

Sunday April 24th 2022.
A service of worship for use at home
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**Nottingham North East
Methodist Circuit**

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Call to worship

Psalm 150

Praise the LORD
God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!

Hymn - Thine be the glory

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.
*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.
*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.
*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

Prayer of adoration and Lord's prayer (From Methodist Worship Book)

Glory to you, O God; you raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us victory over death
And giving us eternal life.

Glory to you O Christ; For us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened
the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit; you lead us into the truth and breathe new life into us.

If we have fallen into despair, Lord forgive us.

If we have failed to hope in you, Lord forgive us.

If we have been fearful of death, Lord forgive us

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ, Lord forgive us.

May the living God raise us from despair give us victory over sin and set us free in
Christ. Amen

Lord's prayer

Our Father in heaven

Hallowed be your name

Your Kingdom come

Your will be done on earth as in heaven

Give us today us our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

As we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours now and forever.

Amen

Reading - John 20:19-31 (read in two parts)

John 20:19 – 25;

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the
house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus
came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this,
he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they
saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has
sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said
to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven
them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them
when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But

he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Reflection

I don't know about you when I read this passage I think immediately about the so called "doubting Thomas". But there is so much more in this passage.

First we have scared disciples, living in real fear for their lives after the brutal crucifixion of Jesus. Then the appearance of Jesus, who first of all promises Peace. "Peace be with you".

But then he sends them out into the world after he has breathed the Holy Spirit on them. The very same Holy Spirit that he had promised would come to them as advocate comforter, forgiver of sins, bringer of peace.

What a moment for the disciples who were there. Being sent out into the world by the risen Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the template for future mission and ministry for us all ?

Hymn - Sent by the Lord am I

1 Sent by the Lord am I;
My hands are ready now
To make the earth a place
In which the kingdom comes.
(Repeat)

2 The angels cannot change
A world of hurt and pain
Into a world of love,
Of justice and of peace.

3 The task is mine to do,
To set it really free.
O help me to obey;
Help me to do your will.

So we return to the disciples and Thomas.

John 20 :26 – 31

²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Reflection

So to return to Thomas and the disciples . I have a bit of an infinity with Thomas (Didymus). As a twin myself when I was growing up I was often called the twin or twinny – partly I think because people could not tell me and my sister apart – being identical twins.

Thomas was one of the disciples closest to Jesus but we hear very little about him. He is often used as a foil to Jesus by asking questions that allows Jesus to answer and expand on his thinking. You can look them up: Thomas after Lazarus' death. Jesus telling about himself as the way the truth and the life after Thomas reaction Thomas at the sea of Galilee on Jesus resurrection appearance. All in John's gospel.

So Thomas was close to Jesus and not afraid to ask questions. His apparent doubting led Jesus to say that those who believed without seeing would be blessed. They would also receive peace.

“ Blessed are those who have not seen and have yet come to believe”.

Words which have challenged and blessed thousands, even millions of Christians over the years.

We, that is you and me, are blessed, have the chance to know we are loved, to know peace and hope. All because of our faith in Jesus.

Let us celebrate that fact as we look at our next hymn.

Hymn - Christ has risen while earth slumbers

1 Christ has risen while earth
slumbers,
Christ has risen where hope died,
as he said and as he promised,
as we doubted and denied.
Let the moon embrace the blessing;
let the sun sustain the cheer;
let the world confirm the rumour.
Christ is risen, God is here!

2 Christ has risen for the people
whom he loved and died to save;
Christ has risen for the women
bringing flowers to grace his grave
Christ has risen for disciples
huddled in an upstairs room.
He whose word inspired creation
is not silenced by the tomb.

3 Christ has risen to companion
former friends who fear the night,
sensing loss and limitation
where their faith had once burned
bright.
They bemoan what is no longer,
they expect no hopeful sign
till Christ ends their conversation,
breaking bread and sharing wine.

4 Christ has risen and forever
lives to challenge and to change
all whose lives are messed or
mangled,
all who find religion strange.
Christ is risen. Christ is present
making us what he has been –
evidence of transformation
in which God is known and seen.

Intercessory prayers

In the quietness we hear Jesus words, "Peace, I give to you."

We thank you, Lord for your words today. Peace for whatever concerns us today, peace of heart and mind knowing that we are loved and known by you.

We also hold before you the situations of the world where there is no peace. Where violence reigns, where war and hatred grow, where people live in fear every single day. May your everlasting peace be revealed.

May those in positions of strength and power learn a new way of justice and hope for all.

We hold before you our church and circuit. May we continue to seek your ways forward as life returns to a new normality after Covid.

We ask these things and the unspoken prayers of our heart in Jesus name.

Amen

Hymn - I know that my redeemer lives

1 I know that my redeemer lives;
What joy the best assurance gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead.
He lives my everlasting head!

2 He lives to bless me with his love;
He lives to plead for me above;
He lives my hungry soul to feed;
He lives to help in time of need.

3 He lives and grants me daily breath;
He lives and I shall conquer death;
he lives, my mansion to prepare;
he lives to lead me safely there.

4 He lives, all glory to his name;
he lives, my saviour, still the same;
what joy the blest assurance gives;
I know that my Redeemer lives.