

Rev'd Tony Morling – “Now the green blade riseth”

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

O Lord, I come to you this day, to hear your word and to rejoice in your presence in my life, now, and always.

**Hymn: Great is Thy Faithfulness
(Singing the Faith 51)**

Great is thy faithfulness,
O God my Father,
there is no shadow
of turning with thee;
thou changest not,
thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been
thou forever wilt be:

*Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning
new mercies I see;
all I have needed
thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness,
Lord, unto me.*

Summer and winter,
and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars
in their courses above,
join with all nature
in manifold witness

to thy great faithfulness,
mercy and love:

Pardon for sin
and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence
to cheer and to guide;
strength for today
and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine,
with ten thousand beside!

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Let us pray together

O God I give thanks to you this day
for your great faithfulness.

May I match your faithfulness with
my own. You have sustained me in
times of trouble, and carried me
when I could not bear my own
weight. Thank you for the gift of
your love and grace, shown to us in
Jesus Christ. I seek to give my life to
you in service and to love others as
you have first loved me.

May I do all these things with the
help of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Today's Readings

OT Jeremiah 31:31-34

Gospel John 12:20-33

Time to Reflect

I like the words of "The Message" which translates this Gospel passage as:

"Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal."

Jesus often illustrated his teaching by drawing parallels from everyday experiences. In John chapter 12 he speaks about seeds of wheat needing to be 'buried, dead to the world'. This process he teaches, will eventually lead to a harvest which is far greater than the single buried seed.

I don't know anything about growing wheat, but with the help of a retired farmer each year we grow some Jersey Royals. The seed potatoes are planted around Valentine's Day with the hope that they are ready for Pentecost and then sold for Christian Aid.

Not only is money raised for a great cause but it reminds me of Jesus words, *"Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over"*.

Choosing to grow potatoes engages me in the process of preparing, burying, waiting, weeding, banking and then ultimately lifting. In many ways it would be easier not to bother and just buy them from the shops. But I have learned that the effort is worth it!

Over the coming weeks we will be reminded of Christ's journey to the cross and the empty tomb. It is a story of costly love, written

not on tablets of stone but the heart. It requires Jesus's life to be buried as a seed. For you, for me, he died- doing something for us that we could not do for ourselves. Divine love offered freely to which we are invited to respond with gratitude and discipleship.

Lent offers us time to prepare our hearts and minds for Christ's suffering, death and burial. It also gives us space to think about how we might share in giving costly love.

Like growing potatoes, following Christ requires patience and hard work. The rewards may not be immediately obvious. But a harvest is coming and it a very fine thing to know that with Christ we can make a difference.

A time of prayer

Loving and gracious God,
We lift our prayers to you this morning, knowing that you hear all of our prayers, whether spoken or unspoken, for you know all that is on our hearts and minds.

We pray this day for the world... for the distribution of the vaccine, for people affected by war or natural disaster...

We pray this day for our nation... for the NHS and all who work hard to care for people within it, for our leaders, for all the people as we find new ways to live in community with one another...

We pray this day for our church... that we might shine with the light of Christ in the world, that others will come to know him through our actions, help us to be the hands and feet of Jesus...

We pray this day for our own concerns...

Let us pray now
as Jesus taught us to pray...

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father



Hymn: Now the green blade rises

Now the green blade riseth,
from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth
many days has lain;
Love lives again,
that with the dead has been:
Love is come again like
wheat that springeth green.

In the grave they laid Him,
Love who had been slain,
Thinking that He never
would awake again,
Laid in the earth
like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again
like wheat that springeth green.

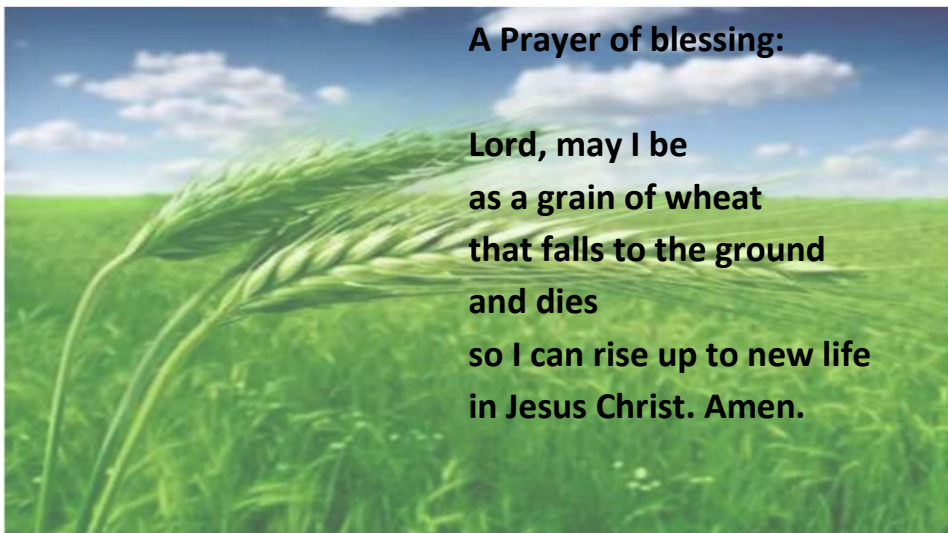
Forth He came at Easter,
like the risen grain,
Jesus who for three days
in the grave had lain;
Quick from the dead
the risen One is seen:
Love is come again
like wheat that springeth green.

When our hearts are wintry,
grieving, or in pain,
Jesus' touch can call us
back to life again,
Fields of our hearts
that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again
like wheat that springeth green.

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958)

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A Prayer of blessing:

**Lord, may I be
as a grain of wheat
that falls to the ground
and dies
so I can rise up to new life
in Jesus Christ. Amen.**