

Reflections and Prayers for Easter

This is the second of a series of weekly Reflections and Prayers being offered to the Norley Methodist Church congregation, temporarily dispersed. They are sourced from a variety of people and places and are supplementary to the Sunday streamed services advertised in the Weekly News Update. You are invited to use them for personal reflection and to share them as you wish. Some pieces relate to the Christian calendar at the time: others are more general, and you may wish to retain them for future reference.

Alleluia, Christ is risen



Alleluia, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

With these words we will begin our Easter Sunday morning service, albeit in our own homes.

And we rejoice with Christians across the world in celebrating Easter Day 2020.

We are not able to do so in the usual way, but we are reminded of the colour and beauty of last year's Easter cross, adorned with yellow and white flowers.

And the picture reminds us that we would gather to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion, if we were able.

Alas not now, but it will be.

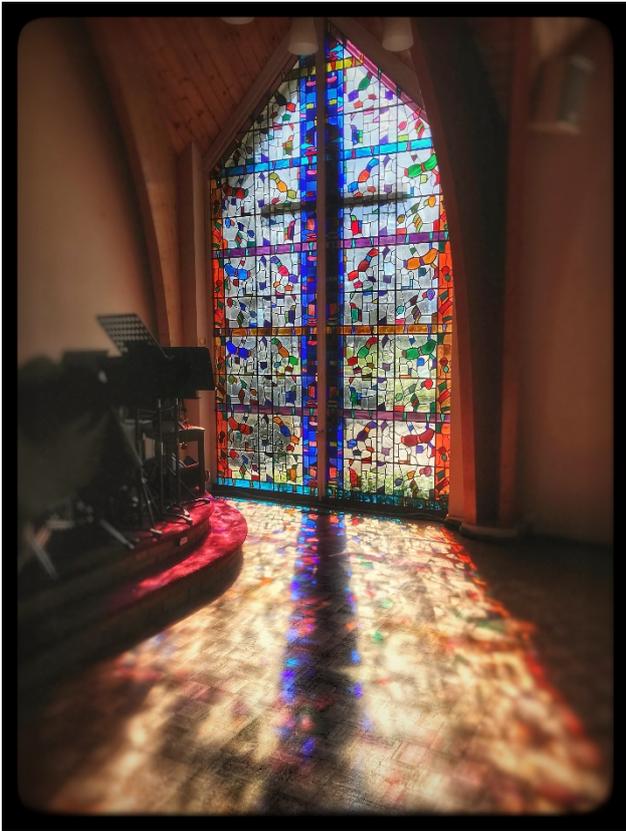
Photo by Joan Bell, Norley Methodist Church, Easter Day, 2019

First thought for Easter Day

After darkness, light; after winter, spring; after dying, life: Alleluia!

Come whatever may, God will have his way; welcome, Easter Day! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Fred Pratt Green, Singing the Faith 292 verses 1 and 4



Windows and Rainbows

Looking out of my window I see a world just beyond my reach.

I want to be out there, not in here.

I want to be in fresh air and feel the sun on my face.

I wouldn't even complain if it rained on me.

I want to walk into town, see my friends, do my errands.

Yet I know these windows and these walls are my defence.

Home is my Ark.

And, like Noah, you Lord are my deliverer and defender.

Proverbs chapter 18 verse 10 reminds me:

'The name of the Lord is a strong tower;

The righteous run to it and are safe.'

Looking out of our church window, all is quiet.

Today, Easter Sunday, I want to be in church, celebrating Holy Communion, not in here.

I want to worship you God with my friends and share

our news.

I want to do your errands God.

I look at the tiny, coloured, stained glass.

I can see green, blue, pink, orange and red colours.

And I thank you for the colour you bring to my life Lord,

I can see through the clear glass but I can't see everything out there too clearly.

The whole view remains blurred.

And Lord I realise I don't know the future,

Or how the tiny pieces of my life and our national life will assemble together once more.

So, I will put my trust in you, the one who holds the future.

For now, help me Lord simply to be.

Lord Jesus, you made your home among us.

I can feel your warmth in here – not just out there.

And you have errands for me here.

Disperse the shadows and flood my life with a rainbow of colour.

Wherever I am, Lord, shine your light into my life, through my church and into my community.

Revd Peter Goodhall, minister of Haverhill Methodist Church, Suffolk

March 24th 2020, with reference to Easter Sunday added: photo Haverhill Methodist Church

Peter Goodhall ends his reflection with mention of a rainbow – a symbol we now see displayed in many house windows and on community noticeboards: the rainbow theme will be developed next week.

Evening reflection



'The sun that bids us rest is
waking our brethren 'neath
the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips
are making thy wondrous
doings heard on high.'

*John Ellerton, Singing the Faith 147
verse 4*

The flower-clad cross, focus
of Easter Day's worship,
placed on the church drive
in the evening, so that, for a
few days, all who walk, jog,
cycle or drive by can be
reminded that it is Easter,
the greatest Christian
festival of all.

Photo by Joan Bell, Easter Day 2019

Easter Evening Prayer

Lord, it's been an odd Easter Day: very odd, and strange. We haven't done the things we yearned to do, for now forbidden, but, as the day is far spent and night is nigh, we are in our homes as we would have been. We are experiencing something of the anxiety, fear and uncertainty of the early disciples, and like them, we don't know what will happen next. But we have joined with Christians across the world in rejoicing that the eternal message of Easter has still been celebrated, though this year, in different ways. We pray in the name of Jesus, who said, 'I am the resurrection and the life'. Thanks be to God. Amen.

John Bell, April 2020

Note and invitation to readers

I have gathered these reflections and prayers and they include some of my own material. If you wish to offer pieces for inclusion in future weeks, please send them to me at johnabell@supanet.com My intention is to release each edition on a Friday so that it can be distributed for Sunday and the following week. And, I would welcome any feedback as a guide to what is helpful and appreciated and what is not. Many thanks, John