

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent  
All Age Worship  
Earlsdon Methodist Church  
14<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Theme: Evangelism**



Jesus was lifted up on the cross so that all could come to him. Let us choose to seek God in this place today, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus and choosing to follow him. **Amen.**



**Hymn 59 StF: Lord, the Light of your love is Shining**

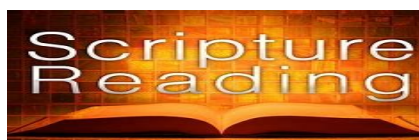


Jesus, you came as light for the world. We are sorry for the unkind, selfish and thoughtless things we have done. May your light help us to become more like you. **Amen.**

**Adoration, Confession and Thanksgiving**

Generous God, you love the world, and us, so much that you gave us your only Son, Jesus, to be light for us all. We praise you for your love and for the gift of life. **Amen.**

God in heaven, when we have strayed from your ways – we thank you for giving us the chance to change direction. When have not made good choices, we thank you for your forgiveness. When we have been influenced by the world rather than obeying your Word – we thank you for your patience with us. **Amen.**



**Numbers 21: 4-9 and John 3: 14-21**

**Reflection:**

Today, is the fourth Sunday in Lent and we reflect on 'Evangelism' which is the fourth requirement of our call to serve God and humanity as Methodists. We will discover from the bible scriptures the various ingredients to evangelism and how we can be effective Evangelists in our own contexts today. Some of the ingredients we will reflect on today are **looking up; to speak the love of God; trusting in God.**

**Looking up:** Nicodemus being a Pharisee and leader of the Jews chose to 'look up' to Jesus when he sneaked in the night to pay Jesus a visit because he was intrigued about Jesus' kingdom teachings and

most importantly to make sense of what it means to be 'born again'. Jesus looked to God His Father and constantly prays to God for divine direction and strength. Moses looked to God by praying on behalf of the Israelites in the wilderness and lifted up the serpent for God's intervention. When we evangelise, we do so not in our strength, but we look to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to work on the hearts and spirits of people so that they will hear and receive the 'good news'.

On this Mothering Sunday, many of us would be celebrating and reflecting on our love for our mothers and the people who play mothering roles in our lives.

**Question: Who do you look up to and what inspires you about them?**

**Speak of the love of God:** As Jesus Christ went about evangelising, he did so without any condemnation. Jesus asked all to come to Him and he did not have preference over any ethnicity or gender. Jesus Christ came into the world as the Light of the world as such John wrote that 'all who do evil deeds, hate the light and are condemned by the very act but those who believe in Him, do the will of God and come to the light'. In our mission as Evangelists, we share the 'good news' with God's love, we try to understand our context, the diverse nature and complex needs of our communities and we embrace all people with the love of God by sharing the Gospel in truth and love thus shining God's lights into every darkness.

**Question: How can we show that we live in the light rather than the darkness?**

**Trusting in God:** The scripture passage in Numbers is a true testament of how God's intervention and remedy is grounded in His promise made in answer to Moses' prayer. The bronze serpent that God instructed Moses to build for the healing of the people was a symbol of deliverance for God's people and those who looked up at it were saved not by the power of the serpent but by the Saviour of all.

**Question: What are your concerns about evangelising in the new normal?**

Beloved, our call to evangelise - to spread the Gospel still stands! Let us therefore reflect deeply on what and how evangelism will mean for us in the 'new normal' taking into consideration the challenges of our society/communities and how the Church expresses the Gospel in context today. Finally, like Moses, we remain steadfast in prayers, listening out for God's voice leading us to people and places where lives are changed, the sick are healed, the broken are made whole and His Word is the brightest beams that disperses every shade of darkness so that God's name is glorified, and His kingdom comes here on earth. **Amen.**



**Hymn 175 StF: Light of the World you Stepped Down into Darkness**

On those who feel isolated,



Merciful God, on the leaders of the nations and the leaders of the Church. Let your light shine, **and bring hope to your children.**

On teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff and students as they settle back into schools: Let your light shine, **and bring hope to your children.**

those who mourn loved ones – Ray Williscroft and family and the family of Rod King, those who are ill...

**Reflect: .....**

Let your light shine, **and bring hope to your children.**

Loving Lord, we look up to you and trust that your light will guide us in the path of peace, justice and love. In the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**



### **The Lord's Prayer (for children/AAW)**

Our Father in heaven, blessed is 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. Do not let us be tempted and save us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours today and for ever. **Amen.**



### **Hymn 59 StF: Shine Jesus Shine**



Lord of light help us to look to you in the coming week. Guide us when the way ahead seems dark and full of obstacles. May we always give thanks, even in the darkest times, and enable us to shine as lights in the world. **Amen.**

### John 3: 14-21 Dramatization

#### Cast: Nicodemus and Jesus

**Nico:** *(hiding with torch)* Psst, Jesus. *(No response from Jesus. Louder)* PSST, JESUS. *(Jesus looks up and around but sees nothing).* Oi, Jesus, over here! *(Jesus looks up and sees Nicodemus.)*

**Jesus:** Who are you?

**Nico:** *(in a stage whisper)* Nicodemus.

**Jesus:** *(thinking, whilst walking to Nicodemus)* Nico ... Nico-de ... *(puzzled)* Nicodemus?

**Nico:** *(coming out of hiding)* Yes, Nicodemus the Pharisee.

**Jesus:** *(still puzzled)* Nicodemus the Pharisee. *(The penny drops)* Oh, Nicodemus the *(loud)* **Pharisee!**

**Nico:** *(still in a stage whisper and maybe trying to put a hand over Jesus' mouth)* Ssh, not so loud! I do not want people to know I'm here. You don't know what my fellow Pharisees and priests might think. That is why I've come at night.

**Jesus:** So, just why have you come?

**Nico:** I've heard some things about you. People have been talking. I've got questions, and I hope you've got answers.

**Jesus:** Fire away then.

**Nico:** Well *(takes a deep breath)*, people are saying that you are a teacher who has come from God. I mean, no-one could do the amazing, miraculous things that you are doing if God were not with you. So, people say ...

**Jesus:** Well, yes ... *(pause, as if that isn't quite enough)* But let me tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

**Nico:** Born again? *(scratching head, very confused)* Born again?? But that's impossible - how can anyone be born after having grown up? No one can enter their mother's womb a second time in order to be born again!

**Jesus:** But I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. A person is born physically of human parents, but they are born spiritually of the Spirit. You must not be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' *(Pause, as if hoping Nicodemus will understand)*

**Nico:** But Jesus, I just do not get it. The Spirit, what Spirit? What does this Spirit look like?

**Jesus:** Nicodemus, have you never read Ezekiel? *(Jesus tries a different tack)* I mean, it is like the wind. You can hear it blowing, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. It like that with the Spirit, and everyone born of the Spirit.

**Nico:** Sorry, you what? I do not understand.

**Jesus:** Nicodemus *(in mock reproof)*, you a Pharisee, you should be ashamed of yourself. You, a great teacher in Israel, and you do not know this? Tut, tut, tut! Let me tell you - we speak of what we know, we report (tell) of what we have seen, but neither you nor your friends are willing to accept the message. I talk to you about earthly things and you do not believe. How on earth will you believe when I tell you about the things of heaven. And no one has ever gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, the one who has come down from heaven.

**Nico:** Oh Jesus, you really have lost me now.

**Jesus:** *(as if speaking to a small child)* Think back, Nicodemus. Remember Moses? Moses lifted that bronze snake up on a pole in the desert so that anyone who had been bitten by one of the poisonous snakes could look at it and be healed. It is the same with the Son of Man - the Son of Man must be lifted up too. Because anyone who believes in the Son of Man may have eternal life.

**Nico:** Snakes ... eternal life ... Jesus, what are you going on about?

**Jesus:** Listen, Nicodemus, it is important. People need to remember this for years and years to come. God loved the world **so** much that he gave them his one and only Son, so that everyone (and I mean everyone) who believes in him, will not perish or die, but will have eternal life.

God did not send his Son to the world to judge and condemn it. No, God sent his Son to the world so that the world would be saved through him.

*(Pause. Nicodemus walks off slowly, but Jesus does not see him go.)*

Nicodemus, Nicodemus, where are you? Where have you gone? *(Turns to congregation)* I wonder what he makes of that? I wonder what will become of him? I wonder, will I ever see him again?