

NewsLink

12 – 19 April 2020



Churches of North
Bradford on Avon
& Villages

Dear friends

How many of us have ever felt an earthquake? I remember experiencing one in a simulator in a museum in Wellington, New Zealand, but I have never felt a real one.

Sometimes an earthquake just shakes gently for a second or two. My son experienced this when he was at University in Loughborough – it was strong enough to wake up students at night in their Halls of Residence, but gentle enough not to cause any damage.

At other times though, a strong earthquake shakes buildings, cracks them open and causes a lot of damage. We may not personally experience them, but news teams on the ground show us pictures of the devastation that can be caused.

Whether it's a big or small earthquake, we become aware that people are not really in charge of the earth. There are powers in the earth stronger than we are.

A Coronavirus is a bit like an earthquake, a virus whose results some people experience but hopefully most don't, and it's one we can't see, but reminds us again that we are not really in control of our lives.

At Easter, we are reminded of God's power. A power as strong as an earthquake that rolls a huge stone away from the cave where they buried Jesus. A power we feel that is stronger than we are.

At Easter we feel power beyond our control. The power of new life that shakes our hearts with excitement because something mysterious is happening, something that brings joy back to our hearts because we know that God's amazing power is still at work in the world.

Some of us are fortunate that we have family members with us this Easter, but many of us are on our own, using telephones, mobiles, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp to stay in touch with loved ones.

What brings joy back to your hearts today? There are two things I want to share with you that have given me joy today.

Firstly, as I was preparing for our online service on Sunday, I found the following pictures from last year and I remember that experience of holding and feeding those baby lambs.



Secondly, yesterday, we put up a new bird box in our garden and were delighted today to see blue tits already preparing a nest in it.

The signs of new life, joy and hope are all around us. Let's keep each other cheerful by sharing our joyful experiences with one another through NewsLink.

Let us pray:

God of Easter mystery, we know the Easter story, but we do not understand how things happened as that day dawned. Help us trust that your power is at work in the world; give us hope, fill our hearts with love and joy as we remember one another and as we hold them in our hearts and prayers today. Amen

Ann, Rector



Benefice on-line services

Easter Sunday - Available on our homepage on Sunday 12 April.

Lockdown

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and
reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours
in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing. Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM



A Spring wreath of peace and love.
Daphne Cox

Bradford on Avon Foodbank

Grateful thanks from the Hub for more donations over the last week. Avril



Lazarus', by John Reilly, 1962.
Methodist Modern Art Collection

A visual meditation on the gospel reading for 29 March 2020 compiled by Sarah Middleton – contributed by Bob Williams

This extraordinarily vivid painting is set in what appears to be a country churchyard, a place traditionally associated with precious quiet and spacious solitude. The church tower is on the left, with a backdrop of trees and an array of gravestones. Artist John Reilly transforms this churchyard with the centrifugal raising of Lazarus (shown centre, leaving behind the strips of cloth that bound him). Lazarus was a close friend of Jesus (shown right) and his death moved Jesus to tears.

The two figures on the left (Mary and Martha, or perhaps one of the sisters with Thomas?) are shown twice. First, at the head of the grave, bending in a posture of grief. Then in a posture of incredulous joy, standing arms aloft behind Lazarus as he rises, the colours of his body reflecting the sunlight.

Resurrection life suffuses this painting. Reilly inclines every part, even the stones of the church, into the energetic orbit of the sun's rays. The blood-red sun echoes the healing power of the divine described in the ancient prophecy of Malachi: 'for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays' (chapter 4, verse 2). Reilly makes a powerful statement about Christ as the source of this healing power and this hope. The 'time tunnel' effect along the axis of rotation from the sun to the grave pulls us gently into itself, willing us to participate in what Christ has made possible.

As our world is invited to acknowledge Earth Hour (a global environmental movement, 8.30-9.30 pm, 28 March 2020), this work of art reminds us that, overarching the troubles that currently afflict the earth, stands Christ, mysteriously both human and divine. He is one who sheds tears at the loss of a friend and is also the 'sun of righteousness' who goes on to vanquish death on the cross and open the way to glory. We rest in his words "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me though he die, yet shall he live." (John 11:25). Image Copyright © Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP).

This and other images from the Collection are available to view online at

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/browse-the-collection/>

Sarah writes, 'Much of the above interpretation of the painting comes from an article by the Rev Stephen Girling, Bath Abbey Missioner, published in the 'Methodist Modern Art Collection Friends Newsletter', Spring 2017 issue. Grateful credit is due to Stephen.' See more *Paintings, Poems and Prayers for Holy Week 2020 - Images from the Methodist Modern Art Collection* ©TMCP on the church's website.



Spring flowers and new life from *Andrew Gaulter*



Lace made From icing...

...and flowers ready for the wedding cake.
Mary Hewetson



Prayer of the faithful

Leader: The Lord is our light and help. Let us bring our needs before him with confidence.

Lord, hear our prayer

For the followers of Christ; that they may have the courage and strength to profess their faith openly.

Let us pray to the Lord

For those who have been let down by others, and who are bitter as a result.

Let us pray to the Lord

For the conversion of those who are living in the darkness of evil.

Let us pray to the Lord

For grace to learn from Peter how to repent of our sins.

Let us pray to the Lord

For our own special needs

Let us pray to the Lord

God of power and love, fill our hearts with your love. Give us the grace to rise above our human weakness, and keep us faithful to you and to one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Bible Reading Mark 14: 53,54, 66-72

Confession

What about our failures?

Words spoken which are untrue – sometimes true but unkind.

Words which need not have been spoken.

Word spoken deliberately which harm or hurt.

Words left unspoken.

Words of apology left unsaid.

Words of apology by others which have not been accepted.

Words of encouragement which have not been given.

Sick who have not been visited.

Hungry who have not been fed.

Sinners who have been despised.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, you know us better than we know ourselves.

You know our weakness and our sins.

You know the words spoken and the actions undertaken which should never have happened. You know also how we have failed to act or speak, when we should have done.

You know how we have taken pride in our own achievements.

Pat Ellis



Love is an 'end of life' keepsake for grieving families. The bears used by my friend Jennie when supporting those in end of life care. Ann



Sainsbury's in Bury St Edmonds posted this picture on their notice board as a heartfelt thank you to their staff.

Sent from Jennie, a friend of Ann, the Rector. A heart shaped potato reminded her of so much love at Easter.

Loving God
let me come away with you
to that place of gladness, that time of singing,
to know the truth of your most precious love
for the satisfaction of my deepest need.
And through my own discovery of delight in you,
may I become as one who can bring others
to your healing love,
for by sharing this love, it can only grow.
Amen

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Do check the website resources are added regularly and check Instagram and Facebook for all our latest news.

