

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

Patronal Festival of St Thomas, 5th July

Collect:

Almighty and eternal God, who, for the firmer foundation of our faith, allowed your holy apostle Thomas to doubt the resurrection of your Son till word and sight convinced him: grant to us, who have not seen, that we also may believe and so confess Christ as our Lord and our God.

Amen.

Psalm 31.1-6

1 In you, O Lord, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.

2 Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

3 You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me,

4 take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

5 Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

6 You hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the Lord.



A reading from the book of Ephesians (2.19-22)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (20.24-29)

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 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." 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." 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." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 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."

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, o Christ.

Reflection:

Reflection on St Thomas, from Bishop Mike's sermon on 27 June 2020, at the licensing of ordinands, who should have been ordained deacon that day.

Saturday 27th June should have been a joyful day spent at the Cathedral for those who had prepared for ordination. Instead we were meeting on ZOOM, everyone in their own home, kitchen or sitting room, wearing cassock and alb, with a witness present to sign the document saying that the ordinands had taken the vows of allegiance. Therefore, no surprise that Bishop Mike talked about 'disappointment' in his sermon, saying to the 'deacons to be': 'Today you are literally disappointed, dis-appointed, deprived of appointment as deacons' and then he says 'so make good use of this disappointment!' As we are disappointed today, not to be together to celebrate St Thomas Day in Church, followed by a BBQ, perhaps we too can find something in this experience that draws us closer to God.

Bishop Mike: 'Look at Thomas in our reading today. Thomas has suffered a three-fold disappointment, first in Jesus not being who he thought he was, second in Jesus death leaving him without direction and in mortal danger and now third in not sharing the disciples strange experience of seeing the risen Lord. Unsurprisingly then, his reaction to his friends' suggestion that Jesus is risen is not coolly sceptical, but intensely angry. Aggressively, he demands that he thrusts his hands in Jesus' wounds before he believes. The imagery, the action, the body language is incredibly violent. Thomas has been let down, hurt by the one he loved, wounded by those closest to him, just as we in our own histories have (inevitably) been let down, hurt by loved ones, wounded by the ones close to us. There is every possibility anger will take over – that we respond bitterly to such people (or their memory). "Why shouldn't I?", "Look what has been done to me", "it's so unfair" we cry and something of this we see in Thomas. But where does his resentment, his bitterness and his anger lead? It leads him to shutting out the Good News, he shuts out New Life, he shuts out the very thing that offers healing.

Thomas is us. Thomas is you and me. That's why he's called Thomas the twin, he's our twin.

But the good news is that the Risen Lord doesn't let him or us alone in that place of withdrawal, woundedness and woe. Jesus comes to Thomas and looks at him not with a reproachful and accusing stare, but with compassion and humility. (Can you imagine that, that in the middle of your most ridiculous strop, your most stupid of sulks, your angriest defiance, Jesus appears and looks at you with compassion and humility?). Jesus suggests that Thomas places his hands in his wounds – offering his body up to violence once again that Thomas might see, and it is in this moment that Thomas does see, sees both his own error and the truth of Jesus. And so, his grudge shifts to gratitude, his resentment shifts to recognition, his anger shifts to awe, as he exclaims "my Lord and my God".

If we learn anything from Thomas it might be that our disappointment is an opportunity and a danger, but the ball is in our court as to whether this will be resolved in ways which break us open to our Lord and one another OR close us down even to ourselves.

Amen.

We are the body of Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.
Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**Here are the words of two
hymns you may like to sing or
pray this week:**

*Do not be afraid,
For I have redeemed you.
I have called you by your name;
You are mine.*

When you walk through the waters I'll be
with you,
you will never sink beneath the waves.

When the fire is burning all around you,
you will never be consumed by the flames.

When the fear of loneliness is looming,
then remember I am at your side.

When you dwell in the exile of a stranger,
remember you are precious in my eyes.

You are mine, O my child; I am your father,
and I love you with a perfect love.

For all the saints, who from their labours rest;
who to the world by faith their Lord confessed,
your name, O Jesus, be for ever blessed:
Alleluia, alleluia!

You were their rock, their fortress, and their might;
you, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight,
and in the darkness their unfailing light.
Alleluia, alleluia!

One holy people, fellowship divine!
we feebly struggle, they in glory shine
in earth and heaven the saints in praise combine:
Alleluia, alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west:
soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest,
the peaceful calm of paradise the blessed.
Alleluia, alleluia!

But look! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
saints all-triumphant rise in bright array
the king of glory passes on his way!
Alleluia, alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest
shore
through gates of pearl, ascending, they adore
the Father, Son and Spirit evermore:
Alleluia, alleluia!

Call this number → for free,
for a greeting from Justin Welby,
Archbishop of Canterbury!

Then listen to hymns being sung,
prayers, or reflections. Give it a
go, it's a lovely way to worship
from home!



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers



Sunday: 5th July: St Thomas Patronal Festival:

Thank you to everyone who contributed to ZOOM Church Songs of Praise and sent in a reflection on St Thomas. Special Thanks to **Bishop Martin** for his homily on the video. We are disappointed that we are unable to celebrate this day together, and we are keeping everyone in our prayers today.

This week, we will make a decision about when we resume worship in Church & how to move forward. **St Thomas Church is open for Private Prayer, on Mondays and Thursdays, between 11 am and 2 pm, and The Peace Garden is Open for use every weekday.**

Please pray for:

Those with chronic or long-term illness: Eric Dickerson, Rosemary, Sophie, Adam, Jenny, Andrew Barfield, Kathy Steele, Frank D., Andrew Derrett, Peggy, Pat, Natacha, Christine, Stephen, Julie, Samantha, Jill, Rex, Molly Johansen, Margaret Christian, Marion (Val's sister-in-law)

Those undergoing treatment or currently ill: Emily & family, Juliet Adams, Gloria Elmer, Helen Harlow, Jean Dominy, Leslie Bloomfield, Pete Tancred, Katie (cancer), Peter, Jim, Richard (June's nephew), Sylvia Eley, Dougie, Robert, Andy (Lyanne's neighbour), Alice (Joan's grandson's wife), Chandran (Covid19)

All who are affected by the Coronavirus in the UK and around the world: For **New Dawn, India** supporting communities affected by Covid 19 **for all health care staff, for teachers and for businesses opening again. For all who have lost their jobs due to Covid19; all who are despairing.**

For our government & its advisors: for guidance and wisdom.

Those who have recently died, and their families mourning their loss, among them: Hazel Messenger R.I.P

Sunday Worship Video & other Worship resources on the Church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasipswich/>

Sunday 5 July St Thomas Day - 10am

ZOOM Worship Songs of Praise (Let us know if you want to join by phone)

Tuesday 7 July –6.00 pm LiveStream

Meditation on facebook/ StThomasPilgrimCommunity

Wednesday, 8 July:

10 am Livestream Eucharist facebook/ StThomasipswich

7pm –Faith Pictures on ZOOM Contact Malcolm to join.

Pray for members of the St Thomas Congregation (each week we will include a dozen names)

Brian & Jackie, Hugh Singleton, Daphne & Jim, Julie & Mark, Rosemary, Shirley, Angela, Brian Ward, Audrey, Natacha & Amber, Jill Wilson, Pat Wright



Birthdays this week:

Andrew Barfield (6th),
Phyllis Chevous (7th),
Esmae Knight (9th)

YOUR SUPPORT NEEDED FOR NWIPSWICH FOODBANK organised by the Big Local Trust:

Please drop non-perishable food at Castlehill Community Centre, Highfield Road on MONDAYS between 9.30 and 11.00am.

If you would like to chat, please do give us a ring:

Revd Jutta: 07958 360 564 Rev Cat 07530 412988
Roger Elmer 07810 274586 Sylvia Dickerson 07903 739487
Malcolm Gibbs 07906 663530 Mary Bullass 625135
Gloria Elmer 745590
Rev Jackie 07962172639 Revd Pat 01473 464748

Church website:

<http://stthomasipswich.org.uk/>

Contacts:

Priest in charge: Revd Jutta Brueck
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Jutta's days off are: Fridays & Saturdays

Assistant Curate: Revd Cat Connolly

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Cat's day off: Mondays