



Dear Friends

We would like to bring you greetings in Holy Week and wish you a Happy Easter. This past year has probably been one of the most difficult years many of us can remember and we have all been affected by the Covid pandemic in different ways. We have all experienced the difficulties of lockdowns and restrictions and the losses that accompany those constraints on our everyday lives. We also recognise that some of you will have faced sickness and bereavement as well as concerns over finances, mental health issues and isolation and has in many ways been a wilderness experience for many.

During this Lent season we reflect on Jesus in the wilderness and the lead up to the first Easter, and recall the dashed hopes and dreams of those early disciples as they watched Jesus die, and then celebrate their joy and wonder when their Lord appeared to them again, risen from the dead.

We have been walking a difficult path through this pandemic but just as the longer days, flowers blooming and birds singing remind us that the earth is reawakening after the darkness and gloom of winter, we are reminded that there are signs of hope around us. Those of us who know and love Jesus have found comfort in knowing that he has been walking alongside us even in these difficult circumstances and we are encouraged to lift our heads and fix our eyes on Jesus as we look forward in hope to the future.

We pray that whatever your reflections on this past year, you will know the hope, comfort and peace of the risen Jesus in your heart and life and that you will see those glimmers of light as the dawn breaks. We pray that you will indeed discover the joy of the Lord to be your strength moment by moment and know the truth that 'The best of all is, God is with us.' With every blessing,

Revd Richard Teal President of the Methodist Conference
and **Mrs Carolyn Lawrence** Vice President



EASTER DAY

APRIL 4

Acts 10:34-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Mark 16 1-11

JESUS GIVES
NEW LIFE AND HOPE



**When everything was dark
and it seemed that the sun
would never shine again,
your love broke through.**

**Your love was too strong,
too wide, too deep
for death to hold.**

**The sparks cast by your love
dance and spread
and burst forth
with resurrection light.**

**Gracious God,
We praise you for the light of new life
made possible through Jesus.
We praise you for the light of new life
that shone on the first witnesses
of resurrection.
We praise you for the light of new life
that continues to shine
in our hearts today.**

**We pray that the Easter light of life,
hope and joy,
will live in us each day;
and that we will be bearers
of that light
into the lives of others.
Amen.**

Revd Michaela Youngson

LECTIONARY REFLECTION Easter Day John 20 v 1-18 Praise God for Resurrection Joy.

At a time when many even within the church, question the resurrection, we do well to remember that Jesus said "I am the Resurrection and the Life". But the resurrection is more than something to be believed. It is something to be experienced and felt deep within our hearts and lived out day by day. I don't think anything shines more brightly in the accounts of the resurrection than the story of Mary. When the other women left the tomb, Mary lingered in the garden. How dearly she loved Jesus and her loving devotion was rewarded, for Mary was the first to see the risen Lord.

Mary went to the garden that first Easter morning full of sadness and deep sorrow but having seen the risen Christ and heard him call her by name she left the garden filled with great joy as she hurried to share the wonderful news with the disciples.

On this glorious Easter Day, whatever sadness fills our hearts, may we like Mary hear him call us by name and be able to say 'I know that my Redeemer lives' and experience the wonderful joy such assurance gives.

Ann Corner

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Notes from the Circuit Meeting of 11 March 2021

Of necessity this was held on Zoom and so a number of people were unable to "attend".

Churches shared their experiences during the last year of pandemic: with its ups and downs of opening and closing buildings for worship, struggles to keep in touch with everyone by phone or online, the new ways of communication such as the regular Bulletin, online services on YouTube and Zoom. It was recognised that some people had found these helpful but others were not IT able and had been missing out.

Noting the recent stationing announcement for Rev Ken moving to Ringsash Circuit in Devon in August, the meeting heard that the District is trying to organise some support and also the Circuit Leadership team thinking how we can best arrange ourselves within the Circuit. News will be shared when it comes available.

The recent District Synod voting on the recommendations in "God in Love Unites Us" had been shared. All had been passed with majorities from 65% – 80%. The decisions now lie with this year's Methodist Conference.

Appleton congregation have sadly agreed to cease worship; the people will join with the village Anglicans. Permission was given to sell the building.

The 10-year lease on Gillamoor Chapel is ending in the summer and the future of that building is being considered.

The plans to enable the sale of land at Rillington is with the local planning department.

Slingsby have secured substantial grants towards their new roof, pointing and boiler, and the work will commence after Easter.

Pickering chapel's sanctuary is still being repaired, the end is in sight, though the actual date is uncertain.

It was reported that some churches are now struggling to meet their quarterly assessment, due to not meeting for worship and loss of letting income. Thankfully the Circuit is financially stable with money available from the previous sales of church buildings.

The Circuit has finance available to help churches wishing to develop new on line methods for worship, both to use in services and to share outside the building, etc. e.g. broadband installation and equipment.

The Safeguarding Policy was agreed and refresher training will be necessary for many in the Autumn.

Although this last year has been very difficult there have been signs of growth: people coming to faith through the Christianity Explored course and new people attending online worship.

As this was the final Circuit Meeting for Rev Ken, Rev Tony & Deacon Fiona before their moves in the summer, thanks were offered for their ministry. Farewell services are planned in June and July. **Revd Peter**

