

**Pastoral Letter | 2 July 2020**

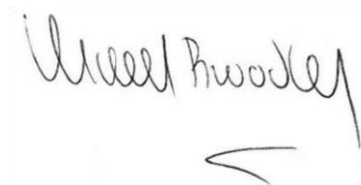
[Luke 24.21] *"but we had hoped"*

I find this verse one of the most powerful and poignant in the bible. The two disciples, walking with Jesus on the road to Emmaus pouring out their disappointments and dashed hopes. They had invested so much in Christ yet it had now all come crashing to a halt. Their lives were devastated. All summed up in 4 short words: "but we had hoped."

This was the verse that came to mind when it was announced that Leicester was going back into lockdown. Businesses that were planning to reopen now have to remain closed for at least another 2 weeks. Churches that were open for private prayer as well as planning for corporate worship will have to remain closed. Holidays that were planned put into doubt. We had hoped that life would be returning to some kind of normality yet, in a stark warning to all of us, on 1 July 2020 the government published a list of 40 areas that could also experience further local lockdowns. We had all hoped that the virus was beginning to fade away with the death rates reducing and the infection rates plateauing. We had all hoped that normality was returning with shops, pubs, restaurants reopening and football returning to our screens and foreign holidays on the agenda. We had all hoped that those who were shielding could slowly re-enter life. Yet we have had a stark reminder to remain cautious and careful. We had hoped yet anxieties have now risen. We need to continue to hold the affected people of Leicester in our prayers.

In our passage the disciple's dashed hopes were transformed as Jesus explained, through scripture, what needed to happen to the Messiah with respect to suffering and death before resurrection. The disciple's hopes were then transformed with an encounter with the risen Christ as he broke bread with them and their eyes were opened. In all the ups and downs of this virus, with all the hopes that have been dashed, as well as the uncertainties of the future let us pray that we will encounter Christ and find our strength and hope in Him.

Yours in Christ,



Revd Michael Broadley