

Rev Tim Perkins
March 31st 2021

““But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...” 1 Peter 3: 15

Dear Friends,

It is, I think, thoroughly appropriate that we come to the last of our themes from the Methodist Way of Life as we approach the great celebration of our faith that is Easter Day. The theme for this week is, “We will share our faith with others!”

How can we not share our faith if Easter Day means anything to us more than roast Lamb and chocolate eggs. If we intend to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, death defeated, sin accounted for, the hope of eternal life this Sunday – honestly what greater, more important news has there ever been to share with this often broken and bruised world than that?!

Easter Day is the fulfilment of that great prophecy of Isaiah’s that Jesus quoted from in the synagogue in Nazareth back at the very start of his ministry: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”*

And how our world, here and now, at the end of this year of global pandemic, needs to hear again – and see again through us – this message of light, love, life and hope. As you celebrate your faith in Christ either in a church building or in your own home, find some way to share that faith with others through good words and good deeds.

Don’t think that you have to be someone you’re not to share your faith. God has made you and loves you just as you are, as a unique human being with your own personality, giftings and life experiences. Jesus has died and risen again so that the you who you are is welcomed into his kingdom, not the you who you think you should be!

Yes, God brings transformation into our hearts and lives as we allow Christ to reign in our hearts by his Spirit – producing the fruit that demonstrate God’s presence – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, gradually repairing the damage that life in this world has done to us. But fundamentally you were created by God and declared by God to be very good, unique, precious in God’s sight and honoured by him. Own that good news. Own who you are and allow God to use who you are to demonstrate his love to others in ways that are true to you. In short – be authentic! And then Christ will shine through you and the Spirit will speak through you.

What have we to fear? A little embarrassment? A little mockery? A little rejection? What are they compared to death defeated, sin accounted for, the hope of eternal life? As St Paul writes in Romans 8: *“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or sword...? No, in all these things we are more than*

conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that...nothing in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

May God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Every blessing,

Rev Tim

Riding Lights Theatre Company – “Breaking Dawn”

As day begins to break on Good Friday, the occupying Governor’s tenuous grip on authority is slipping. It’s festival time in Jerusalem but his wife is plagued with disturbing dreams. Amid the demands of the Sanhedrin and the murderous cries of the mob, the lines between personal and political in Pilate’s house start to blur. The teacher at the centre of it all remains silent.

Confused by the hopes and fears of her people, a Jewish servant in the Praetorium, clearly knows more than she should. Pilate wrestles with a quandary of his own devising while outside momentum is gathering – the power of the Capitol in tension with the will of the people.

With stark intimacy, *Breaking Day* casts a surprising light on the death of Jesus from inside the Governor’s household, immersing us in the decisions that led to crucifixion. Filmed remotely in an innovative lockdown style, *Breaking Day* is a virtual passion play for Easter 2021.

Burley and Menston churches are partnering with Riding Lights Theatre Company to show this online production. If anyone from elsewhere around the Circuit would like to watch it please contact Rev Tim and he will send you a link to an unlisted video on Youtube. For copyright purposes you will be asked not to share the link with anyone else and you will have the opportunity to make a small donation towards the costs should you wish to. The link will be available until April 14th.

Staff Leave

Rev’s Roberta, Roger, Shannon and Tim will be on annual leave from Mon 5th April for a week. All enquiries for pastoral support should be made in the first instance to Deacon Jenny Parnell (0113 2509805, jenny.parnell@methodist.org.uk) or Deacon Liz Day (01943 831625 liz.day@methodist.org.uk) in the first instance. If necessary, your enquiry will be passed on to either Rev Dr Marty Atkins or one of our team of supernumerary Ministers.

Financial Giving & Gift Aid

We are grateful to everyone who has continued to make regular offerings to their church throughout the Covid Pandemic lockdowns. This has been particularly important during a time when other sources of income have largely dried up. As we approach the end of the tax year (5th April) churches will be preparing to claim Gift Aid on qualifying income. If you are planning to make an offering to your church it would be helpful if you could do so before 5th April. If you are a taxpayer and have not yet signed a Gift Aid declaration, please consider doing so; this is a vital source of income to all churches (at no extra cost to the giver) and we need to maximise its value. Please contact your church treasurer or Gift Aid secretary for a declaration form.

Christian Aid & Yorkshire West Methodist District Vaccine Appeal

Yorkshire West Methodist District has partnered with Christian Aid to give people an opportunity to give thanks for their Covid-19 vaccine and help others in crisis across the world. Recognising the deep sense of relief and gratitude experienced by many people after being vaccinated, the two organisations have come together to enable people to pass the blessing on by making a donation to Christian Aid’s Coronavirus Appeal. Funds from the appeal are helping vulnerable communities

around the world access soap, water, food and vital health information in the face of the pandemic. Many communities around the world face an uncertain wait for a vaccine as questions remain around the cost and timing of a global vaccine programme.

Revd Kerry Tankard, Chair of the District says, “The vaccine is bringing with it a deep sense of relief and hope for families across the UK and we saw that many people wanted to express their gratitude by reaching out to others. This is good news for us all and we genuinely give thanks for how fortunate we are. However, we are acutely aware that this good news is not being experienced equally across the world. While the pandemic affects all of us, it has highlighted the deep disparities in how communities and families are able to protect themselves both within our country and around the world. My hope is that people will give generously to the work of Christian Aid from a place of thanksgiving and a desire to see all people being able to live safely. Whether people can give just a few pounds or a much larger sum, it will be an opportunity to share hope and love with our brothers and sisters across the world who do not have the benefits we have.”

You can donate to the Yorkshire West Methodist District's appeal by visiting <https://events.tapsimple.org/online/christian-aid/yorkshirwestvaccineappeal>