

A reflection for The Second Sunday of Easter 2020 from The Revd Liz Hassall

When I arrived in this benefice back in 2013, I was informed that the Sunday after Easter Day is kept here as Colourful Sunday. Having never heard of this tradition before, I went looking online for resources, hoping to find some tips on liturgy. It turns out that this is not an obscure tradition from a particular spiritual discipline but rather a good idea from a former churchwarden here that has now been made into a recurring feast day.

So, how do you celebrate Colourful Sunday? Usually, we have a big joint service with plenty of good music and everyone is challenged to wear their brightest clothes. Some of our congregation members keep outfits specifically for this day – and they have to be seen to be believed. You will have to wait and see what we manage for this year. Look on <http://bylandchurches.net> on Sunday morning to find out.

Why do we do this? Because we think the celebration of Easter is too important to make it about only one day. It is always a challenge to keep Easter going for the full 50 days until Pentecost. Clergy and congregations are often burnt out by the time you get to Easter Day and things all go very quiet after that. Easter is about resurrection and new life, about a calling to a vibrant existence. The Christian life is not meant to be drab or dull – we have the promise of eternal life and the knowledge that the kingdom of God is breaking into this world even now.

Perhaps this year we have even more reason to make an effort to keep the Easter joy in mind. As so many of our congregations are in isolation and separated from friends and family, it would be very easy to drift back into a Lenten fug of dreariness.

I'm not saying that we should force ourselves to be happy when we are not. Bottling up feelings and putting on a brave face may be the traditional British way, but it is more healthy in the long term to acknowledge that things are pretty awful at the moment and allow some wallowing in grief.

The key I am finding to snapping out of the depths of despair is in searching out and acknowledging the good things, the moments of hope and joy – however small – and taking them to God in thankful prayer.

So, today I am thankful for many things including the first green shoots in the vegetable garden, the taste of a really good quality dark chocolate egg, a smile from my 6 month-old niece as she successfully executed a 360 degree roll while on a video call, a message from an old friend, and some peace and quiet. How about you?

We don't know how long this lockdown is going to continue and a significant proportion of the population are worried about money or illness or mental health. Life has changed for nearly all of us and it is a struggle. In all this, however, we can be sure that Jesus really is risen and that we have that promise of eternal life and that life has already begun.

What are you thankful for today and how could you put some Easter colour into your or someone else's life this weekend?