

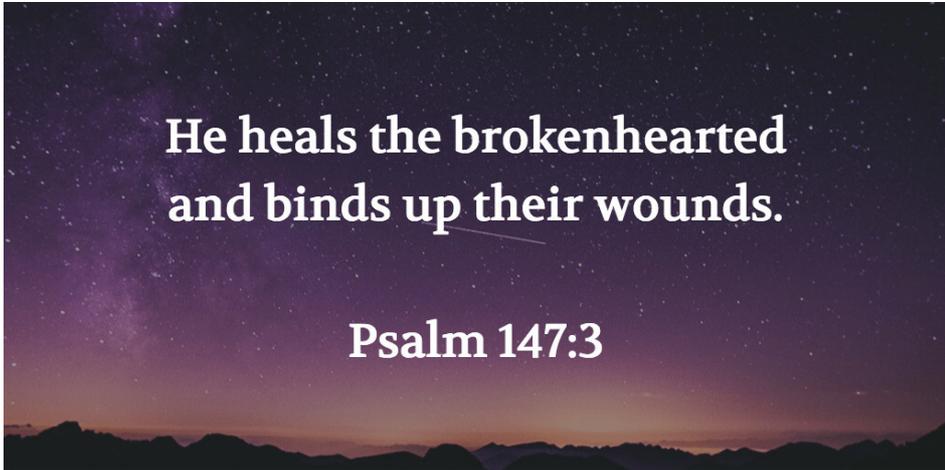
# Dear all,

**Oulton Broad Team Ministry**  
The Parishes of St. Mark with  
St. Luke and St. Michael.

Welcome to the Sixth Weekly Newsletter that we've had since Public Worship was suspended.

It's almost unbelievable to think that it has been that long since we were able to physically meet together for worship, but it's good to hear all the different ways that you are finding yourselves to be spiritually fed.

I've been feeling quite emotional at times this past week. As the weeks go by, and the death toll mounts, it is impossible not to be affected by the sense of pain that there is in the nation, and the knowledge that people are suffering. It's good to feel emotional because, although it can be uncomfortable at times, feelings of grief and emotion are always best expressed. Tears are a gift of God and an important way to let out feelings which can be detrimental when bottled up. The bible is very permission giving in this area, as more than half of the Psalms are Psalms of Lament. As we feel these things—grief, sadness, lament—I believe we're reflecting God's heart of love. The bible says that he is... *near to the broken hearted* (Psalm 34:18), but it doesn't end there. God's heart is one of compassion, and compassion is an active love. Therefore,



**He heals the brokenhearted  
and binds up their wounds.**

**Psalm 147:3**

Psalm 147, verse 3 tells us that God *...heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds*. These are words that we can prayerfully declare over our nation, and over one another throughout this time. We are Easter people and that means that grief and loss will never have the last word. Amen!

The Gospel reading for this Sunday—April 26th—picks up on this theme. Two disciples have

left Jerusalem and are travelling towards Emmaus, full of emotion at what has taken place. Verse 17 of Luke 24 tells us that they were “downcast” but, unbeknown to them, the stranger that has drawn alongside is Jesus, the image of the invisible God, the one who heals the broken-hearted. He reveals himself to them in a different kind of breaking; the breaking of bread. A reminder that the healer was, himself, once broken. What incredible truths are given to the Church for us to live and proclaim!

I hope that you're all well and finding ways to keep occupied and to be helped through this time. There is so much care being shared across our congregations, and also beyond them, and that's so heartening to see. Do get in touch via St. Mark's Parish Office, phone or email, if there's anything that we, your wider Church Family, may be able to assist with—(01502) 514771 or [stmarks.oultombroad@gmail.com](mailto:stmarks.oultombroad@gmail.com)

Thank you to those of you who have been able to help others in need across our town by leaving Foodbank Donations in St. Mark's Church Porch. These are being gratefully received. The Foodbank currently has shortages in the following areas: tinned veg, tinned meat and UHT milk.

I'm aware that not all of you are able to access our Sunday Worship and so we will continue to make paper materials available including 'The Sunday Link' and 'Live the Word', which you should have received with this newsletter. UCB 'Word For Today' booklets are available from St. Mark's Church Porch, and can be posted out to you upon request. There is also an Audio CD of Spoken Worship, which includes Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Prayer during the Day, Compline, some Reflections and a variety of other Prayers. These are spoken by voices that you will recognise! Contact St. Mark's Office if you'd like a copy.

Our regular Sunday Worship via Zoom continues at 10.30am each week. It is followed by Holy Communion at Midday. You can join these gatherings via the Zoom app or by phone if you don't have access to the Internet. In order to listen to our Sunday Morning Worship by phone, please call the following number: **0203 481 5240**. When prompted, you'll then need to enter this meeting ID: **588 877 574** and press the #

key on your phone keypad when instructed to do so. This call will cost you the same as any UK national call. For others, joining the Sunday online gathering with video, the meeting ID 588 877 574 remains unchanged. For any children that will be joining us on Sunday, there's a special video this week, just for you, as well as a colouring sheet. We look forward to seeing your artwork.

The Clergy are celebrating Holy Communion each Wednesday morning at 10.30am. In the week ahead this will be via Zoom. The Meeting ID will be: 838 0435 8791 and no password is required. The number to call if you will be phoning in will be: 0203 051 2874.

### ***A Prayer for Today—no. 5—Written by Tony Hilder from St. Luke's.***

***'O Lord I serve a risen Jesus Christ our Saviour, He is here in this world today.***

***I know that he is living with us whatever many men may say.***

***I've seen his hand giving mercy, and heard his welcome voice of cheer***

***and whenever we need him we know he is always there' <sup>(1)</sup>***

We remember peoples of all nations who feel drained and lack energy because of Covid19. We ask your blessing upon all who suffer from the stresses of being confined to our homes and those who are now experiencing poverty because of being laid off from work. We pray for any who are separated from their homes; while in isolation or in hospital. We think of all who are struggling with life; homes where there is tension or lack of peace; and afraid of the future; all who are lonely and facing this time of crisis, may we all know your presence and your peace. Father, we give you thanks for the new life that you offer to us in your Son Jesus Christ, for you offer us eternal life. We

come to you with confidence and pray for friends and families of loved ones departed. May they know the fullness of joy in your presence and in eternal life. We pray that with the extension of the social distancing that we do not become depressed or anxious but remember that we will overcome and return to something like normal in time. Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your son Jesus Christ. Amen

**Acknowledgements: (1) adapted from Alfred Henry Ackley's Hymn (295 mission praise)**

For those of you who usually attend Mark II at St. Mark's, you may remember that we had planned to have a Mark II Meeting on **Saturday, May 2nd at 10am**. We will still be going ahead with this, using Zoom. I'd like to hear your thoughts about what you consider the aims and purpose of Mark II to be, and whether or not you feel those aims are being realised. I'd also like to hear what you think works well in that particular context and what might be working less well. To join this meeting you'll need the following meeting ID: 878 0631 0354. To join by phone please call 0203 481 5237. If you can't attend, you can also email or post your thoughts to me.

This is advance notice that the PCC Meetings scheduled for May will still be going ahead. That's **Tuesday, 12th May at 7pm for St. Michael's** and **Wednesday, 20th May at 7.30pm for St. Mark's/Luke's**. More details as to how you can access those meetings, assuming we're still in lockdown, are to follow soon. As you'll be aware, the timeframe for holding the Annual Parochial Church Meetings has been extended and all current PCC members are authorized and requested to continue serving until such time as the new PCCs can be formed at an APCM.

Who Cares? - Online East Coast Vision Meeting. 'Who Cares?' is a mission initiative which involves asking



one simple question, and asking it to as many people as possible. The Question is: "What hurts the most?" The answers to the question are then compiled by professional survey analysts, and all participating Churches will be given the results, and will then be able to respond to them. Is this something with which we, as Oulton Broad Team Ministry, should get involved? If you'd like to join others in considering whether we should,

please join the Vision Meeting, which will be taking place on **Tuesday, May 5th at 7pm**, via Zoom. The Meeting ID is 990 114 063, and you can join by phone if you call 0131 460 1196.

In Him... *who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy (Jude 1:24) ...and with love and prayer, Helen*

# Given time



Lord, who walked alongside his disciples in their grief and reinvented the past for them, turning tragedy into triumph, strengthen our faith, to know that you are in the midst of everything in our lives, too. Amen.

## Stations of the resurrection

Station 10:  
Supper at Emmaus

by Richard Greatrex

Was it just because they had reached the familiar territory of home, that the ground they walked on seemed greener, friendlier? Or had the stranger's opening up of the scriptures filled them with a fresh vision for life? Whichever, despite the rigours of the journey, their steps were lighter than when they started. There was no hesitation about welcoming the stranger into their home.

But then the unmistakable command: take, bless, break, share. It was not so much what he did, but the way he did it. The gestures were so familiar, the intonations in his voice so memorable, the stress on certain words that were worn into their consciousness. There was no other person this could possibly be. In his words on the road there had been the first glimmer of understanding, but in hospitality there was revelation.

Christ is risen, he is risen indeed. 🍷



From Stations of the Resurrection: from Easter to Pentecost.  
Code: 1841 Price: £12.95  
ISBN: 9780852315453

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Zephaniah 3:14-end, Psalm 116:1-3. 10-end and Luke 24:13-35

The story from Luke is familiar – two disciples, heartbroken, grieving, “looking sad”, trudge along the road from Jerusalem, the city which three days earlier was the scene of so much drama. The cult that Cleopas and his companion belonged to had been quashed when their leader was unjustly tried, tortured and put to a brutal death. When the stranger draws alongside, Cleopas tells him that they had hoped that Jesus would be “the one to redeem Israel”. Their dejection is palpable.

The two men are bound for Emmaus, a village whose exact location is now lost to history. Perhaps they're desperate for a break from the chaos of the city, possibly they're afraid for their own safety. Whatever the reason for their journey, it's one of the darker moments in the New Testament.

So it's astonishing that the unimaginable joy that they are about to experience will spring from the very source of their despondency. It's summed up by Fr Denis McBride in his book *The Road to Emmaus and Beyond*, when he writes: “The past is not dead; it lingers on as a resource for meaning or it waits for new interpretation.”

It's a wonderful idea – that, far from being fixed in history, the past can change through our reinterpretation – the realisation that, even in the darkest moments, when no redemption or resurrection seemed remotely possible, God was there all the while. It's why the writer of the book of Zephaniah, today's alternative Old Testament reading, celebrates the fact that “the Lord, is in your midst... The Lord, your God, is in your midst”. 🍷

## International Chernobyl Disaster

Remembrance Day

by Lisa Tulfer

Today is International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day, which was proclaimed by the United Nations in 2016 on the thirtieth anniversary of the 1986 nuclear disaster. The events will be familiar all of us who were around at the time – the explosion and fire at the nuclear power station, the radioactive cloud

that spread across the USSR and far beyond, the evacuation of people from a large area, the ghostly remains of deserted settlements, the poisoned land, people becoming sick and dying. Deaths resulting from the Chernobyl disaster are estimated (depending on sources) at between four thousand and ninety-three thousand.

This day of remembrance is intended to raise awareness of the wider consequences of the disaster, and of the potential dangers of nuclear energy in general, for example the accident at Fukushima in 2011. And, in a kind of resurrection, despite radiation and against all expectations, nature is flourishing in the Chernobyl exclusion zone. 🍷

“ Every knee shall bow... every tongue shall give praise to God. Romans 14:11

**MONDAY**  
**27 APRIL**  
**Acts 6:8-15**  
**Psalm 119:17-24**  
**John 6:22-29**

**TUESDAY**  
**28 APRIL**  
**Acts 7:51 - 8:1a**  
**Psalm 31:1-5. 16**  
**John 6:30-35**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**29 APRIL**  
**Acts 8:1b-8**  
**Psalm 66:1-6**  
**John 6:35-40**

**THURSDAY**  
**30 APRIL**  
**Acts 8:26-end**  
**Psalm 66:7-8.**  
**14-end**  
**John 6:44-51**

**FRIDAY**  
**1 MAY**  
**Philip and James, Apostles**  
**Isaiah 30:15-21**  
**Psalm 119:1-8**  
**Ephesians 1:3-10**  
**John 14:1-14**

**SATURDAY**  
**2 MAY**  
**Acts 9:31-42**  
**Psalm 116:10-15**  
**John 6:60-69**

## REFLECTION



The martyrdom of St. Stephen, St Etienne du Mont Church, Paris.

The first Christians had a tough time and we hear in these readings about Stephen's arrest and death by stoning and the persecution that was encouraged by Saul. Yet this climate of fear and violence did not deter others like Philip and Peter from telling the good news of Jesus. That good news led to healing some sick people, such as Aeneas, and raising the dead woman Dorcas. It also led to the inclusion of the Ethiopian eunuch whom Philip met on the road.

Such inclusions are very significant in a culture where to be sick or disabled might suggest that God is punishing you. So in its earliest days, under significant persecution and danger, the Church lived out the message of Jesus, that all are to be included because he is God's gift of "the bread of life". That bread of life, which the writer of John's Gospel speaks about, turns out not to be a special thing only for a few people but "for the life of the world". The first Christians did not think they should keep such good news quiet, but took the risk and shouted it for everyone to hear.

### PRAYER

Dear God,  
 when we are afraid to speak your words of loving inclusion in a world that wants to keep us apart,  
 give us the courage that Stephen and Peter showed.  
 Keep us from judgement and teach us your radical acceptance of all creation.

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## GODPARENTING

### PART I – A RICH TRADITION

Godparenting has evolved through generations of Christians and is, of course, inextricably linked with baptism, which is itself rooted in ancient Jewish purification rites – Jesus was baptised and baptised others. Early Christianity was a persecuted faith, so an important function of godparents – who were initially known as sponsors – was to confirm the sincerity of any adult who was seeking to be baptised and to protect the community from being infiltrated by persecutors.

Initially, because a confession of faith was required on the part of the person being baptised, baptism was reserved for adults. Nobody knows exactly when infant baptism was introduced, although we do know that it was at some point in the first or second century AD. Baptising babies is a practice which remains contentious to this day and is a fundamental doctrinal difference between, for example, Baptists and Anglicans. Writing in around 200 AD, in one of the earliest mentions of godparents, Church Father Tertullian made his disapproval clear: "For why is it necessary... that the sponsors likewise should be thrust into danger? Who both themselves, by reason of mortality, may fail to fulfil their promises." It goes to show how seriously godparenting was taken.

Over time the focus of the role of the sponsor / godparent shifted away from acting as a gatekeeper of the Church, to vocalising the confession of faith on behalf of the person being baptised and acting as a guarantor of their faith going forward. Understanding a bit of the history and background may be helpful for parents when it comes to choosing godparents for their children, and can help godparents and godchildren themselves – particularly older godchildren – to carve out a more meaningful and fulfilling role and relationship. Even for someone who is not a parent, godparent or godchild, it provides a fascinating insight into the Christian faith. What does godparenting mean to you and how can your understanding of it inform and deepen your faith life?



# LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by  
 Caroline Hodgson  
 and Heather Smith

Third week of Easter  
 Monday 27 April to  
 Saturday 2 May  
 2020