

Good-News Desk!

The Magazine of Tylers Green Methodist Church



Minister:
Rev. Vida Foday

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The Lectionary reading for the second Sunday of Easter this year (John 20: 19-31), has the story of 'Doubting Thomas'. Jesus spoke specifically to Thomas when he appeared to His disciples the second time saying: "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas had to touch Jesus' scars in order for him to believe that He was the risen One.

The Easter Lord gives us back our touch when he invites us to "touch and see." Touch nurtures. Most of life's milestones are marked by touch. Many of us take the nurturing touch right into our liturgy, joining hands and embracing others in the passing of the peace of Christ. Never take such touching for granted. Acceptance, encouragement, trust and hope come through in the touch of hand upon hands as the risen Lord touches us through others.

That nurturing touch gets through when nothing else does. When I used to visit Care Home residents who could no longer recognise people or speak because of Alzheimer's disease, I did sometimes get a faint squeeze when I touched their hands. Was it a sympathetic reflex? A sacramental sign that grace still gets through? Both,

I thought.

In the hallways of Nursing Homes across the country, many spend hours wondering if family or friends will ever come to touch their hands. From every side and in the most unexpected ways, the Lord Jesus meets us in the call to touch lives that ask so little yet need so much.

Touch reconciles. In Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, the waiting father does not hold back his emotions. That hug of reconciling love he gives his son says it all. It speaks of Christ's love – a love strong enough to bear a cross and to say with authority to frightened disciples, "Touch me and see." Through the open arms of forgiven and forgiving people, the deepest wounds are set upon a path of healing.

It is obvious that the 'nurturing touch' Jesus speaks of is not practically possible due to the current coronavirus pandemic that has gripped the world. Many have lost their lives and people wonder where God is in all this, especially when the risen Easter Lord keeps on inviting, "Touch me and see." Even though physical contact is somehow restricted these days, as Christians, we can still intercede spiritually for the world by prayer. It is hoped that our prayers would touch others with the love of the Risen Christ at such a time as this and that God, who is still in total control of the situation, will bring this pandemic to an end.

Touch points us to the future. The risen Lord's invitation to 'touch and see' shows what is yet to come for us. We long for that fulfilment, to embrace our Lord Jesus Christ and those long gone from us. Jesus embraces the world with the arms of His followers - our arms. He speaks words of grace with our voices. He demands justice and offers peace through our deeds of witness and compassion.

Touch breaks every barrier. Remember the magic moment near the end of the film *Driving Miss Daisy*: The black chauffeur and the white patrician lady wordlessly clasp their hands in a simple yet profoundly moving gesture. Such moments point to the wonder of reconciliation. It is our hope that at the end of this pandemic, there would be love in abundance, unity and reconciliation all over the world. The world would then be as God intended it to be when He created humankind

in His image.

Over and over again, by God's great grace, the simple and ordinary practices of the Church are the means by which Jesus becomes real to us and to the world. They are the sights and sounds of Christ, present to us in his Body, the Church; they are evidence for the truth of Easter, signs of the resurrection, and ways to touch and trust Jesus.

Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!

With love and every blessing, Vida.

May the following hymn "*We shall overcome*", give us some hope.

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

The Lord will see us through, The Lord will see us through,
The Lord will see us through someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid today;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We are not afraid today.

We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace,
We shall live in peace someday;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall live in peace someday.

(Composed by Charles Albert Tindley in 1900)

Vida reminds us of a familiar story

God loves variety. Let's look at the disciples of Jesus. Some were fishermen, a tax collector, and the other a religious zealot. Some of them were brothers to one another, others were married or single. Some were probably craftsmen and tradesmen, or maybe farmers. We shouldn't ever think that we do not qualify to be disciples of Christ. If these men qualify, then we qualify too. Though these men may not have amounted to much in the eyes of the world, they were exactly what God is looking for.

This is a humorous letter that confirms the above. It is a fictional letter written to Jesus from the Jordan Management Consultants. Jesus apparently is looking for some co-workers and has submitted some names to these management consultants who write back with their recommendations.

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the applications of the twelve men you have picked for managerial positions in your new organisation. It is the staff's opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale.

We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew had been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man.

Sincerely,

Jordan Management Consultants

From Laurence

Dear Friends, Hope you are all well and coping in these rather difficult and challenging times. I have been asked if I would write about my experience of providing a reading for the 'Live Streamed' Easter Sunday service.

First of all I was very honoured to be asked to do a reading for one of the most celebrated services in the church calendar! That came about as a result of me emailing Sue Horley to say how uplifting I was finding the services; and asking her to thank everyone involved. I finished the email by saying that if the organisers were looking for readers then I was happy to give it a go. A few days later, to my amazement, the answer came back from the "virtual steward", Neil Manthorpe, that our Circuit Superintendent Minister Rev. Nick Thompson would be conducting the service and he would be in touch at a later date with a reading. Some days after that I was given the details of the reading and told that it was preferred that the reading be read "live" via "Zoom Conference Chat" or, if I would rather, then I could email a recording. I decided to play things on the safe side and make a recording. My computer had frozen a couple of times whilst watching the service the week before and I didn't want to risk that happening right in the middle of the reading or worse still my cat Cookie jumping up on the keyboard, as he often does, and walking across the camera in full view of everyone! I didn't want to tempt fate, so a recording it would be!

I was put in touch with the "Tech Guru", Tim Ashburner, who gave some excellent advice (including a very good instructional video via 'You Tube') on how best to go about a video recording. The instructional video was shot outside, and it had a lovely bright look to it so I thought my garden would be the best "filming location" for my reading. I recorded the video on the morning of the Tuesday before Easter Sunday as the weather was ideal. In my head it was going to be very straight forward. All I had to do was print out the text I was going to read and make it big enough to read from a distance, get my video camera all set up on a tripod in the garden, put on some nice clothes and go and "shoot" the video! It all started off well, my camera has one of those small built in screens that I could turn towards me so that I could see that I was in the middle of the picture and there were no shadows across my face etc. It was at this point I realised why the professionals have a crew! My poor wife, Janette, had very kindly agreed to do all the behind the camera stuff; hitting the record button, holding my script up for me to read, listening out for mistakes; one pair of hands was not enough but she

did a really good job.

We thought we were being clever filming early that morning. Janette and I had been in the routine of going for our daily walk at 6am during the 'Lock Down' because there were fewer people around. So, we were back from the walk and ready for the filming at around 8.30am. Nice and quiet under the circumstances you would have thought.... I forgot about the local wildlife! In particular, a pair of noisy parakeets sitting in my neighbour's tree. We made quite a few attempts at the reading, but I was drowned out each time. Eventually it was quiet enough for another 'Take' but, halfway through, someone started their car engine and drove off. Try again. This time I messed up the words; instead of saying "The disciples took hold of his feet..." I said, "The disciples took his feet...". Re-set and go again..... for the eighth attempt! What really helped me was in my mind's eye I was standing at the lectern looking out at all of your smiling faces. This time we got it!!

We brought everything in from the garden and had a look at the final 'take'. I was still worried about the background noise so I decided, just in case, we would shoot an indoor version. However, we just couldn't find anywhere bright enough so, for better or worse, the outdoor version was going to have to be the one. On Easter Sunday I was sitting in front of my computer feeling a mixture of nerves and excitement on how it was going to come across. Not wishing to be egotistical but I was very happy about the reading and I needn't have worried about the background noise. The little bit of bird song, I felt, really added to it. I also loved the illustrations that were cross faded in and out I presume by Tim.

I feel very emotional and truly blessed that I was given this opportunity; and I felt our Lord's presence and love throughout the service. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for providing us with regular worship in our circuit, keeping our spirits up and our faith alive!

Please all keep well and keep safe.

Take care and God bless.

Laurence

Thought for the month

*If God sends us on stony paths, He gives us strong shoes.
Corrie Ten Boom*

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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Worship Leaders: Geraldine Nelson and Chris Oxby

Senior Church Steward: Peter Stevens*— 📞 815256

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Pastoral/First Steps: Rosemary Newman— 📞 461492 and Christine Stevens - 📞 815256

Property : Peter Stevens— 📞 815256

Property matters: For the moment speak to Peter or Geraldine

Online Good-News Desk

Items for the next Good-News Desk should reach
Peter Stevens by 19th May by email to
psredkite@googlemail.com or 📞 815256

**Note: Some items in Good-News Desk are included by subscription to
Parish Pump—the resource site for Church Newsletters.**

Lockdown

Sue Horley: During lockdown I've enjoyed watching the live Sunday services from Marlow and from my sister's church in Worcester. I particularly liked the Tenebrae service on Maundy Thursday - a powerful combination of words, music and the imagery of ever decreasing numbers of candles. Otherwise, we've been busy at home catching up on jobs but have also been out and about walking - the cherry blossom and bluebells are particularly beautiful. We're using our local shops and realising how lucky we are to have them. Technology is brilliant too for keeping in touch with everyone for as long as we need to.

Carole Bowler: Not sure whether this is what you had in mind when you asked for contributions for the May GND!!? Any rate I thought it would make you smile! I have been told that Ian Drury used to go to the RGS - have not checked whether this is correct or not.

There is a blackcap singing once again each day from the bottom of my garden - lovely tune! It is amazing to think he has flown to Africa and back, most likely to nest in the same bush as previous years! Just wonderful!! (Ed note: Quite true about Ian Drury. He admitted to being a somewhat undistinguished border in those days. I think boarding stopped some years ago.)

Peter Stevens: I am self-isolating in our home and garden where I am enjoying bird song and nestlings calling for food. There is so much more bird song in the absence of noisy traffic. My daily walking has created a new path around the lawn. I do miss my longer walks and the song of skylarks in the fields behind The Red Lion.

A Prayer written by Barbara Glasson President of the Methodist Conference for the Christian community

We are not people of fear: we are people of courage.

We are not people who protect our own safety: we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.

We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity.

We are your people God, giving and loving, wherever we are, whatever it costs

For as long as it takes wherever you call us. Amen