



Church at Home 6 For Abridge The Sunday after Easter

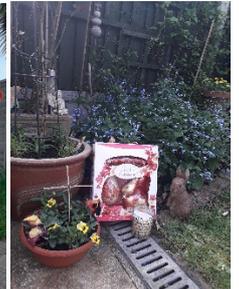


Sunday 19th April 2020

***Jesus said to Thomas, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed;
blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' John 20:29***

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful set of photos of your Easter Gardens you have been sending in! Thank you. Here are a few of them as a focus to begin today's church-at-home worship. Let them naturally lead you into the great Easter shout of praise for this morning: **Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Halleluiah!**



A suggestion: If you know of someone in the church family who is alone for this act of worship, you might like to give them a call and arrange to share this time with them.

1. Thank you too for the photos of your church-at-home spaces. Keep them coming! We are including one each week on the Sunday sheet. Today in addition to a cross or another Christian symbol, a candle, and a Bible, perhaps you might include a stone and nail. Last week Mary discovered that the stone had been rolled away and today Thomas saw for himself the nail marks in Christ's hands.

2. Today's Bible readings are: **John 20: 19-31** and **I Peter 1:3-9**

3. A prayer as we join with all those meeting in their homes in Abridge and beyond at this time:

Living Lord Jesus,

On the first Easter Day, locked doors could not keep you away from those you loved.

In the same way today, you are with each one of us in our isolation by your Spirit.

Thank you for your resurrection gifts of peace, hope and forgiveness,

That don't take us out of our circumstances but transform us within them,

To the praise of your glory. Amen.

Before turning to today's Bible story, spend a few minutes bringing this past week before God, calling to mind the times that God has been with you; thanking God for answered prayer; saying sorry for what has come between you and God, and between you and others; and receiving again for yourselves the words that Jesus speaks in today's reading: 'Receive the Holy Spirit'; and finally, based on the words that John writes in verse 31, rejoicing again that 'believing in Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, we have life in his name'.

4. Read the Bible passage from John chapter 20 slowly, and then, with the Bible still open, ask yourselves....

- I wonder which part of the story most catches your attention?
- I wonder which part puzzles you?
- I wonder which is the most important part of this story?
- I wonder which part was especially for you this morning?
- I wonder how this story might connect to what is happening in our world today?
- I wonder how God can use this story to inspire and encourage us and those dear to us?

5. To help you explore the story further, there is a reflection sheet and also some all-age activities, that you might like to use, if you have access to the Internet. You can find these resources on the websites of the two churches and here are the links:

www.lambournechurch.com www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org

6. For our prayers, and in the light of the resurrection of Christ, let us remember:

- Families in lock-down who are finding it increasingly difficult, especially if they haven't garden space or countryside nearby.
- Our NHS health professionals and other key workers who are putting themselves at risk to save lives. You may know of some by name for whom you can pray.
- Those who are being treated in hospital this very day.
- Those who have been bereaved. We think especially of the family of Kay Pearce, a member of Stapleford Abbots choir and community over many years ..and also of others known to us.
- Those in Chelmsford's partner diocese in Kenya where they are facing the onslaught of the virus with far fewer resources.
- The work of those online charities supporting individuals with mental health or facing domestic violence.

Add any particular people and situations that The Lord has brought to your mind as you have been praying. End with our family prayer, The Lord's Prayer.

7. You might like to try one or both of the following hymns - [Amazing Grace](#) and/or [And can it be](#)

End your time of church-at-home by saying out loud the words of **The Grace**, reaching out your hands to include in your imagination all those you know and love, who live here in the village.

* And don't forget that there are Church services available on whatever is your radio station of choice, with Songs of Praise on BBC 1.

* Finally, you might like to continue the habit of placing a candle safely in your window at dusk as a sign that we are praying for this country at this time. During the week you might like to share what you have done this morning with others. Do let your friends in Abridge know we are praying for them and ask them if they have any specific prayer requests.

* Don't hesitate to contact the church leaders, if you would like to have a friendly chat or want to pass on some news for us all. **Nick** - 01992 814 426.

Roger - 01992 815 838. **Keith** - 020 8504 9168

Right is a photo of Sue and John Freeman's church-at-home space.

Please do send your own photos in to us

