**19th April 2020
Second Sunday of Easter**

**Collect:**

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacriﬁce and peace, to the praise of God the Father.

**Readings**:

Exodus 14:10-end & 15:20-21
Acts 2:14 & 22-32

**Gospel:**

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

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.’

**Making meaning:**

It really isn’t stretching things too far to say that, following Jesus’ crucifixion and death, the disciples were in ‘lock-down’. This may help us to imagine our way into the story. All sorts of doubt were whirling around in their heads. You might like to think and identify doubts that you’re living with at the present time. We might, with Thomas, be in all sorts of ‘seeing-is-believing’ quandaries about the future. The good news is that the risen Jesus met them in their doubts, even Thomas, and Jesus will meet with us too, causing us to recognize him and to worship as Thomas did, “My Lord and my God!”

**Prayers:**

Continue to pray for the Government; for wisdom in prioritizing resources and responses to need.

Continue to pray for strength for frontline workers in hospitals and residential care settings.

**Church & Charity Finance during Lockdown:**

Whether at national, diocesan or parish level, the Church of England’s economy is anchored to traditional Sunday giving in the collection plate, so we are likely to be a month behind budget already. We need to appeal for you, therefore, to adjust to this part of your life, as with any other. Amounts given are known only to the PCC Treasurers. If you have already done this, many thanks! If you are willing to arrange a one-off or a regular gift by bank transfer or standing order, please use the following co-ordinates:

Account: St Giles’ Church
Sort code: 09-01-51
Number: 74188307
Ref: Surname & ‘Donation’

Likewise, the work of foodbanks is needed more than ever, and our usual monthly collection of tins and packets for Chatham is simply not possible. The Rector at All Saints’ has offered the following two ways to help if you wish to make donations or to purchase foodstuffs for distribution:
[**https://medway.foodbank.org.uk**](https://medway.foodbank.org.uk/)[**https://www.spareable.co.uk**](https://www.spareable.co.uk/)