

**Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup>** For use at 10.30 am or at another time

### **Prayer**

Loving God, we come to worship you.  
Help us to remember that you are here with us.  
May we pray to you in faith,  
sing your praise with gratitude,  
and read your word with eagerness;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Optional Old Testament:** Ezekiel 37 v 1 – 14 is set for today. This is the passage that asks whether dry bones can come to life which seems relevant in lots of ways....

**Gospel Reading :** John 11 v 1 – 45. Like last week, this is a long reading but well worth it and worth really trying to imagine what this story felt like to the participants, as it happened...

### **For thought**

*Martha's faith in Jesus is very touching... In contrast to the story of the two sisters in Luke 10 v 38 – 42, in this passage Martha comes across even more positively than her sister Mary... In one of the most famous 'I AM' sayings in John... Jesus declares himself to be 'the resurrection and the life' (John 11 v 25). The calling of Lazarus back to life when he has already been dead for four days and the body has begun to decompose is a startling preview of what the Son of God will one day accomplish for all his disciples.*

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What does this story say to us in our current situation?

### **Hymn**

And can it be that I should gain  
an interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died he for me, who caused his pain?  
For me, who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That thou my God, shouldst die for me?

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!  
Alive in him, my living head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown through Christ my own.

Charles Wesley (1725 – 1807)

## **For Prayer**

We give thanks for Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life.

We pray for all those who are sad today, all those who despair, all those for whom there is no resurrection life. On this Passion Sunday, we pray for all those who are suffer in any way.

We pray for our world, our country, the Methodist Church, our community, our local church and fellowship, our family and friends, ourselves.

We pray for anyone, and everyone, coping with the coronavirus emergency – in any way.

We say the Lord's Prayer...

**Offer to God your offertory for the week:** and, if cash, put it aside in a special place.

## **Message from a Methodist Friend** (different person each week)

*Do you know if you are an introvert or an extrovert? Basically, an introvert is someone who gets their energy from within themselves and finds that when they are with a lot of people for too long it tires them out. Opposite to that is the extrovert who gets their energy from people around them and finds that they get tired when they are alone for too long. Guess which one I am?!*

*It has been an extrovert's nightmare to go from a full diary of activity of visiting people at home, in care homes or hospital, leading worship, Bible study and prayer groups /meetings to an empty diary apart from, sadly, funerals. I have been reflecting on, which was Jesus?*

*I believe he was more an introvert, which might seem strange, but think about it. When he was exhausted from big gatherings like the feeding of the 5,000 to preaching from a boat as the crowds gathered too close, he went away to a quiet place to have time for prayer and connecting with his Father in Heaven.*

*Let's be honest, we are in unchartered challenging times where we all will need to make sacrifices for the overall good of ourselves, our family, our communities, our country and indeed the whole world. We have all the resources that Jesus didn't have and we have plenty of friends and family who will keep our spirits up and support us with whatever is needed be we introvert or extrovert. Treat this as an opportunity, not a punishment, read your Bible daily, pray, do diaries, write memoirs, letters to friends and keep a record because future generations will talk about this time for many years to come.*

*God bless you all, keep safe and well, here's my daily prayer. I freely give it to you too.*

*Father God, enter my house and take away all my worries, dis-ease and fear and please protect my children and grandchildren, my friends, neighbours and family. In the name of Jesus I pray...Amen*

**Rev Betty**

## **Hymn**

This, this is the God we adore,  
Our faithful, unchangeable friend,  
whose love is as great as his power,  
and neither knows measure nor end:

'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,  
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;  
We'll praise him for all that is past,  
and trust him for all that's to come.

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**May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us (and all those we love) this day and always, Amen.**