

# Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**Welcome to everyone today both in our church buildings and those who join us from their homes.**

This morning's services are **both** live-streamed on St Thomas' Facebook page. We hope that our dial-in will also work. You should be able to listen live, or later, by dialling **01706 599309**.

Some safety reminders now we're back in church:

- Please keep face coverings in place over nose and mouth during the service
- The hymns are sung by choir alone
- Please remain in your places until invited to move by a steward
- Please don't wander to chat to friends – sorry
- Please take service sheets with you at the end
- Please disperse quickly at the end of the service and **please don't congregate outside to chat**

### **The Collect**

Almighty God,  
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ  
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:  
grant that, as by your grace going before us  
you put into our minds good desires,  
so by your continual help  
we may bring them to good effect;  
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### **First Reading Acts 8.26-end**

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He

had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip<sup>\*</sup> baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

### **Gospel Reading *John 15.1-8***

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes<sup>\*</sup> to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth, and to share his risen life; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

# The Week Ahead & Information

Monday-Saturday

9am Morning Prayer on St Thomas' Facebook page  
(not on Monday)

5pm Evening Prayer on St James' Facebook page  
(not Saturday)

Thursday 1pm Interment of ashes, at St Thomas'

Friday 9.30am Church cleaning at St Thomas'

**Next Sunday – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

9.15am Eucharist at St Thomas'

**followed by the Annual Meeting**

10.45am Eucharist at St James'

## Annual Meetings

St Thomas', **next Sunday**, St James', Sunday 16 May following the morning services. There are vacancies on both PCCs and for Secretaries. Nomination forms are available at the back of church, today, including for Churchwardens. Please keep this date in your diary and consider if you're able to offer some time to help lead our churches.

**Christian Aid Week 10th-16th May 2021** This year it's not possible for us to deliver/collect door-to-door in our parishes. Both churches have alternative plans. As we weren't able to collect at all last year, we hope you will feel able to be even more generous this year. You can also give on-line by visiting [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

**St Thomas'** – Envelopes will in church on 9th May to be returned Sunday 16th. There will be a **pop-up cafe** on the church car park, 10am-1pm on Saturday 15th May. There will be tea, coffee and juice available with cakes to buy and take away. Joanne Smithson, our Christian Aid co-ordinator, is appealing to the wonderful cake bakers in the church community for donations of cakes for the stall. *I would be very grateful if you could let me know what you are able to donate by sending an email to myself [joannesmithson@live.co.uk](mailto:joannesmithson@live.co.uk).*

**St James'** - Envelopes will in church on 9th and 16<sup>th</sup> May and can be returned either to church or to Kaye Ridings (13 Lyndale Avenue). We

hope that those in church will (safely) share envelopes with friends and neighbours.

### **Doorstep Joy**

We want to help keep people occupied. Please see fliers and bulletin articles about our new outreach programme to help those who continue to be isolated or restricted. We're offering to deliver jigsaw puzzles and reading books to your doorstep, and to collect them again in a week or two's time, and bring new ones, if you'd like. The first point of contact is Fr David – 07539 264279 – to get started. Please share this information with anyone you think might appreciate it.

### **Food for all**

Our Wednesday Lockdown Lunches have now come to an end. There are two lunch deliveries in May (12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>). Please book with Fr Andrew **by the previous Saturday**. Absolutely **anyone** is eligible. No charge but donations of £5 welcome. Fr Andrew – [andrewinhaslingden@gmail.com](mailto:andrewinhaslingden@gmail.com), 07460 899451

*Our frozen main meals are still available to order. Please let us know of anyone who might benefit from a delivery. Suggested donation of £1.50 per meal.*

### **Prayers**

Please let Fr David know of anyone who should be included on our weekly prayer list. ([frdavidstephenson@gmail.com](mailto:frdavidstephenson@gmail.com), 07539 264279)

### **For your prayers**

For the upcoming *Thy Kingdom Come* initiative to spread the news of Jesus wide into our communities.

For the Queen and all in her government, nationally and locally.

In thanksgiving for gradual easing of lockdown restrictions and for all who work to vaccinate throughout the world and for all who work in the NHS. For those in India where coronavirus cases continue to escalate.

For our church community and annual meetings; for people to offer to serve on our PCCs and as Churchwardens; for the strengthening of bonds between our two churches

For the sick: Ian, Edna, Charley, Mandy, Wynne, Lizzie, Janet, Allister, Betty, Derek, Rita, Mary, Mother Enid, Margaret

For all who have died in the past week and all whose anniversaries fall in the coming week. *Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord.*