

Sunday April 11th

Second Sunday of Easter **The Love of our Amazing God calls for a response.**

Alleluia Christ is Risen and the family of the church says He is Risen indeed

We continue praise God and celebrate the resurrection as we sing

STF 309 SEE WHAT A MORNING

We offer up our Prayers of praise and thanksgiving

Lord Jesus we praise you that we can worship you not simply as the crucified Christ but as our risen lord and saviour. We praise you that death was not the end but a new beginning Not just for you but for us. We praise you for the joy of Easter for the thanksgiving and rejoicing and a time that speaks of victory, renewal and hope.

Lord Jesus the disciples met you face to face, we too can meet with you in our hearts experiencing the reality of your living presence. Come among us now in your risen power in this worship, live in us always so that our lives may resound to your praise and Glory so that we proclaim your name through our words and deeds. Amen

All age worship is the church family sharing together in praise and fellowship learning both from each other and deepening our understanding. This morning the NKANTAH family are going to share what the set Acts reading

Acts 4 23-24 and 30-35 says to them about Christian living.

We all respond to God's call in different ways what we have in common is that he calls each one of us we sing **Stf 664 Lord you call us to your service**

Prayer of confession. Loving God we know what we should be and we know what we are and the gulf between the two is often wide. We come before you seeking your mercy and forgiveness for the actions that do not reflect your sacrificial love. The times when, our pride, our greed, our selfishness and our envy of other people get in the way. Forgive us our unkind words, unworthy thoughts and our carelessness in our discipleship. Touch our hearts with your love and make us all new by your grace so that we worship you in all we do Amen

Brothers & Sisters in Christ In him we are made whole, in him we are made new fashioned through the power of the Holy Spirit to be his Easter people.

Amen thanks be to God.

Set Gospel reading John 20 19- 26 31 read by Helen

Reflection **we have an amazing God whose Love prompts us to serve.**

In the upper room in the disciples were gathered together scared and fearful, praying for their safety, for courage and for a greater understanding of the empty tomb. Despite all the doors being locked Suddenly the Risen Christ appears, bringing peace and sowing the seeds in their hearts that would lead to the Birth of the Christian Church. The miraculous appearance showed Jesus to be their Lord and the Saviour. Jesus presence strengthened them and John says Jesus Breathed the Spirit into them saying “as my father sent me so I am sending you”.

Eventually even Thomas who had been full of doubt and who wanted hands on proof is moved to take the ultimate step of proclaiming the divinity of Jesus when he meets Christ face to face. He moves Jesus from the word of God present since the start of time to “MY LORD AND MY GOD”. This draws the response from Jesus of “because you have seen me you have believed, blessed are those who have not seen yet believe”. We today can only see Jesus in the world around us as it reflects the glory and wonder of God and shows his love in action is all around us if we look for it.

A long time ago on a camping /walking trip to the Brecon Beacons, on a very clear night, I looked up at the sky and was amazed by the thousands of stars I could see with the unaided eye. Yet they were a fraction of those of the 100,000 million in our galaxy. And that galaxy is only one of several hundred million within the viewing range of our telescopes. Just like The Psalmist said: ‘The heavens are telling the glory of God’

This is all an estimate because we can only make the calculations based on observations from the most powerful telescopes using light which has to travel unimaginable distances. Astronomers measure these distances by the time it takes light travel, our sun is 8 light minutes away, the next nearest star is 4 light years, the edge of our galaxy 95,000 light years and the farthest observable star 25,000 million light years away . This makes time a very strange complex thing.

These numbers are so big they become difficult to comprehend but we believe it is God’s universe and he is the power behind its creation and evolution. It is God who is responsible for the beauty we see around us, from the complexity

of the tiniest insect, the beauty of flowers and for each one of us. The psalmist reminds us Ps 139 'for it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works.'

When I became a father and then a grandfather holding my sons and granddaughters in my arms for the first time were moments of a great outpouring of love that I will never forget. God in whose image we are made must have that same experience with each of us for he knows each one of us. Yet we are an incredibly small part of the wonder of God's universe. However God didn't just make us - he also loves us AND there's nothing we can do that will stop God loving us. But since the start of time humanity has done things which built barriers between us and God so God sent Jesus to show us the right way to live in his presence.

We should be in awe at the wonder of God and his creation. We can learn lots of lessons by looking at the intricacies of the natural world that reflects his love for us and the fact that he is the amazing power at its heart which moves the universe along. Spring is the time of year when my green fingered wife is in the greenhouse planting seeds. Take the concept of a small seed and how the seeds work often. Hard ugly things from which beauty will emerge when fed watered and cared for with love.

When my boys were younger we used to collect Conkers which had fallen to earth in their hard spiky shells, so unpromising, so unwelcoming. Difficult to get into and with sharp spikes to keep the squirrels away. But hidden inside is something wonderful. Conkers are rather like the image we often present to the world when we feel vulnerable. We often show a hard outside, difficult to get through. We are often slow to open up to others to protect us from having to get involved. But hidden away inside each one of us is something wonderful.

If you can get past the hard outer exterior of the conker, nestling inside the soft, inner protective casing is something with appearance of mahogany or French polished wood. Something so smooth, so beautiful, - so shiny - such fun to play with. Inside we are like that, all we have to do is to be open to God's prompting and we can be full of surprises too. We can become beautiful for others if we follow God's way.

The whole purpose of a conker is to grow another horse chestnut tree which will in turn produce hundreds more conkers every year. When it falls onto

suitable ground, the outer shell splits revealing the nut which will soften in contact with the soil, growing a root and then a shoot. The beautiful mahogany shell is lost as the growing begins. The old dies and the new is born.

In the same way we need to lose our hard outer coating by drawing closer to Jesus enabling God to through the Holy spirit to form us anew as his people. This enables us to Grow in our faith as we love and serve God, by loving and serving the communities in which we live so that the kingdom of God grows too.

As we approach the end of this lockdown we are to be the new Green shoots, full of life, full of potential, Enabling a new tree to grow that will bring about a new generation and set up future opportunities. God's creation is full of such cycles of nature.

The wonderful transforming love of God as seen in Jesus enables us to grow as we nurture and support each other So that we start to over flow with God's love, caring for His people and His creation, becoming open to the possibilities which he sends us and through the power of our Risen Lord start to transform the society we are part of. Fulfilling our calling as part of the Methodist family to go and serve our Lord.

Lets hope we become seeds that enable God's kingdom to grow as he works through us in his world. For we are to be Easter People whose faith celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and the new beginnings our trust in Him and the authority of God over all things will bring. Remember jesus words "As my father sent me so I am sending you" Jesus send us out as he sent the disciples out to share his love and to be a blessing within and beyond God's church for the transformation of the world..

The Methodist way of life cards which were sent out with membership tickets remind us that part of our Christian responsibility is to serve by helping people in our communities and beyond, to care for creation and all God's gifts and to challenge the injustices around us in the world.

We can only do that if our faith is active and we let God use the gifts and talents he gives us to serve him. We are to let Christ's love sing out to the world through the choices we make in how we live. Amen

We sing of that in stf 399 when deep despair cast out all light Repton dear lord and father

Dianabasi is going to lead us in our prayers of intercession and the lords prayer.

Jesus said “as my father has sent me I am sending you” Our closing hymn reminds us that when we trust and obey Jesus who is our living hope all things are possible

Stf 67 colours of day dawn into our mind

Blessing

God calls us live out our discipleship in worship and mission to be a blessing within and beyond his church Family transforming the world. So go out assured that the Grace of God is upon us, the power of the Holy spirit empowers us and that Jesus walks with us this and every day Amen.