



Sunday 26th April 2020 Easter 3

(Revs Jenny Pathmarajah & Nico Hilmy-Jones)

This act of worship has been prepared for you to use as you are unable to attend church.
If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you

Opening Prayer

We come to worship you O Lord our God, to declare our trust in you and to rejoice in the light of your love. So we just ask that you Quiet our hearts and make us still in our spirits that we might know the wonder of who you are. And so we wait upon you, Gracious God, loving Spirit, Source of all joy, we wait upon you and commit these holy moments into your hands. AMEN.

Low in the grave he lay (StF 305)

from their CD 'Jesus Christ is risen today'. Easter Hymns
The London Fox Choir &
Saint Michael's Singers, Coventry Cathedral

- 1) Low in the grave he lay,
Jesus, my Saviour,
waiting the coming day,
Jesus, my Lord:

*Up from the grave he arose,
with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
he arose a victor from the dark domain,
and he lives for ever with his saints to reign:
He arose! He arose!
Alleluia! Christ arose!*

- 2) Vainly they watch his bed,
Jesus, my Saviour;
vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus, my Lord:
- 3) Death cannot keep his prey,
Jesus, my Saviour;
he tore the bars away,
Jesus, my Lord:

Robert Lowry (1826-1899)

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Prayer of adoration and the Lord's Prayer

Gracious God, you have called us to respond to your challenge and walk the path of Discipleship. Open our hearts, minds and souls, to respond in faith, inspiring and guiding us to live as your chosen people. We thank you for your Holy Spirit, who moves among us bringing us light and life. We thank you for your Son, who gave himself for us, so that we could be reborn and live. We thank you for your gift of love which transforms us and makes us into new people. We thank you for the opportunity to share and walk in the service of Jesus, our guide, our teacher and our friend. Pour out your wonderful spirit on us today, that we may walk as children of light and by your grace reveal your presence in the world.

Loving God, we confess that we have been short-sighted when we have looked at the potential in ourselves, others and situations. Forgive us when we only see what we want to see. Forgive us when we have missed seeing what people could become, and what we could become. We ask that in your mercy you lift us up again and help us to see through your eyes. To see the potential that you can see in all things and all people. To be people of love, quick to forgive and bringers of hope. Sisters and brothers, as you trust in Jesus let go of those things that are holding you back, and as you do this, know that your sins are forgiven and be at peace. We ask all this in your Holy and precious name. AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in Heaven...

Today's Gospel Reading: Luke 24: 13-35 (NLT)
Story of the journey on the Emmaus Road

Time to Reflect:

I love walking the lanes of Jersey, I always make a point of saying hello to everyone I pass by. But have you ever been walking in your own little world and someone says hello and you're like wait, who are you, I normally see you at the gym or somewhere else, I don't recognize you dressed like this or recognize you here?! Happens to me a lot.

I guess that's what was happening with the disciples on the walk to Emmaus as well. What they were seeing and witnessing didn't quite add up. And then Jesus talks about 'them' being witnesses. And there's something interesting going on in the grammar of what Jesus says to his disciples. He doesn't say, "you will be witnesses" or "please be witnesses," or "consider being witnesses if you have time." He uses the present tense, "you are witnesses of these things." We are witnesses.

As it turns out, witnessing is not voluntary, but a state of being.

A fascinating thing about being human is our brain. And even more fascinating, is our memory. We all remember things differently, and our memories are shaped by how we are interpreting the present.

I've seen a lot of encouragement for people to keep diaries during this pandemic, as diaries in the future will give future historians critical information about what everyday life was like during the lockdown. Living in Jersey, all Jersey Beans know about Nan Le Ruez's occupation diary which gives a fascinating account of life during the Nazi occupation here on the island.

We are witnessing the pandemic in our own context. We share our stories, concerns and joys with friends and neighbours alike. But if Jesus said "we are witnesses to these things" what does that mean for Christians living during the Pandemic?

What have we witnessed as Christians during this time? Where have we seen God? What is God doing in your life right now? What does the message of Easter mean in the middle of a Pandemic?

How are we witnessing the Good news of Jesus Christ in a world locked down, fearful and frightened? Perhaps this doesn't sound like Good news to you at all!

It's easy to deny our Christian identity, not share our story of hope and forgiveness to those who are broken, not have courage to say 'there is no fear in death because of Easter.' And the biggest hurdle; what's the point and why bother?

Well that's the thing. When something exciting happens in my life, I go round telling as many people as can, whether they want to hear it or not! What would Christianity and our church look like if we did that as well?

Because WE are witnesses. And it's not just about who we are, but how other people see God. They witness God through us. We see God, and because of our relationship with God, people see God through us. There's no getting away from it.

So what? What does this mean for me and you? Let's witness through this pandemic. I want to know, I want to see God in you. I want to hear your stories, I want to know what God is doing in your life. Send us an email, write a letter. Share your story with your family or on your next social digital commitment. What and how are you witnessing God like right now?

Here in this circuit, we'd love to hear your stories, there's a technical term, it's called testimony. What is God doing in your life right now. We want to know! email us on jerseymethodist@gmail.com or write to us: Jersey Methodist Circuit, c/o Georgetown Methodist Church, St Saviour, JE2 7PH.

What's God doing in your life right now? What are you witness to?

Prayers of Intercession:

Let us now come together in prayer. It is during this time that we lift up prayers for ourselves, for the wider world and we are also voices for those who do not have a 'voice' and so we pray for the vulnerable, the weak, those who are struggling, those who are going through very difficult times. It is a chance for us to offer words to God, with the belief and knowledge that he is very much listening. So, as I offer the words to you, may you find them part of your heart as you offer them, also to God.

Let us pray,
God of love, we pray for our communities and the world, that we may see its needs and difficulties; with the same eyes of Jesus. We pray especially for our family and friends who have yet to find you and see and recognize, what our faith can offer them. We pray for those who are blinded by bitterness and unable to see that Your love and grace can lift them up from their dark world.
Lord in your mercy.....**Hear our prayer.**

God of love, we pray for the Church and its continued ministry locally and in the world. For the followers of Jesus, searching for the lost and loving them into the Kingdom. And we pray for Churches everywhere including the Jersey Circuit, the Methodist Church and all our ecumenical partners in our world. We pray that during these difficult, isolating times we may still feel your presence and the energy of that love that always surrounds us. And so we pray that all Churches can be a place that offers true friendship and hospitality by offering true, genuine ministry that they can even if it is different than what we are used to, right now.
Lord in your mercy.....**Hear our prayer.**

God of Love, we pray for your strength and protection against all hypocrisy and double standards in our society. We pray that those in leadership positions recognize that all people are to be cared for, all people are to be given help and that all people are seen as worthy. We pray for a Spirit of love to come among all of us, including those who are leading us. That they may hear the voices of all people who are struggling and that all people may be lifted up in the time of need.
Lord in your mercy.....**Hear our prayer.**

God of Love we pray that you will make our homes and our relationships places where people know that they are loved and wanted. May they see in us people who value others, people whom cherish moments with one another and that it is not about how much time we spend with them, or even if we are close to them physically, but that it is the quality of that experience that shows them how much they mean to us. We pray especially for those who are living alone, feeling separated from communities, from friends and from families. And we pray for those that are right now taking care of people and nursing others who may be quite ill and for all people who feel disconnected from the world.
Lord in your mercy.....**Hear our prayer.**

God of Love we pray for those who are in pain, who feel alone, afraid, unwanted and unloved. For those who need your healing grace as they face great difficult and dark times in their lives. We pray for Our Nurses and Doctors, for all Carers in Residential Care Homes, Nursing Homes and also in Hospices and our Hospitals. For those who work tirelessly behind the scenes, keeping places clean, working in warehouse and on farms to bring us food, and those who are dealing with frantic people who are unable to stay calm. For those who work in our Food shops both with the public and in our warehouses that store the food, and we thank them so much for continuing to make sure there are food items on our shelves. That they are well stocked and we appreciate the work and the dedication it must take, in order to bring food to Islands that may be isolated, to large shops and small shops in our villages and small areas within this Island as well as on the mainland.

We pray for those who are abroad and unable to come home, who feel very disconnected from family and friends, isolated in cultures that they are not familiar with and who are afraid, wondering when they will be allowed to travel back home and if they will be safe when they do. We pray for those who have lost their jobs and those who do not have enough food to feed their families. Those that are struggling to meet their financial burdens during this time. For those who have life threatening illnesses who feel afraid and those who feel vulnerable and unsure of the future and are afraid to leave their homes and if it will be safe when they are allowed to come back out. And so we pray for those who are anxious and frightened about the coronavirus and wondering if they are safe where they are

We pray for those who do not have a home, forced to live on the streets, both adults and children and young people who are struggling on their own. For those who are forced to live with people who are abusive. For people crammed together in overcrowded migrant camps and for those who do not have proper healthcare or medical supplies and equipment. For those who are still facing war and violence in places wracked with unrest and for those completely alone and do not have a voice and even when they are calling out in pain and feel no one hears their plea. May we be beacons of hope for the voiceless

For anyone in our hearts today whom we know need healing and your love. We lift them silently up to you, now.

Loving and Gracious God, give all these people, all these places, all these situations strength and your bring comfort and healing and you bring peace and a sense of knowing they are being held by you.
Lord in your mercy.....**Hear our prayer.**

Loving and merciful God, we pray for new beginnings, new ways of thinking and seeing, new challenges that enrich us and new opportunities to spread your love in a world that has been turned upside down and for the challenges we may face that they will enrich our lives rather than tear us apart. May we find new ways to reach people and help people in ways that honour the Lord . May we be the hands and feet, the eyes and ears of Jesus for others. And so, Receive the prayers we offer and give each one of us power to serve you, wisdom to know what to do and grace to follow you. We ask this in the name of Jesus. **AMEN**

Hymn: *On the journey to Emmaus* (StF 308)

Church of Saint Michael - Stillwater, MN

Music Director - Jayne Windnagel Principal Organist - Joseph Clarke https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_E2obtMQpU

- 1) On the journey to Emmaus
with our hearts cold as stone-
the One who would save us
had left us alone.
Then a stranger walks with us
and, to our surprise,
he opens our stories
and he opens our eyes.
- 2) And our hearts burned within us
as we talked on the way,
how all that was promised
was ours on that day.
So we begged him, 'Stay with us
and grant us your word.'
We welcomed the stranger
and we welcomed the Lord.
- 3) And that evening at the table
as he blessed and broke bread,
we saw it was Jesus
aris'n from the dead;
though he vanished before us
we knew he was near-
the life in our dying
and the hope in our fear.

- 4) On our journey to Emmaus,
in our stories and feast,
with Jesus we claim that
the greatest is least:
and his words burn within us
let none be ignored
who welcomes the stranger
shall welcome the Lord.

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As we end our Service this morning we all hope that you were empowered and you were able to feel the presence of God.

We would also like to let you know that this is the 'Year of Testimony'. The Methodist Church is very much known for testimony and it is what Methodist do. We tell our stories and that are unique and special to us so we would really love to know what God is doing in your life right now and anything you want to share about your own personal journey. It is in hearing one another's stories that we find those connections. We begin to get a sense of the impact that God has had on people's lives. We would like to invite you during the next few weeks and months to share your stories and allow us to share them with everyone else during our Worship Services.

Blessing and Benediction

May God hear and respond whenever you call; May Christ Jesus make himself known to you in all things; And may the Holy Spirit open your eyes and set your hearts on fire with love.

May the Blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always.
AMEN.

