

Notices

Good Morning, and welcome to Tyndale. It is good to be back in the building on this third Sunday of Eastertide. If you are joining us on-line we are here with Michael, but it may be a few weeks before you can see me live.

Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us, and look to a greater understanding of God's message for us.

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 Thursday evening at 7.30pm, again on Zoom, we will be holding another of Tyndale's fun evenings when we will be taking part in 'The Bristol Quiz'. Please come along to join in.

Our Annual General Meeting will take place as part of our May church meeting at which we will be holding an election for the office of Church Secretary. Nominations need to be submitted to the Church Treasurer by Sunday 25th April and, once again, the election will utilize both online and postal balloting.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Rachel our Community Minister.

Welcome

Welcome back, everyone who's gathered here in the church this morning – but if you're 'zooming in' on-line you're just as welcome, as we worship, in this strange time, as one body of people and continue to express the joy of Eastertide.

The risen Christ is present among his people, we usually say at communion; but we gladly affirm and proclaim that the risen Christ is present *now* – and not just among the few gathered here, but among *all* his people in the whole world – and more than that, his is a living presence *in* the whole world, beyond the Christian church – *bringing life, love and laughter*, in the words of the song.

In this suffering world we proclaim a new world this Eastertide; the rising of Jesus that we celebrate is a sign and a promise of that new world; the first fruits of a reality for every life that turns to Christ in faith and a revolution in the way that the world works – death no longer has dominion; it is a great lie that has been exposed for the imposter it is; from now on new life, eternal life, reigns.

All this we believe and proclaim as we worship together; we are glad to be able to gather again, even if it remains a restricted, limited gathering – that's a sign, if any is needed, that the old ways continue to bear down on us; illness, death itself, as well as injustice and destruction, continue – we hardly need reminding.

But we are here – physically or 'in spirit' to bear witness to that new reality that comes into focus at Eastertide; He is risen! The world is renewed; and we shall be raised with him and new life shall be ours and shall be the way for all creation – and we will proclaim that in the new world of God's Kingdom death will be no more; and mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

['Faithful One'](#)

Brian Doerkson sung by Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church

CALL TO WORSHIP

Again & again we have gathered because of God's love & again & again we have found God's love to be real, as it has been shown to us in the life, death & rising of Jesus; & once again we gather, called together wherever we are, to hear again of that love & to worship

BPW 258 ['This joyful Eastertide'](#)

Cantus Firmus Trust

Opening Prayer

Lord there is no need for any of us to grieve or weep because of the joyful message of Easter – Christ is risen! We worship you for who you are & we praise you for the power that brought Jesus back from the dead; & we thank you that grieving & weeping are done with – dealt a fatal blow – & we rejoice, *for* Easter joy, *in* the joy of Easter; in the *power* that makes the joyful message of Easter possible.

But Lord, forgive us for not always living in this grieving, weeping world as if the joy of Easter was real; we confess that in our weakness we can't always rise above the grieving and weeping; we confess that sometimes we can't help ourselves – we grieve what has been lost; we grieve the loved ones who are no longer here; we weep with those who weep, we mourn with those who mourn – and we wait on your Word.

'See, the home^l of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

Lord, the great words of hope at the end of the Bible are words for us; we thank you for them and we thank you that they get their hopeful power from the joyful message of Easter..

Now help us once more to live by faith; to proclaim the joyful message with our hearts and lives – and to worship you in the power of your own Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord

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

[There is a redeemer](#)

played & sung at Regent Hall by the Salvation Army

Readings

[Zephaniah 3:14-20](#)

[Luke 24:13-27](#)

['Christ in the stranger's guise'](#)

Iona Community

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

You know how it is – you feel something 'deep in your bones'; 'burning within you': maybe an old grief or a hurt from many years ago; abuse; a rejection; a slight

We don't mean it still to affect us; in many ways we've moved on – but it's still there, if we're honest; still niggling away.

Or maybe it's some kind of fear or anxiety – something that keeps you awake at night, or wakes you up – worry about how things will turn out; anxiety about what might happen – you know it won't, probably – Philip Larkin – 'most things won't happen'

But still, in this strange year-and-then-some, lots of things *have* happened – lots of folk have died; many more have experienced illness, perhaps severe illness; others have lost jobs, livelihoods, businesses - we've all lost freedoms.

Maybe it's regret; if only I'd done something differently; if only things had worked out differently; if only I wasn't so...shy, bombastic, cowardly, stand-offish. If only I knew more; had learned more, had tried harder - the old school report – you know? 'Could do better'.....

We're not rational, we human beings; much of this isn't logical; objectively we know we're fortunate; objectively we know it's not our fault – how we turned out; how we were brought up; where we happen to live; who we chanced to meet –

Philip Larkin again – I often turn to him when I want something to express the irrational pain of being human – it's not autobiographical, I hope you understand..

I work all day, and get half-drunk at night.

'Waking at four to soundless dark, I stare.

In time the curtain-edges will grow light.

Till then I see what's really always there:

Our interior selves.. someone in an on-line joke said recently, 'never mind 'walk a mile in my shoes'; spend 30 seconds in my mind – that will *really* freak you out' - true of us all, isn't it?

And never so much as recently, I suspect, has there been so much introspected, navel-gazing. No wonder there's been so much celebrating at being able to go out and about – a bit – to a pub or a shop or a camp-site; apart from anything else it means *at last* there's something to do or someone to talk to so we don't have to be with ourselves all the time – apologies to those introverts who are quite happy being with themselves all the time..

Still – you can imagine, can't you, the mood of those two disciples – Cleopas (Jesus' uncle, apparently) & the other – unnamed. Grief, bewilderment, astonishment at the reported news of the empty tomb; walking along, talking to one another about all that had happened...

Let them stand, those two, for us in our world, in our continued confusion and grief and loss..imagine them, walking along, talking.

I like the Emmaus Road story – I'm not alone I know; lots of us like the story, *love* the story; of course *all* the stories about the risen Jesus are lovely in their way – Mary in the garden, Doubting Thomas, disciples in locked rooms, Peter being forgiven –

But there's something about *this* story, don't you think? It draws us in, it's so *real*, so *realistic* – Jesus in this story is no kind of superhero, overwhelming them with supernatural shenanigans; he's no mysterious apparition, all shiny and new, dripping with risen glory.

He's a stranger on the road; someone they can talk to. You know about the comfort of strangers? There's only so much you can say to your spouse or your partner or your close friend about what you're going through (did you see that desperately sad interview with Owen Pattinson the former NI Secretary on Friday? His wife of 40 years committed suicide a while back.. 'how could I have not noticed the signs?' he said),

Probably you can't talk to someone close because you know how they'll react; probably because how *you* are affects how *they* are. In Casualty close relatives are kept away; the vulnerable patient *opens up* to the professional; the addict *shares* with the therapist deep things, personal things, things from the heart they could never share with a relative or friend

That's how a lot of poetry works – why, for instance, Philip Larkin's poetry works; the poems *speak to the heart* – by all accounts Larkin was a racist, a misogynist, a right-wing anti-communist; none of that matters for the sake of the poems – the stranger knows the heart; the stranger *has the same heart*.

Jesus is a stranger..the disciples can tell him *anything*. Maybe *we* ought to be careful we don't give the world a Jesus who is too chummy, too familiar. The stranger is...*strange*...we don't know anything about the stranger, except that at heart the stranger is like us – you can share *anything* with the stranger

How about that as a reason for immigration – to make sure that we might always encounter, in our society, those who are *strangers* – how sad and narrow and restricted we would be if we only ever encountered friends and neighbours and loved ones....

The stranger listens to what they have to say and – you know the story – *opens the Scriptures*, explains what they really mean, points to himself – and they don't really get it until he breaks bread in the old familiar way. But this isn't a communion service so let's move on to *after* their eyes were opened, *'and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us?'*

I think that's it in a nutshell - true of everyone; all those 'deep in your bones' feelings – they're real of course, all the griefs and losses –

But something else is real as well, deep in the hearts of everyone; a deep-seated, hardly-acknowledged *burning (yearning!!)* for eternity. All those stories of near-death experiences – they're found all around the world. Spiritualism, built on the supposed comfort of contacting the dead. Every religion with its own version of an after-life;

Larkin again, naming the universal fear, *'the anaesthetic from which none come round..nothing to think with, nothing to love or link with'*

I'm not sure the human heart can cope with the idea that death is the end of everything. Oh, intellectually lots of people can – 'when you're dead you're dead' and all that..'you're a long time dead' – all that grave humour *'here lies Sir Giles Fortescue-Smythe, killed in a shooting accident by his butler' – well done thou good and faithful servant..'*

Larkin again – *'death is no different whined at than withstood' – 'that vast musical brocade created to pretend we do not die'*

No! says the human heart; it burns within us, a hope that we will live for ever..

Except Jesus died on the cross. Except loved ones die. Except 120000 plus folk have died from coronavirus in this country; thousands – *tens* of thousands - more all round the world; except destruction rains down all over the place – and there're still car bombs in Afghanistan after 20, 40 years of war and all those maimed and killed soldiers, and Russian troops are massing on the borders of Ukraine a we speak

I did Larkin a disservice earlier, the full line is 'most things won't happen, *this one will'*

No it won't! says the burning human heart – & Jesus the stranger walks alongside and hears our cry, and we recognise him in ordinary human things like (broken) bread and when we can't see him alongside anymore, when he's disappeared from our sight, we recognise, with those disciples, that he touches our burning hearts with the promise, now – not merely some vague, superstitious, wishful-thinking hope – the promise..the joyful promise of Easter..

Were not our hearts burning within us?

Did we not feel, deep in our spirits, something move?

Could we not sense that here and around us

A World had changed, come fresh into focus:

Every evil, iron law overwhelmed with love?

Have we not known, ever since Friday,

All that despaired, all that was broken, all that died

Raged against ending, railed against silence;

A World made to be a peaceable Kingdom

Would not close, finally, though its people cried?

Could we not hope, all through the twilight

Of the gods, as all religion came to loss,

There might yet gather, out of the stars' light

Electrons and protons and particles

Drawn by the god-blood that flowed from the Cross?

Dared we not speak, as we walked home in silence,

Words to ring life from the ravenous home of the dead?

What great reverse, what beautiful violence

Done to our doubts and the terrorist threat

Of our fear could be known only in the breaking of bread?

Burning within us, burning within us;

Corteges of pain and the virus-borne cries of our world.

Were not our hearts that bled like sinners'

Hearts healed? Were not massacred spirits

Mended by bread and the Light of the World?

Offering prayer & the grace

Lord we stand before you on the promise of your word in Jesus Christ our Lord, the Living One – the promise of eternal life. Saying ‘thank you’ is just the start; we give of ourselves in these and all our gifts so that the thanks might work themselves out into lives of service and a willingness to share the joyful news of Easter with all the world. Amen

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

CG 42 ['God to enfold you'](#)

John Bell virtual choir of St David's Church, Exeter

Prayers

Today, as we gather once again in this place, and celebrate a stage on the way – please God no more lockdowns, even if we're not out of the woods yet – we should pray that the joyful promise of Easter will find its way into the world's many grieving hearts..

Lord, we pray, first, for those far from here who suffer terrible loss, by a grave in Brazil, behind a mask in Singapore, beside a care home window in Europe – and as the pain of grief and loss spreads we pray that the joyful promise of Easter will work by your Spirit to go deeper and last longer in many hearts..

We spend a few moments in silence..

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Lord, we also pray for those in war zones & places of tension & conflict, whose fear of death & destruction is very real, in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, the Yemen etc, etc – & as those fears gather we pray that the joyful hope of Easter will work by your Spirit to dissipate them

We spend a few moments in silence..

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Lord, we pray further for folk who must make hard choices in governments and institutions all around the world – decisions about spending money, administering restrictions, communicating messages. Where corruption and secrecy stalk the corridors of power we pray that the joyful truth of Easter will work by your Spirit to open doors

We spend a few moments in silence..

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Lord, we pray for ourselves & those we love, as we live on the edge of fear & freedom; in between staying in & going out; concerned about loved ones near & far, anxious for ourselves & the future, hopeful for each other and glad for each day – we pray that the joyful message of Easter will work by your Spirit to set our hearts on fire with your love..

We spend a few moments in silence..

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

CG 73 'Look forward in faith'

Tyndale Virtual Singers

Benediction

May the peace of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us for evermore, amen

Thanks to everyone who has made today's service possible – Ian recording and processing; Nick & Tina printing and posting; Julian and Rachel reading; Rachel sorting music, Tyndale's singers singing, virtually, and the Stewarding Team who have overseen all the practical arrangements and will clean up after everyone has left– thank you one and all for taking part.

As the season of Easter continues and its deep joy is enhanced by the joy of worshipping together in the church, we will continue to support and pray for one another over the coming week – until we meet again..

[Redemption Song](#)

Arr. Kanneh-Mason