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Weekly Letter – 7 April 2024

John 20:19-31

Sticking Together

We normally think of this as two stories a week apart: the risen Jesus appearing to the disciples and 'doubting' Thomas. In both there is something about sticking with the community of believers despite fear or doubt.

The doors of the house where the disciples were gathered were locked out of fear, but the scattered disciples had regrouped and were together, although Thomas wasn't there. A week later, he hadn't given up on them, nor they on him; despite needing more evidence, he stuck with the community of believers. Both times Jesus comes to them and says, 'Peace be with you.'

When I was a teenager, our youth leader was a faithful woman, but she told us that for years she had just gone through the motions of church life after having a child with physical and mental disabilities. She didn't feel she could leave the church because her husband was a key church leader, but otherwise she might have drifted away. Over time, and with the care of the church community, the smouldering wick of her faith was fanned into flame, and shone brightly to guide us through church membership classes.

I see Thomas in a similar way. By remaining with the group of disciples, Thomas renews and extends his faith. Through John's gospel Jesus is referred to as the Son of God, but after meeting Jesus again, Thomas calls him 'My Lord and my God!'

Jesus says that those who can believe or trust him without seeing him are blessed, and John adds that the things he has included in his gospel are selected so that we may come to trust that Jesus is the Son of God and have life in his name.

Have you been through a dry patch? What watered your faith to help it grow again?

Are you going through a tough patch now? Stick with us and let the faith of those around sustain you while you find the way again.

Together may we find Jesus bringing us peace.

Simon

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Simon Walkling.

Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Uniting Church, Sketty

Tuesday 9th – Tea and Chat in Christ Well - 2-4 pm

Prayer Chain

As part of our prayer ministry we are restarting the prayer chain so that people and situations can be prayed for between Sunday Services. The chain is divided into three groups, to ensure the request gets round as fast as possible.

- Before you ask for anyone to be put on the prayer chain, **please ensure you have their permission unless no names are mentioned**

News from Wales United Reformed Church Synod Meeting held on 16th March 2024

Jeff and Simon represented you at the online Synod Meeting. As well as the formal news about ministers and elders and nominations, we had presentations and discussions about our shared work.

Maggie Kirkbride, the Lay Preaching Advocate, encouraged us to think about involving more people in leading worship and told us that the Worship Leaders' Weekend this year will be from 01-03/11/24. Jason Askew, the Training & Development Officer talked about Stepwise as a way of developing disciples. The Synod will be running Faith Filled Life online, but it could also be done with a local group.

Megan Price, the Synod Clerk, told us about the work of the Joint Public Issues Team who are encouraging us to make a difference in the General Election later in the year. There is guidance for meeting with candidates and discussing the issues. We were reminded that we need to have identification to vote. They are also supporting work on ending poverty and supporting asylum seekers and refugees.

We were encouraged to listen to children's voices when we make decisions in church, and we heard from Judy Harris, the Children & Youth Work Development Officer, what the children had said at the children's event held in our church.

Eileen Newington, the Synod Green Advocate, spoke about Eco Church and ways to address the climate crisis and she used activities at Christ Well as one of the positive examples. Julie Kirby, the Rural Advocate, spoke about the ways that rural communities support each other and said that 'It's better for someone to do something than for all of us to do nothing.'

Martin Spain, the Officer for Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations, reminded us that we would be celebrating 50 years of the Covenant of Churches in Wales next year, along with the centenary of the Church Leaders' peace letter to the United States, and 1700 years since the first ecumenical council at Nicaea.

David Salisbury, the new Moderator, closed the meeting with worship, with the vision in Isaiah 65 and assurance that our work for God is not in vain. No-one can do everything, but everyone can do something.

