

## Reflection for Sunday 22 March 2020 by Deacon Jenny Parnell of the Wharfedale and Aireborough Methodist Circuit

Opening prayer

Eternal God, source of all blessing,  
Help us to worship you  
With all our heart, mind and strength;  
for you alone are God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
For ever and ever Amen

Our Gospel reading for this morning is John 9:1-41

*“As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”* John 9:1-5

It is hard to find the words to describe the events of the last few days. It has been a worrying time for many. In this time of uncertainty, difficult decisions have had to be made. These have affected and will continue to impact upon our Churches and communities for the unforeseeable future.

We may feel that we are living in dark times; but let’s not be afraid. May we each know the truth of our faith, that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. He continues to shine in the darkness.... and defeats it.

This Sunday is the fourth Sunday in Lent. Traditionally this Sunday has been known as Mothering Sunday. Mothering Sunday began as a religious event in the 16th Century, with no connection to mothers at all. The word "mothering" referred to the "mother church", which was the main church or cathedral of the region. It became a tradition that, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, people would return to their mother church for a special service. This pilgrimage was apparently known as "going a-mothering", and became something of a holiday event, with domestic servants traditionally given the day off to visit their own families, as well as their mother church.

This year may feel a little strange for all of us. We’re unable to meet together to worship in our churches, but church is not over. We just have to learn to do things a little differently for a while. We may not be able to share time with our family and friends in quite the same way as usual. This may leave us feeling lonely, anxious or afraid, but relationship isn’t over. We are still in relationship with God and with each other. We have to discover new ways to worship and to care for each other. This may seem a little daunting, but God has promised to never leave us alone.

I pray that we will each be assured of God’s love and presence with us as we navigate the unknown weeks ahead. I also pray that we will be aware of the light and hope that Jesus has promised us and trust the promise that the darkness will be overcome. Amen