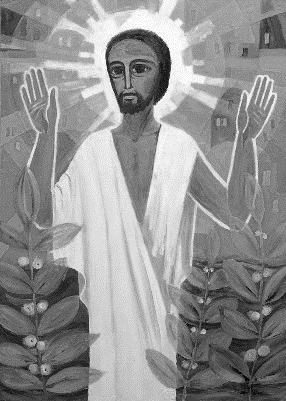
**Saturday 18th April 2020  
Second of Easter**

**Thoughts for the day: Kettering & Corby.  
Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn: Christ is alive: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRQoeitN5nA>

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
but saving, healing, here and now,  
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war,  
where colour, scorn or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,  
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,  
and find the way, the life, the truth,  
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive and comes to bring  
good news to this and every age,  
till earth and sky and ocean ring  
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

Brian Wren (*b.*1936)

[**https://youtu.be/77l11E3o7a4**](https://youtu.be/77l11E3o7a4)

Let us pray:

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.

Glory to you Father, Son and Holy Spirit,   
now and for ever. Amen

**Gospel Reading for this day:  
John chapter20, verses 19 to 31**.

[**https://youtu.be/fGxMU4TVEIw**](https://youtu.be/fGxMU4TVEIw)

John very precisely sets the three scenes in chapter 20. It is ‘early on the first day of the week’ that Mary visits the tomb where Jesus had been buried. The first resurrection appearances continue within that garden/tomb scene with many comings and goings and at some pace. ‘Running and ‘suddenly’ are the order for this scene.

Now we encounter the disciples, together, ‘in the evening of the first day’ and then a week later. They have gone to into a room and have locked the door ‘for fear’ of ‘the Jews’.

The energy of the early discovery, their exaltation, has diminished. They are trying to make sense of what they have witnessed and experienced. They also seem to have missed the moment. Mary goes and tells; tells the disciples; now they watch and wait. By the next scene, they have gone home. Gone fishing once more. *The story of the resurrection could have been lost.*

But human malaise cannot match the persistence of Jesus showing them that he is alive.

Enter Thomas. You wonder what he had ventured out for in order to have missed Jesu’s first appearance in the room. Have you ever done that, just left before the interesting bit, or arrive to late. “Oh, you should have been here earlier”. Thomas returns and can hardly comprehend the news he is given. Jesus was here, yes, he passed through the locked door. What a wind-up. Not falling for that!…. Or…. Or… what if it were true?

Jesus never disappoints. A whole week after, he appears again, and this time Thomas is around, and sees, and believes. Then we have the teaching of believing without always seeing.

And, here we are. We haven’t seen, but we believe. We are not given the opportunity to examine healed hands, feet, and side, yet we believe. We believe in Christ, born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and buried… and on the third day He rose again

*The resurrection story could so easily have been lost.* We can be thankful that Mary was the one who first realised and went and told. We can be thankful that somehow the disciples stayed together. Their bond of experience held long enough to become a bond of lasting faith. The bond that encountered the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit and for the Gospel of Resurrection to be publicly declared.

And here we are, descendants and inheritors of that apostolic teaching. Bearers of the truth, witnesses to the presence of the living God in our lives.

We may find ourselves in isolation, behind closed doors, but the Gospel cannot be contained. It is thought that more people have worshipped each Sunday of lock-down than would normally attend our places of worship. What messages and learning can we take from this?

Have you been able to receive and experience the joy of Easter? How can you share that message with family, friend, or neighbour?

For we believe that in Christ we have life in all its fulness. We truly know of the completeness of God’s love and mercy. It is in the love of Christ we live. Christ is alive, His cross stands empty to the skies.

I know that my redeemer lives. What joy that blessed assurance gives.

Never doubt, only trust and believe. And try to share your faith. Don’t lock it away. For blessed are you who have not seen yet believe. Amen.

Hymn: I know that my redeemer lives

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k8rKROCaDk>

I know that my Redeemer lives —  
what joy the blest assurance gives!  
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;  
he lives, my everlasting Head!

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.

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.

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!

Samuel Medley (1738–1799)

We pray: [**https://youtu.be/NUTsEs6saAo**](https://youtu.be/NUTsEs6saAo)

If we have fallen into despair, Lord forgive us.  
If we have failed to hope in you, forgive us.  
If we have been fearful of death, 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.

Faithful God, the strength of all who believe and the hope of those who doubt; may we, who have not seen, have faith and receive the fullness of Christ’s blessing; who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

We continue to pray for:

healing throughout the world,  
comfort to the bereaved and dying,  
those who are in places of leadership,  
those who make life and death decisions,  
those offering caring and service to others,  
those facing uncertain futures,  
  
for Your church, Lord, that we might so powerfully live and proclaim the glory of your resurrection that all may come to know you as Christ their Lord. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer.

Alleluia!  
Live in joy and peace to love and serve the Lord. In the name of Christ. Alleluia!

Rev’d Andrew Farrington:   
Superintendent Minister, The Methodist Church  
07985 308637