

Eternal, Everlasting God you are eternally patient with us, and no matter what we do, you persevere with us. Help each of us to show patience and perseverance with others; and with this prayer in our hearts and on our lips, we pray for those we know and love and hear of this day.

For those struggling to accept the Easter message of resurrection; for those who long to have faith but miss the final step; who long to see Jesus but doubt what they see.

For those without meaning and purpose in their lives, who wake to the morning light and dread the empty day that lies ahead.

The disciples gathered behind closed doors not only for fear of the Jewish authorities but they gathered to grieve the loss of their friend, their leader, their visionary, their Lord. We pray for those who mourn the loss of family or friends and especially those who have had to grieve alone in these Covid times without the support of those who love them – may the gentle easing of restrictions and the lengthening of the days bring them light and hope for the life ahead.

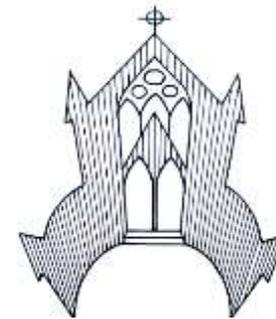
God, in whom we believe: **Bless them.**

And for ourselves we pray, that we might banish shadows that hold us back and keep us fixed to what we are familiar with, even the new familiar, when we can be afraid to step out, step on, step forward, step up – we pray that we might know the wisdom of the psalmist, the grace of God, the blessing of the Spirit, the love and companionship of each other and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

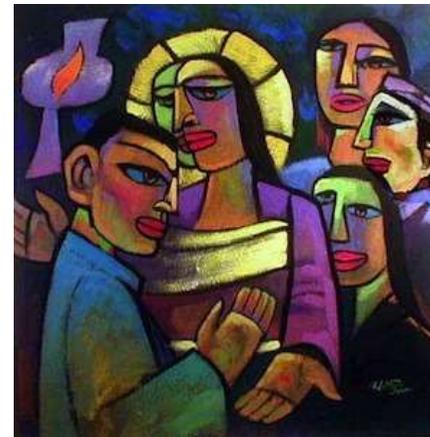
These are our prayers this day. **Amen**

All contributions for future notices & items of interest for the Church Website are welcome! Please contact Lesley Jackson on [brackenjack@btinternet.com](mailto:brackenjack@btinternet.com) or **telephone 01642 714384** or **Text on 07837178938**. All notices must be received by the Thursday before the following Sunday. Many thanks.

# Stokesley Methodist Church



**Sunday 11th April 2021**



Doubting Thomas  
"My Lord and my  
God!"

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Leven Online – Your local Radio Station: <http://levenonlineradio.com/>  
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([a.dumphybrook@gmail.com](mailto:a.dumphybrook@gmail.com) or mobile 07717 503761).

During these unprecedented times, we have changed the way we 'go to church' to help to protect ourselves and others. We have put in place measures that will enable us to still be part of the worshipping community, at home with family, online with friends, coming back together again in Church. If you go to the Circuit Website you will find a range of resources available for you to use at home which we hope will help you to continue your cycle of prayer and worship.

Today our Morning Worship is at 10.30am & will be led by Rev Trevor Haigh from Marske-by-Sea

([www.youtube.com/stokesleymethodistchurch/live](https://www.youtube.com/stokesleymethodistchurch/live))

<https://www.stokesleymethodistcircuit.org.uk/news/join-us-at-home.html>

and <http://www.facebook.com/stokesleymethodistcircuit/>

Light a candle on Sunday as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ.



#### A Gathering Prayer from the Roots resources:

God, whose light shines in the darkness, shine on us today.

God, made known to those who met Jesus, touch us through the experiences of our lives.

God, who gave Thomas what he asked, give us what we need – that we too may come to believe.

For Jesus' followers, after that first Easter, life would never be the same again. Their new life with the risen Lord was just beginning.

Let us stir ourselves to remember that we are children of the resurrection, and we approach our Lord with senses alert to the new life and lessons he has to share with us today.

Amen.

## Testing Truth

#### Today's Lectionary Readings:

**Acts 4 v32-35** (p1096) The Believers Share Their Possessions

**Psalms 133** (p625) How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!

**1 John 1 v1-2 v2** (p1225) The Word of Life/Walking in the Light

**John 20 v19-31** (p1089) Jesus Appears to His Disciples/Jesus Appears to Thomas

#### Message from the Church Mouse for EVERYONE!



This week our readings explore how we come to believe. The story of 'doubting Thomas' is often seen as a negative one – the disciple who wouldn't believe without seeing the risen Jesus – and yet he is someone who just wanted to see the evidence for himself.

It would have been easy for Thomas to go along with his friends who had already seen Jesus, but Thomas wanted to experience it for himself in order to believe. The meeting with Jesus provides him with the chance to test the truth for himself.



In the age of social media and fake news, what helps us to believe in something? Is it knowing where it comes from, personal experience, physical evidence? Can you think of things you can't see, but you know them to be true? The first thing that may come to mind is the wind & it's certainly been blustery this past week! We can't see the wind, but we believe the wind is real because we can see it rustle through the grass, move the leaves on trees, and feel the breeze on our cheeks. Think about the fragrance of a rose. That is something we cannot see, but when we put our nose into the flower and sniff we are certainly aware that the wonderful scent is real. How about love? You can't actually see love; you can only see the results of love. Think about the people who love you and what comes from their love. Love is a very real thing even though we can't see it.

We all have doubts. We question things and that is good. But, this lesson teaches us that it is not necessary to see something with our own eyes to know it is real. No one knows what God looks like, but we can see the results of His Love in the world around us and we can feel it in our hearts. Jesus said, "**Blessed are those who have not seen, and have believed.**" Jesus didn't reject Thomas because he doubted. May we value questions and questioners, and not to reject either when they are awkward; may we discern what kind of evidence is appropriate and trustworthy in different situations; and may we have the courage ourselves to be questioners and seekers of truth.

## Arrangements for 'in-person' services at Stokesley Methodist Church

Despite the rapid rollout of the covid-19 vaccines it is likely to be sometime before we are able to return to services as normal. In the meantime, we will continue with arrangements that were in place in the Autumn:

- ✓ Numbers of people attending worship will be limited to help maintain safe social distancing. To help address this we will also be 'streaming' the service live on YouTube as it happens. It may well be that many people prefer to watch a service from their own home. See below for more information about how to book your seat.
- ✓ In line with legislation, you will need to wear a face covering while in the church building for worship.
- ✓ We will need to record your name and contact details to support the 'track and trace' initiative & to help control the spread of the virus.
- ✓ There will be strict 'one-way' system in operation and you will need to follow the steward's instructions about how and when you can move around the building and where you can sit.
- ✓ Unfortunately, we cannot allow any singing by the congregation.
- ✓ Toilet facilities will be available for those 'emergencies'.
- ✓ Refreshments will not be available and, at the close of the service, you will need to leave the building immediately following the directions of one of the church stewards.
- ✓ Hand sanitising stations are available at the entrance and exit of the building.

You should continue to book your place in church for services. This can be done by emailing Alison Dumphy-Brook, Circuit Support Manager for Stokesley Methodist Church at [stokesleymethodistcircuit@gmail.com](mailto:stokesleymethodistcircuit@gmail.com) or calling or texting Alison on 07717 503761. Places should be booked by 12pm on a Friday where possible.

Alternatively, there will also be a sign-up sheet in church each Sunday for the following Sunday so that you can book your place this way. Please bring your own pen!



SHOULD YOU NEED ANY ADVICE  
PLEASE CONTACT  
REV ANDREW ROBINSON (TEL:  
01642 710358 / MOB: 07718  
516236)

**PLEASE CHECK THE CIRCUIT WEBSITE EVERY WEEK TO KEEP UP-TO-DATE  
WITH THE CIRCUIT PLAN AS THIS MAY BE AMENDED DEPENDING ON  
GOVERNMENT/METHODIST CONNEXION GUIDELINES**

**Please note that all the circuit churches have now re-opened for worship & you can return to church safely (see the guidelines in these notices).  
We will continue to provide online worship from Stokesley and Gt Ayton for those who prefer to worship from home.**

### Your Sunday 'Worship Online' Services

**This is a time of real uncertainty for everyone and the Church will continue to be central to the life of our community in bringing light and hope in any way we can.**

**It's simple! Please go to the Circuit Website & click on the  
'Worship at Home' Logo:**



On this page you will find the links to any recorded services provided by the ministers or local preachers for the coming Sunday. Rev Trevor Haigh will be streaming his morning worship on Sunday from 10.30am on the [Stokesley Methodist Church YouTube channel](#) (use Google search).

If you want to follow the service at your usual worship time you know that you are joining with friends in their homes at the same time. This will be followed by our weekly Zoom 'Feeding Station' at 11:30am. More information can be found on the Circuit Facebook page. In addition, each week we are provided with a worship sheet from District which you can find on the 'Worship at Home' page & which is also available to download from the link in these notices.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/20781/11-april-21-worship-if-you-are-unable-to-attend-church.pdf>

## A BIG THANKYOU

Many thanks to everyone who helped make Holy Week a special time – from giving out daffodils for Mothering Sunday to providing everyone with an Easter Bundle (containing the Diary Plus, 'Mark, The Great 50 Days', the little 'Comfort Present' & a Palm Cross), from giving out an Easter Activity Pack for families with young children to giving out Hot Cross Buns from the Church steps (thanks to Thomas the Bakers!), & above all, for the glorious flower-laden Cross which has been standing at the Church doors all week to celebrate the Risen Lord.

Thanks to everyone who thought of the ideas, who gave their time to give things out, who supported with donations & who helped to bring Easter 'Cheer' to the people of Stokesley. Well Done!

## What's On this week

Monday 12th April	2.00pm Nattering & Knitting – Please join us for a 'chinwag' & to catch-up on all the things we've been doing at home! Contact Ann Keene ( <a href="mailto:keene.home@yahoo.com">keene.home@yahoo.com</a> )
Tuesday 13th April	Our Tuesday Night Fellowship will be meeting as usual at 7.00pm (Zoom ID 288 056 7734). We will have a catch-up for an hour and then move into our online Oasis Study Group at 8.00pm based on our current Holy Habit. Contact Mandy Robinson ( <a href="mailto:mansemum01@gmail.com">mansemum01@gmail.com</a> )
Wednesday 14th April	'Hymn-a-Long' with the Choir at 7.00pm. The Zoom ID is 288 056 7734.
Thursday 15th April	
Friday 12th April	 <p>We hope you will join us in a quiet prayer-time between 10am-11am from your living room. Light a candle &amp; pray your own personal prayers.</p>
Saturday 13th April	10.30am – Coffee Morning with a theme, on Zoom (ID 288 056 7734). Contact Mandy Robinson ( <a href="mailto:mansemum01@gmail.com">mansemum01@gmail.com</a> ) 11.30am Saturday Quiz



## TALE FROM THE GARDEN!

As one of the most familiar signs of spring, primroses (or primula as they are also known) bring a sign of early cheer to the garden. Primroses flower reliably from January through to May and are one of the most attractive native wildflowers in Britain & Ireland. These easy-to-grow perennials provide a beautiful carpet of colour in a variety of forms and sizes to make an attractive feature of any area, from pots to borders and everything in between! They look great planted in clusters. Our roundabouts & street tubs are full of them at the moment (thanks to the happy planters from SPIOTA!).



Many legends spawned a love of primrose. The most famous says that once, when the Apostle Peter, the guardian of the heavenly monastery, dozed off, he dropped the keys to Paradise. Once on the ground, they sprouted amazingly beautiful flowers - these were the Primrose.

Did you know? ... April the 19th is Primrose Day. It is the anniversary of the death in 1881 of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, as the flower was his favourite. Queen Victoria sent a wreath of primrose flowers to Disraeli's funeral. Since the plant blooms in the spring, the primrose is often poetically called the 'golden keys' to the whole green kingdom of the summer. On Easter Day we celebrated the re-opening of our church doors for worship. From Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April it will feel like a golden key has unlocked us from even more of the restrictions imposed upon us because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The story of Christ's resurrection and other stories in the Bible are filled with **closed doors**. It is a common phrase in the resurrection narratives: "**the doors being shut** for fear of the Jews." It led them all to **hide behind closed doors**. God may have closed the doors temporarily for many of the things we would do at church normally, but they won't stay closed forever. We are to trust God in these moments and wait to see where He leads us and what **new doors may open**. When Jesus unlocked the doors of the disciples' hearts, they became emboldened to him and stepped outside of their comfort zones, came out from behind their locked doors to fearlessly and courageously proclaim the Gospel to all who were lost. We all have our **locked doors** of desperation and futility. I wonder what has been **unlocked** and **opened** for us during this **Easter Season**. God uses locked doors to help us grow in faith. Locked doors become God's agents of change. He will present us with that 'golden key' to help us walk through the door of faith. So as we move onwards, along the 'roadmap to normality', take heart from the Primrose & look forward to the whole green kingdom of the summer.