

Order of Service for Sunday 11th April 2021

Jesus stands in the centre and says

“Peace be with you”.

He comes close to you

Close enough so that you can feel his breath.

He breathes on you and says

“Receive the Holy Spirit”.

HYMN 297 (Singing the Faith): Christ is alive! Let Christians sing

<https://youtu.be/Qqaw-VzM7ms>

PRAYER written and led by Gill Gray

Glory to you O God, you raised Jesus from the grave bringing us victory over death and giving us eternal life. Glory to you, O Christ, for us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life. Glory to you, O Holy Spirit, you lead us into the truth and breathe new life into us.

God our Father, we offer thanks and praise for all you have done, all you are doing and all you will do for us, for the Church and for the world. You have brought us into being. You are moulding us into your likeness and you lead us forward into the light of your presence. By the power of the Holy Spirit, living and working in us, lead us to reflect on your glory in the world. You are truly wonderful, Heavenly Father. You made this world for us to enjoy yet we are set upon to destroy it with greed, reckless behaviour and selfishness. We sometimes forget that you painted the beautiful flowers, crafted each animal to fit in its habitat and moulded the landscapes to be an inspiring backdrop to your creation, but we don't always appreciate it as we should and we often ignore your work and consider it our right to enjoy as we wish. You are the Creator, you are the craftsman and you are the sole owner of this universe and we give you our worship today.

Loving God, you call us to love you with our whole being, but we respond by offering only a small part of our lives. In Christ you showed us how to put ourselves last, but we are still self-centred, insensitive to the needs and expectations of others. In the death of Christ, you suffered for our redemption but we turn back again and again to the ways from which you set us free. You come to us when we least expect it, but we need convincing of your love for us. You enter our lives but we do not always accept you fully and try to go our own way. Your Spirit breathes on us but we sometimes turn our faces away and ignore you. You call us to go out into the world, taking your message to all we meet but we are hesitant and fearful. We are full of our own self, regardless of the cost to you. Help us to be more fervent and bold for you. Forgive us, heal us, and love us into a deeper devotion to you and a stronger faithfulness to

the ways of your Kingdom. In the name of Christ, we ask your forgiveness assured of your mercy and love.

Almighty God, of your own free goodness and mercy you have created us, and through the resurrection of your only-begotten Son, you have given us hope. Guard us by your love and in your wisdom, keep us in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

JOHN 20: 19-31

HYMN 306 (Singing the Faith) Now the green blade rises
<https://youtu.be/En28Je8ehDs>

TALK

Tony's broadcast sermon will be shared on the circuit website over the next few days. The reflections that follow are an alternative taken from the national website of the Methodist Church.

Time to Reflect

Poor Thomas, famously known as 'doubting Thomas' from the passage in John's gospel. It somehow seems a flaw in his character. However, when we remember the events leading up to the crucifixion, Peter denied Jesus and all the disciples deserted him, as Jesus had predicted they would.

In the passage, the disciples were gathered behind locked doors, they were still very afraid of repercussions from the Jewish authorities. It's also fair to assume at this moment they didn't know what would happen next, despite the fact that Jesus had told them about his impending death and resurrection.

Another thing we aren't told, (in this gospel, but see Luke 24:11), was whether the disciples believed Mary Magdalene, the first person to see the risen Christ.

Doubt is a very human emotion, we all experience it in our lives, we doubt that we can do things, often feel doubt when we think God is asking us something which takes us out of our comfort zone.

At the time of writing this, we are awaiting an announcement which will describe the road map out of our third lockdown. Our churches are not open, worship is online or in paper form. We have had to do things which take us out of our comfort zones and many times I have had doubt over whether I am able to achieve whatever it is I am asked to do. I have found recording a message on a screen difficult, often having 7 or 8 attempts before being happy with the result.

Doubt need not always be seen as a negative emotion though, because doubt leads to questions, and ultimately to answers to those questions. Thomas doubted that the other disciples had seen Jesus, but when he finally saw Jesus, he didn't need to touch Jesus to know, he called him "My Lord and my God", he recognised who Jesus really was – God.

Jesus told the disciples that those who believe without seeing are blessed. For some of us it might happen in a short time, while for others it might take years of questioning and having those questions answered. When we reach the point of belief we can and will, with assurance recognise and call Jesus "My Lord and my God".

HYMN Led like a lamb to the slaughter
<https://youtu.be/0DZvps7EnEo>

PRAYERS

Prayers in the circuit broadcast will be led by Lesley Trott. The prayers given here are from the Methodist Church website.

A time of prayer

We pray for our world, for countries ravaged by war and natural disasters. We pray for those countries struggling with Covid who have little or no vaccines.

We pray for our country, for those making decisions, give them wisdom and courage to act wisely. We pray for those who are on the frontline, who are exhausted from the effects of the pandemic, give them rest.

We pray for the bereaved, especially those who haven't been able to grieve with or for loved ones. We pray for those still struggling with illness and weariness. We think of those who are anxious and afraid to go out, those who have been isolated for so long and those who are lonely.

We pray for our churches, some open, some still worshipping in other ways, help us to go forward in the way you lead us, not to just return to what we have always done.

We pray for ourselves, that we don't need a sign to believe in you, that we trust you to supply everything we need in our lives. Through our risen, redeeming Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

HYMN 247 (Singing the Faith) I danced in the morning when the world was begun
<https://youtu.be/Rp52moP5WGA>

BLESSING

In you, God trusts
Calling you to go and make God known.
In you, Jesus trusts
Making his home at the centre of you

And giving you his gift of peace.
In you, the Spirit trusts
Flowing in with your breath
And becoming in you
A spring that gushes up to eternal life.

May God, Creator, Risen Saviour and Spirit
Be with you and bless you
Now and always

AMEN.