

Together as One

Newsletter of the Methodist Churches in Hungerford, Lambourn,
Newbury and Thatcham during Coronavirus Pandemic

Verses for the week

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. (John 20: 19-20)

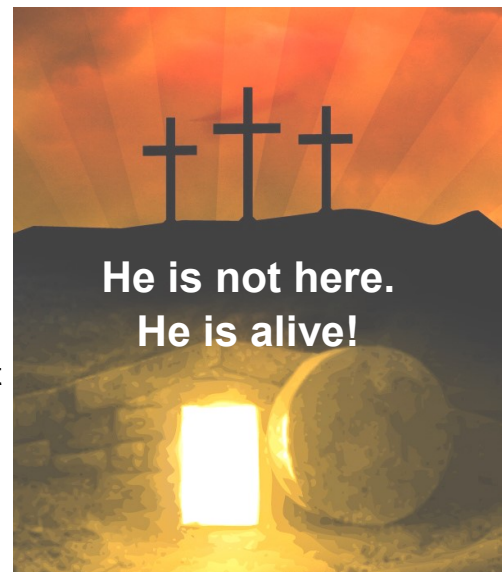
It dawned on them

Like rain after prolonged drought, like a reunion after a long separation and like recovering from a long illness, thankfulness and joy are heightened by what has gone before. Easter Sunday is a day of thankfulness and joy, not only because of the life-transforming, future-defining, hope-releasing miracle of Jesus' resurrection, but because of what had gone before it. Perhaps this Easter Sunday that is more evident to us because of the year just passed. A year of fear, loss, death, pain, anxiety and confusion brings us to this moment of hope, joy and life again.

For Jesus' followers the slow dawning of Easter Sunday had been preceded by the shocking suddenness of Jesus' public humiliation and death. This brought the ending of the trust and expectation invested in Jesus, his words and actions. It is so well summed up in the words of two travellers on the road to Emmaus on the evening of the resurrection 'but we had hoped'. The loss of hope, the questioning of trust placed, which now seemed misplaced, the 'things once held dear' and the failure felt may sum up our thoughts too as we look back and look forward. The disciples discovered that Easter Day that resurrection's new life would, when they began to understand what had happened, vindicate all they had hoped for and so much more. That trust in Jesus was not the greatest mistake of their lives but the best decision they ever made. In the turmoil and confusion of Good Friday they could not see it, but when it came Easter morning's dawning light shone so much brighter. In our times of despair and confusion when so much we thought we could rely upon has been shaken, it is the truth of the resurrection that we too can rely upon. This one event alone makes sense of the death of Jesus and sets the world on a totally different path. Perhaps above all it makes sense of existence, it provides meaning, a future and a hope by which to live. We need to cling on to that hope, return to it, ask God to renew our confidence in it more than ever now and we need to find ways to share it with a traumatised world, bruised and broken by loss and grief and hurt by long-standing divisions.

Happy Easter.

With love and prayers, Peter.



News from Peru

Marion Burke has been teaching English online to students in Peru and would like to share some snippets of news from two of her students about life in Peru during the global pandemic.

Article from a newly trained medical student living in Lima:

'Many areas of Peru have been greatly affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic and recently the second wave has taken more lives than the first. There have been more than 45,000 confirmed Covid-19 deaths and triple that number of suspected deaths. Everyone knows someone close to them who has died of the virus. The hospitals have collapsed and there are no intensive care beds available for people who are critically ill with Covid. Oxygen supplies are running out and people are having to join long queues for more than 4 days to get their oxygen tanks filled. Doctors are exhausted. However the vaccination has become a small light at the end of the tunnel and the authorities are trying their hardest to stop the spread of the virus. The current situation is catastrophic, and the economy has been widely impacted. It has been described that more than 3 million people have lost their jobs in our country.'



Opposite - Queuing up for benefits in Iquitos, Peru where most people do not use digital banking.

And a reflection on the positive effects of the pandemic from a dentist also living in Lima:

'I am a dentist in Peru and last year, due to the pandemic, was not able to go to work until October 2020. Since then, we have had two more lockdowns and I have only been able to work during January. I thank God that my family has not been infected. There are three of us in my family, my husband and I and my daughter Paula, the pandemic has brought many positive things to our home such as spending time together, getting to know each other better and more father-daughter time. Because of the empty streets there is less stress moving from one place to another and we are learning to be more creative. I am teaching my daughter different tasks around the house, that we can all get involved in, learning to cook and make desserts. Above all we are trusting more in God who is teaching us to enjoy the time that He gives us to be together and deepening our understanding about the security and hope that for those of us who believe in Him all things are good for us. In general terms, I see the pandemic as an opportunity for family unity, for personal change, to focus on the things that matter, to care about others, to share hope.'



Food for Easter

I hope you are able to enjoy something a little special to eat this Easter, perhaps a hot cross bun or an Easter biscuit, oh and perhaps some chocolate, especially enjoyable if you decided to give up chocolate for Lent. Last year these luxuries were more difficult to obtain but thankfully this year they are readily available - how easy it is to forget to give thanks for the abundance we have and for those who make it available. If you want a little food for your soul

[Click Here](#) to hear Bear Grylls reading a short extract from his book Soul Fuel.

And finally thanks to Colin

A man walks into a pet shop and orders a dozen bees. The assistant counts out 13. The man says, 'that's one too many'. The assistant says, 'that's OK it's a freebee!'