

Dear friends,

We were blessed with beautiful sunshine for the “Open Gardens” event in Otterton which drew hundreds of people out to look at the nine gardens on display. An incredible 722 tickets were sold and the village hall and the various stalls all did brisk business all day!

Like the scarecrow festival a couple of weeks earlier in East Budleigh, people are wanting to get out and engage with life after a wretched couple of years.



A view over Otterton from the top of one of the gardens.

**This** glorious afternoon came hot on the heels of a marvellous BBQ outside St. Peter's church to celebrate our patronal festival which in turn came after two well attended services which reached 110 combining the 8am and 10am eucharists.



I'd like to thank everyone who were involved with both events that made Sunday such a lovely day.

# Sunday 3rd of July we remember St. Thomas (forever saddled with the epithet “Doubting”)

Archdeacon Trevor Jones will be presiding at both services at St. Peter’s, and I will be presiding at All Saints at 9.30am and John Archibald is presiding at St. Michael’s at 11am.

**Habakkuk 2: 1-4.** Not an often-read book of the Old Testament. Written at an especially uncertain and tumultuous time when Babylon was in the ascendancy and people it seems succeeded when they ignored God and were seduced by the allure of power and success. Habakkuk however says that a glorious future awaits those who submit to God. God is still in control and will establish his kingdom in the end.

**Ephesians 2: 19-22.** A wonderful statement on the true nature of the church and the true identity of members of it. Whatever the personal character (or perceived weaknesses) of the individual apostles – they were all nevertheless witnesses to the risen Christ and on their witness we continue to build the church which of course has Christ himself as our unmovable cornerstone.

**John 20: 24 – 29.** People often will say that they will only believe what they can see with their own eyes. Well, it has always been thus and here Thomas, needing very human reassurance that what his friends were saying was true encounters the risen Christ and immediately believes what they have all attested. Although forever saddled with the epithet “doubting” Thomas actually gives one the most unequivocal statement of divine truth in the New Testament when he addresses Jesus as “My Lord and my God”.

## Thought for the day.

I like to be well prepared for any act of worship – arriving in time, being familiar with the liturgy, having considered the sermon (judging its tone and whether it says what I want it to say), checking that everyone and everything

is in place as far as you can! Unfamiliarity and uncertainty have always been the enemy in my book so imagine my consternation when I am asked to preside at a BCP wedding as I will do this Saturday. I have never done one before in twenty years of ministry, so I hope I can master unfamiliar language and terms and the different order in which things take place. My worst nightmare is that someone thinks that I am incompetent! Anyway, that is my problem at the end of the day. Privately I think it is wonderful when a young couple deliberately choose something in which they hope to find strength, comfort, and solidity in the traditional treasure trove of the church. Modernity makes a virtue of being impromptu, disposable and “in the moment” but unfortunately that means it can also tend towards lacking depth and substance for a lot of people. We have been engaged with updating the liturgies of the RMC for a long time (interrupted by Covid) and it is a complex process trying to ensure that the timeless message of the church (the “Tradition”) is carried and proclaimed well through words that can reach and impact upon people living in our modern culture. I am a great believer in evolution rather than revolution so no major changes would be contemplated but a refreshing of language and forms within the overall picture is to be welcomed. It is good to remember what Liturgy actually means in these situations. It comes from the Greek of course (!) Leitourgia which means “a public work undertaken at our own expense for the benefit of all”

**The Prayer for Today** is a lovely little prayer written by John Wesley which I know we could all pray.

**Lord, let me not live to be useless.**

Love and peace,  
Martin