

## Notices

Good Morning; welcome to our on-line service on this 2nd Sunday of Eastertide - Low Sunday

Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us and look forward to hearing God's message through his teaching and preaching.

Our Zoom coffee shop will take place as usual on Tuesday morning at 11.00am with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

On Tuesday evening we will be holding our April church meeting via Zoom starting at 7.30pm. The agenda will be sent to Church Members.

On Wednesday evening at 7.30, again on Zoom, there will be a discussion evening, details of which will be sent through via email.

It has been decided that at our May Church Meeting we will be holding our Annual General Meeting. Thus I will be shortly contacting those from whom I require reports. This will obviously be a reduced number as some organizations have not operated in the past year. The meeting will also involve an election: for the post of Church Secretary; therefore I give formal notice of this & would request nominations to be submitted to the Church Treasurer by Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April. The election will, once again, utilize both online and postal ballots.

Tyndale will be re-opening for morning services from next Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> April. We all look forward to this, but I would remind everybody that the same regulations which were in place at the beginning of the year will still be followed to keep everyone safe.

### Welcome

Welcome to the worship service of Tyndale Baptist Church in the season of Easter, as the mystery and strangeness of Easter Day begins to deepen into the lasting joy of the Easter season – and we begin to contemplate the changed future – for Christians, changed utterly by the rising of Jesus. The great resurrection words shine over us in this season – do not be afraid, for I was dead, but now am alive for evermore.

Perhaps not at any other time in the current era has the 'do not be afraid' message been so important. Fear is all around, in this pandemic – fear of the disease itself, fear because of all the insecurities of lost income and livelihood; fear of loneliness and isolation – and in many ways the unknown future, for all that it beckons with more freedoms than for many a day, brings anxieties and fears in its wake – we are increasingly aware of vaccine risks and can't ignore the warnings about coronavirus waves following on from release from restrictions and great social mixing.

Over all this the Easter message must be allowed to reign in our hearts, we who are Christian – in such a way as to demonstrate what living by faith – living without fear – really means. Apart from anything else it means, surely, living in and through the present rigours without allowing its anxieties and fears to rule over us.

We worship so as, in part, to encounter that message again and again. Christian living is a leaky business; our inherent weaknesses and sinfulness mean that we need regularly to be 'filled' with the sense of God's presence and the 'do not be afraid' sense of Easter. But first and foremost, of course, we worship God because God is who God is – we can do none other than worship..

'Haven't you heard'

Mike Garnier

### CALL TO WORSHIP

The Easter message has gone out to all the world – Christ is risen! We *have* heard and we would that all would hear – and as we continue to hear and respond, we come to worship God whose power raised Christ from the dead..

**BPW 252 'Jesus Christ is risen today'**

Virtual Choirs & Congregations of HTSM Guildford

### Opening Prayer

Alleluia! Praise the Lord! Let us praise the Lord – all people praise the Lord! Lord, we hear the cry, command & call that echoes the ancient liturgies and rings with songs of faith-filled hearts down all the years and we join in; we *will* praise you; we *will* shout with joy in our hearts at your presence; we *will* rejoice as the waves roar and the trees whisper and the birds call and the creatures growl, bark, hiss and mewl with the sheer joy of existing in the new world ushered in by the rising of Christ –

Christ is risen! Praise the Lord! No priest or minister is needed, for the command and call come from the very heartbeat of creation – as Jesus himself said one time ‘the very stones would shout out’ – Lord, that’s how it is for us in this Easter season..

Never mind the fractures and frailties of the world; never mind the rising seas and the burning trees; creation is made new – we are made new; that’s the joy of Easter

Yet, Lord, still the old ways cling on, we know; still we are haunted by fears, still injustice stalks the earth; still destruction finds a way and poverty spreads - Lord, forgive us for what we have allowed to flourish in the world – we wait on your word..

Words of new life - ‘*Do not be afraid, for I was dead but I am alive for evermore*’ – Lord, thank you – we take them to ourselves with grateful hearts..

Now, Lord, call us back to life again – touch us and transform us again; show us that Christ has risen again help us to live by faith again – to love and serve and give in this fractured world as those who are born again into the new world of your Kingdom.

#### **Lord's Prayer:**

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen*

**"Jesus is Lord": the cry that echoes through creation'** Townend & Getty, sung by Stuart Townend

#### **Readings**

Exodus 15:11--21

John 20:19-31

**BPW 257 'Now the Green Blade Riseth'**

Ely Cathedral choir

#### **Sermon**

*Lord we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard & understood be touched by your spirit & may what is decided lead us towards your Kingdom*

There's a bit of Doubting Thomas in all of us; a bit of the other disciples, too, probably, who, according to John, gathered behind locked doors *out of fear* (of the Jews – who often get a bad press in John – never mind that Jesus died from a Roman form of punishment..).

*After Easter* – in the season of Easter. Maybe we were frustrated because the pared-back Tyndale service last Sunday didn't display as much joy as we'd have hoped.

Certainly we joined in with the cry of all the Christian church ‘Christ is risen – he is risen indeed! Alleluia!’ But otherwise, by centring on Mark’s ‘bare bones’ telling we emphasised the mystery, the moment, the bewilderment, and – there’s no getting away from it – Mark’s final words ‘for they were afraid’

But now, here we are, a week later, after Easter, with the joy deepening and settling in our hearts *in the season of Easter* with new life all around – as the song says ‘what need is there for grieving?’

Yet we’re back with the disciples in the locked room, and with Doubting Thomas – before the joy gets going, still fear and doubt lingers – look, this isn’t me, this is John..Locked doors, fear, doubt..

Consider *who* we are, celebrating Easter; we are ordinary human beings; living in a damaged, suffering world. Around us still isolation thrives, anxieties fester and – I was going to say *doubts deepen* – but actually I’m not so sure about that – if anything, *beliefs spread* – the GK Chesterton idea: ‘when people stop believing in God they don’t believe in nothing, they believe in anything’

Wat we might call ‘unshackled belief’ – no need to go into lots of detail, but what with conspiracy theories about everything from politics to pandemic origins, what with vaccine rollouts and hesitations, wishful political thinking, Bolsonaro-type leaders, flag-waving nationalism -

I think all those things, in their various ways, are what people *believe* so as to get away from their doubts. Perhaps never so much as *at a time like this*, what with all those anxieties and sufferings, doubts are never far away; people doubt much of what they’ve been relying on – good health, a stable economy, the rule of law, a benevolent political system.

When all those things were on song – not so very long ago – *belief* was largely confined to those few religious nutters who skulked away in their churches and temples. *Belief* wasn’t for grown-ups; grown-ups

were busy making money, going on holidays, making plans for the future, not having to worry too much about health and welfare..

Now it's all changed..the NHS is just about coping; there isn't enough social welfare to meet all the needs – who'd have thought, 18 months ago, we'd spend so much time discussing epidemiology, or the ethics of lockdown restrictions, or vaccine passports and the like..

Now – belief is everywhere – *believe* that the vaccines will save us; *believe* that there's a world-wide conspiracy to infect us; *believe* that this or that politician or political project (usually wrapped in a flag) will save us – banish doubts –

Throw a petrol bomb at a police car; riot on the streets of a British city, storm the domed symbol of democracy, or hunker down and watch another episode of Saturday Night take-away or some such and *believe*.

I've spoken before, recently, about the danger of *just believing*.. I really want to get to the joy of the season of Easter, but first, I think, we've got to reckon with what you might call the *right kind* of belief –

There won't be any joy without the right kind of belief – not the joy of Easter, anyway; Oh, you could settle for the joy of the natural world – many do (maybe it'll be enough) – or, maybe, the joy of family and friends – how much we all want to get back to that joy again

But the joy of Easter is something *else*, something *more*. The NT seems set up to make sure that we take the right kind of belief away from the Easter story, so that we can get to the joy.

Those ordinary disciples, skulking away in their locked room out of fear – locked rooms were no problem for the risen Jesus, it seems...*fear* was no problem for the risen Jesus either – 'peace be with you' – and the Jews? Let's not forget the Romans – *they're* the real culprits in all this – spears, nails – all the nasty paraphernalia of crucifixion – 'Jesus showed them his hands and his side' – *after Easter* the marks of death remain...

Doubting – ordinary – Thomas, with his worldly-wise scepticism as a foil for the risen Jesus, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side.' – doubt was no problem for the risen Jesus either –

And, perhaps most important of all, for our faith in today's world – 'Do not doubt but believe'.

See, it's the right kind of belief; it's belief that *in this suffering world a real human being suffered and died and was raised*; it's belief that *here* is God – nowhere else; no one else; no other way – but *this* way, this marked, dying, rising way; no other kind of belief –

Not belief in conspiracy theories, as if some power was in control; not belief in political projects, as if some means of human organisation can save us (or those like us); not belief in charismatic leaders, as if some frail human and his (usually his) way can save us.

*This* belief. Get the belief right first, and then you can have the joy. The locked rooms of your unjust world won't be able to stop that joy; the fears of this or that circumstance won't be able to stop the joy – the doubts about this or that source of security won't be able to stop the joy – the joy of Easter.

Oh, you'll still doubt – in fact you could say that only the right kind of belief has room for doubt – all the other kinds of belief are ways of avoiding doubt altogether. But the right kind of belief faces up to doubt and deals with it head on – rather, 'hands and side' on..

And this is for all time – this is for *now*. Probably John imagined believers in years to come – 'you have seen me and believed? Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have come to believe..'

See? The right kind of belief – but one final thing makes it right – and I've said something like this before; it's not just belief like you might choose to believe anything else to make you feel better or happier or more secure – it's – let Jesus words do for us all – words to those disciples; 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

See? The right kind of belief means seeing, first, who Jesus is, then following him, serving him, going where he goes..

and it's hard, in a world where many doors are still locked, many fears still rampage and many doubts are denied by false beliefs of all kinds.

But only then can we begin to know the joy of Easter

## **Offering prayer & the grace**

Lord we come before you again; we begin to see who you really are, and we give ourselves to you in these and all our gifts with grateful hearts, for we believe in you, and we will follow you, and serve you, and go where you go, with the joy of Easter in our hearts

**'Sing Alleluia to the Lord'**

Linda Stassen

Tyndale Virtual Singers

## **Prayers**

We pray in the light of Easter joy

Many still suffer; their own illness, or the illness of loved ones; grief and loneliness and isolation and insecurity; this pandemic still rages around the world. We pray that as some freedoms come our way and as vaccinations take effect over here, we will not forget those who, in other parts of the world, wait and hope for freedom, health and healing.

May the joyful news of death being conquered once and for all reach deep into the roots of such suffering, to bring comfort, peace and hope.

Lord in your mercy    **Hear our prayer**

Many work hard, to discover new breakthroughs in medicine and science, to communicate more clearly, to teach more effectively, to make decisions that will affect millions of lives, to reconfigure their own and other's commercial, social and artistic futures. We pray that as we benefit from so many things we will never cease to be grateful for them all

May the joyful news of new life enliven all who work to make the world a better place and enhance every good thing

Lord in your mercy    **Hear our prayer**

Many fall prey to the blandishments and falsehoods of the age, especially in politics and the media, while irrational beliefs take hold and others fall victim to the hatred and prejudices that such things stir up. We pray that as we avoid such things we will be ready to counter them in every encounter and active to promote a spirit of tolerance, acceptance and welcome.

May the joyful news of forgiveness and truth work to undermine every falsehood and deepen our commitment to what is good and right and true.

Lord in your mercy    **Hear our prayer**

**CG 108 'Sing of the Lord's Goodness'**

Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church

## **Benediction**

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording and processing; Nick & Tina printing and posting; Sue and Mike Garnier reading; Rachel sorting music, Tyndale's singers singing, virtually – thank you one and all for taking part.

So the 'moment' of Easter Day begins to give way to the lasting joy of the season of Easter. As we anticipate the joy of worshipping together in the church from next week. our support of and prayer for one another remains as vital as ever and will strengthen our mutual commitment to living in and sharing the joyful news of Easter..

**Voces8 - May it Be**

(Enya/Lord of the Rings)