



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Edition 3: Sunday 19th April 2020

Dear Friends,

Over the last week, the bright and warm spring weather has encouraged blossom to break out in beautiful colour on many trees and shrubs. It's a powerful illustration of the way in which God's love burst out from the darkness of the tomb through the resurrection of Jesus on the first Easter Day.

As we continue in our social distancing, and in our self-isolation, we can find hope in the image of spring and in the truth of the risen Jesus with us still today. We may, this year, only be able to glimpse the start of spring through our windows, but I pray that we will all know the renewal of the love of the risen Jesus in our homes, in our hearts and in our lives.

Yours in His service,

Chris Blake



Worship Information

On Sunday there are opportunities to share in Morning Worship on the television on BBC1 as well as on local radio and Radio 4.

For those with access to the internet there is a live service led by Rev Billy Slatter at Fleet. This can be found on the 'Fleet Methodist Services' Facebook page.

A selection of other Methodist live streamed services can be found through the Methodist Church Website.

Worship Reflection

Introduction

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2 v 9-11)

Hymn

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love drowned in death shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.



Christ is alive and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love and praise. (StF 297)

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, for the victory that you have won over sin and death and for the victories you continue to win in our lives, receive our praise. Amen.

Bible Reading

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!'

But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'

Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20 v 19-31)



Reflection

The image above seeks to portray that moment when Thomas encounters the risen Jesus. Just a few days before, Thomas had found it impossible to accept what the other disciples had told him about how they had met Jesus, risen from the dead. Now Jesus appears to Thomas and invites him to touch his wounds. "Stop doubting and believe", says Jesus.

We may not have the privilege that Thomas had that day, but we read in John's Gospel account that Jesus goes on to speak about how those who do not see can also come to a faith in Him. Today we are given that opportunity to know Jesus for ourselves and indeed, says John, that is the very reason why his Gospel was written.

As we continue to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus let us, in John's words, "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" and in so doing come to "have life in His name".

Amen

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the resurrection we offer our prayers to God. We pray for:

- all who serve on the 'front line', praying especially for those NHS workers in the North Camp congregation who currently have coronavirus
- for those who lead our nation that they might make wise decisions
- for those who feel lonely and isolated and for those for whom 'home' is not a safe place
- and for those known to us, particularly.....

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. Amen

Hymn

I know that my Redeemer lives
What joy the blessed assurance gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my everlasting head! (StF 303)

Final Prayer

Lord of all, despite everything that conspires against it, help us to hold on to the conviction that good will finally conquer evil, and your love triumph over all. Amen.

Images of Spring

Earlier in this newsletter I mentioned spring blossom. If you can take a picture from your window, or on your daily walk, which captures something of 'Spring' please email it to me. I'll try and find space in next weeks 'Anchor' to print a few of the pictures that I receive. The deadline for me to receive photographs is mid-day on Tuesday 21st April. Once again, I'm afraid that there are no prizes!



Feedback

If you have any comments or suggestions about how we might use the 'Anchor' mailing in the weeks ahead, then please let me know by email (chris.blake@methodist.org.uk) or by telephone (01252 548215). Many thanks. Rev. Chris Blake